
Transportation Committee

HB 1207

Brief Description: Improving access to department of licensing issued documents by extending the issuance period of driver licenses and identicards to eight years, allowing online issuance and renewal of instruction permits, and expanding online renewal of driver licenses and identicards.

Sponsors: Representatives Ramel, Boehnke, Lekanoff, Lovick, Ortiz-Self, Eslick, Bergquist and Leavitt; by request of Department of Licensing.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Extends the renewal cycle for standard and enhanced driver's licenses, standard and enhanced identicards, commercial driver's licenses, and motorcycle endorsements from six years to eight years and adjusts the associated fees to reflect the new terms.
- Allows online issuance and renewal of non-photo driver's instruction permits.
- Allows remote photo and signature capture at driver's license and identicard renewal.
- Allows that driver's licenses and identicard can be renewed online any time, and specifies that photos must be updated at least every 16 years.

Hearing Date: 1/26/21

Staff: Christine Thomas (786-7142).

Background:

Driver's Licenses, Identicards, Endorsements, and Driver's Instruction Permits.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

The Department of Licensing (DOL) is authorized to issue several instruments, such as driver's licenses (standard, enhanced, and commercial), identicards, driver's instruction permits, and motorcycle endorsements, that are related to driving vehicles and providing official identification of individuals. The fees and documentation required for application of the identifying and authorizing instruments vary, but the instruments are generally valid for up to six years for qualifying applicants. Driver's instruction permits are valid for up to one year. During in-person visits, the DOL takes photos of applicants for licenses and some identicards.

Applications for a new license or instruction permit must be signed before an agent authorized to administer oaths, meaning that an in-person visit to a DOL office is required. Renewals for driver's licenses and identicards can be made in person, but they may also be made online, as long as the last renewal was not made online. A renewal for an instruction permit must be made in person, and a renewal for an identicard without a photo must also be made in person.

Emergency Executive Orders in Response to Coronavirus Disease 2019 Safety Measures.

As a result of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, the DOL driver licensing offices were closed for several months for all non-commercial driver licensing services starting at the end of March 2020. The DOL began reopening driver licensing offices in June 2020 and are open by appointment only with every other counter closed to allow for social distancing. Appointments are available for scheduling 30 days in advance.

In response to the DOL's limited capacity for in-person services, the Governor issued Proclamation 20.41.6. This allowed the DOL to issue a no-photo instruction permit online, renew driver's instruction permits online, and provide expanded online renewals for driver's licenses and identicards. These are temporary measures.

Summary of Bill:

Driver's licenses, commercial driver's licenses, identicards, and motorcycle endorsements are valid for eight years. Online renewals of driver's licenses and identicards are no longer restricted to every other renewal cycle, including non-photo driver's instruction permits. The following fees are adjusted to reflect the new renewal terms, though per-year costs remain unchanged:

Category	Per-Year Cost	Current fee for 6-year renewal cycle	Proposed fee for 8-year renewal cycle
Standard driver's license/identicard	\$9	\$54	\$72
Enhanced driver's license (EDL)/Enhanced identicard (EID)	\$13	\$78	\$104
Motorcycle endorsement	\$14	\$84	\$112

Commercial driver license (CDL)	\$26	\$156	\$208
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The DOL is authorized to capture photographs and signatures remotely for driver's licenses and identicards eliminating the need for in person renewals. Photographs for renewed driver's licenses and identicards need be updated only every 16 years. A sworn statement must be signed by the applicant before someone authorized to administer oaths only for original driver license issuances.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on 1/15/21.

Effective Date: This bill takes effect December 1, 2021, except for sections 2 and 3, relating to non-photo driver's instruction permits and in-person sworn oaths, which take effect immediately.