

Identity Documents for Washington Drivers' Licenses

Sometimes there's confusion in the community regarding the type of documents you need to obtain a driver's license. This publication explains the law about identification documents that you'll need in Washington State.

We also have a publication about how to prove residency in Washington if you don't have a Social Security number. Read [*How Do I Apply for a Drivers License if I Don't Have a Social Security Number*](#) for more information.

When you go to the Department of Licensing to obtain your license or identification card, you should take documents that prove your identity. The Department has three ways to prove your identity.

First, there are documents that the department has to accept, if you have them. These documents are:

- an old driver's license or identification card from this state;
- an old driver's license or identification card from another state;
- a U.S. military identification card;
- a U.S. passport with your photo and signature;
- a U.S. immigration form with your photo and signature;
- a U.S. or state government employee identification card.

Do I have to have immigration documents to obtain a driver's license?

No. You can prove your identity by using other documents. You can use a combination of particular documents that include one document that lists your name and date of birth, and is either a foreign passport, certain native American tribe's enrollment documents or Bureau of Indian Affairs documents, verification letters from some specified correctional authorities or certain Washington city or county police employee ID cards, and two additional documents that include your name and signature.

If you don't have any of these documents, you must take at least five documents that have your photo, signature, address and/or date of birth. One document must have your name and date of birth.

The most common examples of documents that the department will accept include certified birth certificates, certain court papers, foreign passports or driver's licenses, and refugee relief placement packets. A second document must have your name and signature. Common examples include library, bank, credit and bus pass cards, the Mexican matriculate consular, medical coupons, cancelled checks or rent agreements. The other three documents that you present must be from a particular list approved by the department. This list is at <http://www.dol.wa.gov/driverslicense/idproof.html>.

If the Department of Licensing doesn't accept this identification, you can do one of the following:

1. If you only need a driver's license, you can obtain a license that is "not valid as identification." With this license, it's legal to drive, but you can't use it for identification.
2. If you need an identification and a driver's license, ask to have a supervisor in the office review your documents to see if they're sufficient to establish your identity. If they still deny you a license or identification card, you can write a letter to the director of the Department of Licensing.
3. The law requires that you give your Social Security number to the Department of Licensing. If you don't have a Social Security number, see our publication titled [How Do I Apply for a Drivers License if I Don't Have a Social Security Number](#) for more information on what to do.

If you have questions about how to obtain your license or identification card, call:

CLEAR: 1-888-201-1014 weekdays from 9:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

(to speak with an attorney or legal assistant and receive advice and/or referral for more assistance); or contact one of our local offices:

NORTHWEST JUSTICE PROJECT

Wenatchee: 1-888-201-1021

Yakima: 1-888-201-1018

COLUMBIA LEGAL SERVICES

Wenatchee: 1-800-572-9615

Kennewick: 1-888-201-9735

Yakima: 1-800-631-1323