

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE · SEATTLE

How to Get a Driver's License in Seattle: 2026 Guide

This guide is about Washington State on the Pacific coast, not Washington, D.C. For people without an SSN, drivers arriving with a Turkish license, and visa and green card holders: tests, documents, REAL ID and fees.

SHORT ANSWER

You have 30 days after settling in Seattle to get a Washington license, and it comes before vehicle registration. Licenses come from the state Department of Licensing (DOL), not the city. Two driver licensing offices sit inside Seattle: Queen Anne (450 3rd Ave W, Suite 100) and West Seattle (2420 SW Dakota St), both by appointment only. No SSN is required: if you have none, you sign a declaration saying so. A Turkish license does not transfer, so you take both the knowledge test and the drive test. A first license is \$111 for 6 years or \$131 for 8.

Before you start

- **A Turkish license does not transfer.** DOL waives the tests only for other U.S. states, Washington D.C., British Columbia, Germany and South Korea. Türkiye is not on the list, so you take both tests. As a visitor you may drive on a foreign license for up to 1 year.
- **No SSN needed.** Give the number if you have one; if not, sign a declaration saying you have none and the transaction still goes ahead. A commercial license (CDL) does require an SSN plus citizenship or permanent residence.
- **Turkish is not a test language.** The knowledge test is given in 12 languages and Turkish is not one of them. DOL does arrange an interpreter if you ask at least 5 business days ahead: email languageaccess@dol.wa.gov with your name, phone, language, office and appointment.
- **New from November 1, 2026:** first-time Washington license applicants under 25 must complete a free online course of about one hour. There is no such requirement at 25 and over.
- **There is no star-marked REAL ID.** Washington's REAL ID-compliant card is the Enhanced Driver License (EDL), and it is issued to U.S. citizens only. A green card holder or visa holder gets a standard license marked "Federal limits apply". That card does not board a domestic flight, so carry your passport, green card or work permit (I-766) when you fly.

DOL offices in and around Seattle

OFFICE	ADDRESS	PHONE
Seattle-Queen Anne	450 3rd Ave W, Suite 100, Seattle WA 98119	206-464-6845

OFFICE	ADDRESS	PHONE
West Seattle	2420 SW Dakota St, Seattle WA 98106	206-764-4144
Shoreline	15809 Westminster Way N, Shoreline WA 98133	425-670-8375
Tukwila	200 Andover Park E, Suite 3, Tukwila WA 98188	360-902-3900
Kent	25410 74th Ave S, Kent WA 98032	253-872-2782
Redmond	7225 170th Ave NE, Redmond WA 98052	425-649-4281
Federal Way	1617 S 324th St, Federal Way WA 98003	253-661-5001

Hours differ from office to office and change often; some offices close on Mondays and some open on Saturdays. **Confirm the hours when you book.** DOL customer line 360-902-3900. Addresses come from DOL's [office locator](#). 2026 holiday closures: November 11, November 26 and 27, and December 25.

Step by step: your first license

- 1 Book an appointment.** DOL driver licensing offices do not take walk-ins. They do not handle vehicle registration either, so that is a separate trip.
- 2 Bring original documents.** DOL refuses copies, scans and photos on a phone. Four combinations are accepted: one stand-alone document, two A-list documents, one A-list plus two B-list documents, or four B-list documents (one showing name and date of birth).
- 3 Give your SSN if you have one, or sign a declaration.** DOL verifies the number with the Social Security Administration.
- 4 Take the tests.** The knowledge test has 40 multiple-choice questions and you need 32 correct; the score is good for 2 years. The drive test is passed at 80 of 100 and the score is good for 1 year. At 18 and over, no learner permit or driving school is required. Vision screening happens at the office.
- 5 Bring a car to the drive test.** You need an insured vehicle with valid registration, tabs and plates; a rental car is allowed. Without proof of liability insurance for that vehicle you will not be tested.
- 6 Wait for the card.** The temporary license is good for 45 days and the permanent card arrives by mail in 7 to 10 days. If it has not come in 30 days, call 360-902-3900. The temporary paper license is probably not accepted as ID.

Which document counts on which list?

LIST	WHAT WORKS FOR SOMEONE ARRIVING FROM TÜRKIYE
Stand-alone	U.S. passport or passport card, green card, employment authorization document (I-766), Re-entry Permit (I-327), Border Crossing Card, a U.S. state license or ID that is valid or expired up to 1 year, a naturalization certificate with photo and signature, military ID
A-list	A U.S. visa; a foreign passport carrying an I-94 or an I-551 stamp; a U.S. state ID or license expired up to 6 years

LIST	WHAT WORKS FOR SOMEONE ARRIVING FROM TÜRKİYE
B-list	A certified birth certificate, a Turkish driver's license , a certified marriage certificate, school records, an I-20 or DS-2019, a Social Security card

A Turkish consular ID is not on these lists (consular IDs are accepted only for El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Peru). In practice the easiest route is a foreign passport with an I-94 plus your U.S. visa. A Turkish license only counts as supporting B-list evidence.

Fees (2026)

ITEM	FEE
First license	\$111 (6 years) / \$131 (8 years)
Learner permit (1 year)	\$35
License renewal	\$61 (6 years) / \$81 (8 years)
Standard ID card	\$61 (6 years) / \$81 (8 years)
Replacement card, or a name or address change	\$20
Knowledge and drive test	Varies by testing location, ask the school or office

Offices take cash and checks, and cards at most locations, with a vendor fee. Online transactions carry a 3% card fee.

NOTE FOR IMMIGRANTS

- A standard Washington license gives no immigration status, and the card does not show your residency. Because it is not a federal ID, keep your passport, green card or work permit with you when you board a plane or enter a federal building.
- If your name is spelled differently across documents (Turkish letters in the passport, something else on the I-94), sort it out before the appointment. The name on the card has to match your USCIS and SSA records later.
- DOL staff will offer you voter registration during your transaction. If you are not a citizen, decline and answer the citizenship question truthfully.

Common mistakes

- Walking in to an office without an appointment.
- Bringing photocopies or a photo of a document on your phone.
- Expecting a Turkish license to be exchanged without tests.
- Leaving the interpreter request until test day; it has to go in at least 5 business days ahead.
- Showing up to the drive test with an uninsured car or one without valid tabs.
- Going to register the car first. The license comes before vehicle registration.



TURKISH-SPEAKING IMMIGRATION ATTORNEY IN SEATTLE

Have a question about your immigration status?

Attorney Asim Clinch serves clients in Seattle and the surrounding area, in Turkish and English. Free evaluation: clinchlaw.com/free-evaluation · +1 866-491-7669

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