

FINAL BILL REPORT

SHB 1207

C 158 L 21
Synopsis as Enacted

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: House Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Representatives Ramel, Boehnke, Lekanoff, Lovick, Ortiz-Self, Eslick, Bergquist and Leavitt; by request of Department of Licensing).

House Committee on Transportation
Senate Committee on Transportation

Background:

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

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

Applications for a new license or instruction permit must be signed before an agent authorized to administer oaths, which requires an in-person visit to a DOL office. Renewals for driver licenses and identicards can be made in person, but they may also be made online if 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 COVID-19 Safety Measures.

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.

As a result of the 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 allowing the DOL to temporarily issue non-photo instruction permits online, renew instruction permits online, and provide expanded online renewals for driver licenses and identicards.

Summary:

Driver's licenses, commercial driver licenses, identicards, and motorcycle endorsements are valid for eight years, though the DOL must offer the option to issue or renew driver licenses and identicards for six years. 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	Fee for 8-year renewal cycle
Standard driver license/identicard	\$9	\$54	\$72
Enhanced driver license (EDL)/enhanced identicard (EID)	\$13	\$78	\$104
Motorcycle endorsement	\$14	\$84	\$112
Commercial driver license (CDL)	\$26	\$156	\$208

Online renewals of driver licenses and identicards are not restricted to every other renewal cycle for the period starting January 2022 until July 2024. Non-photo instruction permit renewals may be made online. Photographs for renewed driver licenses and identicards need be updated only every 16 years for persons over 30. Persons under 30 must update their photos every eight years. Beginning January 2023, persons making online renewals must provide an updated photograph in a form and manner that meets the DOL's requirements for remote photo capture. The DOL may make an exception for updating the photograph if the person making the online renewal is unable to provide an updated photograph and the photograph on file with the DOL is not more than 10 years old at the time of renewal. A sworn statement must be signed by an applicant before someone authorized to administer oaths only for original driver license issuances.

The DOL must evaluate the impact of expanded online renewals and remote photo capture

on backlog reduction, access to services, employment public safety, identity fraud, and other related topics in consultation with relevant stakeholders and industry experts. The DOL must submit a report to the Governor and the transportation committees of the Legislature by December 1, 2023.

Other technical changes and statutory reference updates were made to reflect the creation of a state agency and replace gender-related terms with generic references to licensees, applicants, or similar terms.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	81	16	
Senate	49	0	(Senate amended)
House	90	8	(House concurred)

Effective: May 3, 2021 (Sections 1, 3, and 4)
January 1, 2022