

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE · WASHINGTON STATE

How to Get a Driver's License in Washington State: 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 Washington to get a Washington license, and it comes before vehicle registration. The state Department of Licensing (DOL) issues it, and you need an appointment to enter an office. An SSN is not 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. The knowledge test is not offered in Turkish, but DOL arranges an interpreter if you ask at least five business days ahead. A first license is \$111 for 6 years or \$131 for 8 years.

Before you start

- **Two offices, two jobs.** You get the license at a DOL driver licensing office by appointment. You register the car at a county or subagent vehicle licensing office, walk-in. The license comes first.
- **No SSN needed.** DOL asks for the number if you have one; if you do not, you sign a declaration that you have none. A standard license does not show residency or legal status.
- **A Turkish license does not transfer.** Türkiye is not on DOL's list of tests waived. You take the knowledge and drive tests like any first-time driver.
- **Turkish is not a test language, but you can get an interpreter.** The knowledge test comes in 12 languages and Turkish is not one of them. If you email languageaccess@dol.wa.gov at least five business days ahead, DOL arranges an interpreter.
- **New requirement from November 1, 2026.** First-time applicants under 25 must complete a free online course of about one hour (Work Zone and First Responder). There is no such requirement at 25 and over.
- **No star-marked REAL ID.** Washington's REAL ID-compliant card is the Enhanced Driver License (EDL), and it is for U.S. citizens only. Green card and visa holders get a standard license, marked "Federal limits apply."

Step by step

- 1 **Book an appointment.** DOL driver licensing offices do not take walk-ins.

- 2 Gather original documents.** Photocopies, scans and photos are not accepted. One of four combinations works: a single stand-alone document, two List A documents, one List A plus two List B, or four List B documents (one showing name and date of birth). See the table below.
- 3 Give your SSN or sign the declaration.** DOL verifies the number with the Social Security Administration. For a commercial license (CDL) you need an SSN and citizenship or permanent residence.
- 4 Take the knowledge test.** 40 multiple-choice questions, 32 correct to pass, and the pass is good for 2 years. Remember to request an interpreter five business days ahead.
- 5 Take the drive test.** You need 80 out of 100, and the pass is good for 1 year. At 18 and over, no learner permit or driving school is required. Bring a vehicle with valid registration, tabs, plates and insurance; a rental is accepted. Without proof of liability insurance for that car you will not be tested.
- 6 Wait for the card.** The temporary license is valid 45 days and the permanent card arrives by mail in 7 to 10 days. If it has not come within 30 days, call DOL at 360-902-3900. The paper temporary license is not accepted as ID.

Which document is on which list?

LIST	WHAT WORKS FOR SOMEONE COMING FROM TÜRKIYE
Stand-alone	U.S. passport or passport card, green card, employment authorization (I-766), Re-entry Permit (I-327), Refugee Travel Document (I-571), Border Crossing Card, a current U.S. state license or ID (or expired up to 1 year), a citizenship certificate with photo and signature, military ID
List A	A U.S. visa; a foreign passport with an I-94, an I-551 ADIT stamp or a temporary I-551; a U.S. state ID or license expired up to 6 years
List B	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 driving record from another state (30 days)

Consular and voter IDs are accepted only for El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico and Peru, so a Turkish consular ID is not on the list. The easiest route is a foreign passport with a U.S. visa and an I-94. A Turkish license counts only as a supporting List B document.

Fees (2026)

ITEM	FEE
First license (\$50 application + \$10 per year + \$1 technology)	\$111 (6 years) / \$131 (8 years)
Learner permit (1 year)	\$35 (renewal \$25, replacement \$20)
License renewal	\$61 (6 years) / \$81 (8 years); +\$10 if more than 60 days late
Standard ID card	\$61 (6 years) / \$81 (8 years)
Replacement card or name or address change	\$20

ITEM	FEE
Knowledge and drive tests	Varies by where you test; ask the school or office

Offices take cash, check and, at most locations, cards, with a vendor fee on cards. Online transactions carry a 3 percent card fee. You choose 6 or 8 years for the license term.

Driving on a Turkish license

- **As a visitor:** DOL says visitors holding a valid license from a country not on the list may drive for up to 1 year.
- **Once you are a resident:** you have 30 days. A Washington address, voter registration, state benefits, in-state tuition and licenses issued in the state all signal residency.
- **Coming from another U.S. state:** the tests are waived, but you still switch to a Washington license within 30 days.

REAL ID and flying

A STANDARD WASHINGTON LICENSE AND DOMESTIC FLIGHTS

Since May 7, 2025, a card marked "Federal limits apply" does not board a domestic flight. Carry your foreign passport, green card or employment authorization (I-766) when you fly. You do not need REAL ID to drive, show ID inside the state, ride a train, apply for federal benefits or get health care. An EDL cannot be had with a green card or work visa.

DOL offices (Seattle area)

OFFICE	ADDRESS · PHONE
Seattle-Queen Anne	450 3rd Ave W, Suite 100 · 206-464-6845
West Seattle	2420 SW Dakota St · 206-764-4144
Shoreline	15809 Westminster Way N
Tukwila	200 Andover Park E, Suite 3
Kent	25410 74th Ave S
Redmond	7225 170th Ave NE
Federal Way	1617 S 324th St

DOL customer line 360-902-3900. Hours change often, so confirm when you book. 2026 closures: November 11, November 26-27, December 25.

Common mistakes

- Going to register the car before you have the license; the order is license, then registration.
- Bringing photocopies; only original documents are accepted.
- Showing up without waiting the five business days for an interpreter.
- Treating the standard card as ID for a domestic flight; carry your passport or green card.
- Accepting the voter registration offer at DOL when you are not a citizen.



TURKISH-SPEAKING IMMIGRATION ATTORNEY IN WASHINGTON

Have a question about your immigration status?

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