

RCW 46.20.120 Examinations—Waiver—Fees—Renewals—

Administration. An applicant for a new or renewed driver's license must successfully pass a driver licensing examination to qualify for a driver's license. The department must ensure that examinations are given at places and times reasonably available to the people of this state. If the department does not administer driver licensing examinations as a routine part of its licensing services within a department region because adequate testing sites are provided by driver training schools or school districts within that region, the department shall, at a minimum, administer driver licensing examinations by appointment to applicants eighteen years of age and older in at least one licensing office within that region.

(1) **Waiver.** The department may waive:

(a) All or any part of the examination of any person applying for the renewal of a driver's license unless the department determines that the applicant is not qualified to hold a driver's license under this title; or

(b) All or any part of the examination involving operating a motor vehicle if the applicant:

(i) Surrenders a valid driver's license issued by the person's previous home state; or

(ii) Provides for verification a valid driver's license issued by a foreign driver licensing jurisdiction with which the department has an informal agreement under RCW 46.20.125; and

(iii) Is otherwise qualified to be licensed.

(2) **Fee.** Each applicant for a new license must pay an examination fee of thirty-five dollars.

(a) The examination fee is in addition to the fee charged for issuance of the license.

(b) "New license" means a license issued to a driver:

(i) Who has not been previously licensed in this state; or

(ii) Whose last previous Washington license has been expired for more than eight years.

(3) An application for driver's license renewal may be submitted by means of:

(a) Personal appearance before the department;

(b) Mail or electronic commerce, if permitted by rule of the department and if the applicant did not renew the license by mail or by electronic commerce when it last expired; or

(c) From January 1, 2022, to June 30, 2024, electronic commerce, if permitted by rule of the department.

(4) A person whose license expired or will expire while the licensee is living outside the state, may:

(a) Apply to the department to extend the validity of the license for no more than twelve months. If the person establishes to the department's satisfaction that the licensee is unable to return to Washington before the date the license expires, the department shall extend the person's license. The department may grant consecutive extensions, but in no event may the cumulative total of extensions exceed twelve months. An extension granted under this section does not change the expiration date of the license for purposes of RCW 46.20.181. The department shall charge a fee of five dollars for each license extension;

(b) Apply to the department to renew the license by mail or, if permitted by rule of the department, by electronic commerce even if subsection (3) (b) of this section would not otherwise allow renewal by

that means. If the person establishes to the department's satisfaction that the licensee is unable to return to Washington within twelve months of the date that the license expires, the department shall renew the person's license by mail or, if permitted by rule of the department, by electronic commerce.

(5) (a) If a qualified person submits an application for renewal under subsection (3) (b) or (c) or (4) (b) of this section, the applicant is not required to pass an examination and only needs to provide an updated photograph:

(i) At least every 16 years, except that persons under 30 must provide an updated photograph every eight years; and

(ii) Beginning January 1, 2023, persons renewing through electronic commerce must provide an updated photograph in a form and manner approved by the department with each renewal unless they are unable to provide a photograph that meets the department's requirements and the most recent photograph on file with the department is not more than 10 years old at the time of renewal.

(b) A license renewed by mail or by electronic commerce that does not include a photograph of the licensee must be labeled "not valid for identification purposes."

(6) Driver training schools licensed by the department under chapter 46.82 RCW may administer the portions of the driver licensing examination that test the applicant's knowledge of traffic laws and ability to safely operate a motor vehicle.

(7) School districts that offer a traffic safety education program under chapter 28A.220 RCW may administer the portions of the driver licensing examination that test the applicant's knowledge of traffic laws and ability to safely operate a motor vehicle. [2021 c 158 § 6; 2012 c 80 § 7; 2011 c 370 § 4. Prior: 2005 c 314 § 306; 2005 c 61 § 2; 2004 c 249 § 6; 2002 c 352 § 13; prior: 1999 c 308 § 1; 1999 c 199 § 3; 1999 c 6 § 19; 1990 c 9 § 1; 1988 c 88 § 2; 1985 ex.s. c 1 § 4; 1979 c 61 § 6; 1975 1st ex.s. c 191 § 2; 1967 c 167 § 4; 1965 ex.s. c 121 § 9; 1961 c 12 § 46.20.120; prior: 1959 c 284 § 1; 1953 c 221 § 2; 1937 c 188 § 55, part; RRS § 6312-55, part.]

Effective date—2021 c 158 §§ 2 and 5-11: See note following RCW 46.20.049.

Finding—Intent—2021 c 158: See note following RCW 46.20.049.

Effective date—2012 c 80 §§ 5-13: See note following RCW 46.20.055.

Intent—2011 c 370: See note following RCW 28A.220.030.

Inclusion of stakeholder groups in communications to facilitate transition of driver licensing examination administration—2011 c 370: See note following RCW 46.82.450.

Effective date—2005 c 314 §§ 101-107, 109, 303-309, and 401: See note following RCW 46.68.290.

Part headings not law—2005 c 314: See note following RCW 46.68.035.

Intent—2005 c 61: See note following RCW 46.20.125.

Effective dates—2002 c 352: See note following RCW 46.09.410.

Effective date—1999 c 308: "Sections 1 through 5 of this act take effect July 1, 2000." [1999 c 308 § 6.]

Effective date—1999 c 199: See note following RCW 46.20.027.

Intent—1999 c 6: See note following RCW 46.04.168.

Effective date—1985 ex.s. c 1: See note following RCW 46.20.070.