

# What you need to know about driver license/ID changes

## What is changing?

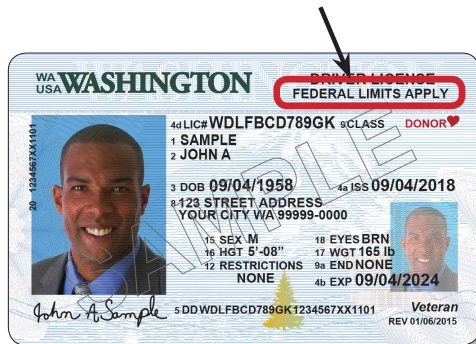
Beginning in 2018, there will be two major changes to standard driver licenses and IDs.

- **Federal marking:** Starting July 1, 2018, all standard non-enhanced cards will be marked with **FEDERAL LIMITS APPLY**.
- **Driver license/ID numbers:** All cards issued after September 4, 2018, will have **WDL** as the first three characters. This includes driver licenses (standard and enhanced), identification cards, and commercial driver licenses.

## Federal marking

Standard identification documents for all Washington residents issued after July 1, 2018, will be marked with **FEDERAL LIMITS APPLY**. This indicates that the document is not valid for federal purposes. The marking is the same regardless of your citizenship status and your ability to drive within the U.S. is not affected.

*No one is required to get an enhanced driver license or ID at this time. The Department of Licensing will continue to issue standard driver licenses and IDs.*

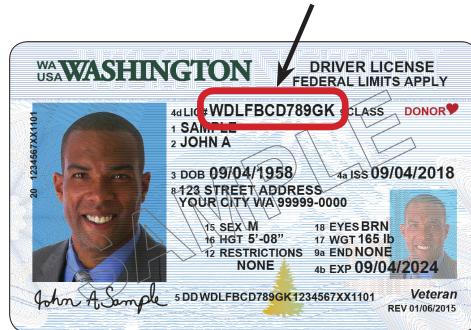


Washington residents that have a standard identification document will still have access to federal courts, Social Security offices, health care facilities, national parks and areas of federal facilities that do not require ID to access.

Starting in October 2020, standard Washington state driver licenses and ID cards will no longer be accepted as a standalone identity document for many federal purposes, including commercial air travel. There are many types of federally accepted identity documents that can be used under REAL ID, with the Washington state enhanced driver licenses and enhanced ID cards being the state-issued option. Adding **FEDERAL LIMITS APPLY** to our licenses will help Washington comply with REAL ID.

## Driver license/ID numbers

Starting September 4, 2018, newly-issued driver licenses and ID cards will receive a new number. They will start with the letters 'WDL' followed by a randomly selected series of alphabetical letters and numbers. This is how you'll recognize that it is in the new format. We chose WDL because no one currently has that series of letters as the first three letters of their license.



- The DRIVES system supports the ability to search for a customer by either the old number or the new number.
- Each of the 12 characters (alphabetical characters or numbers) will have the same characteristics as they do with the current format.
  - For example, the first seven characters of the current driver license numbers are alphabetical. The new numbers will also start with seven alphabetical characters. The same holds true for numbers—all numbers in the current license number format will remain numbers in the new format.
  - Certain letters and characters won't be used, including:
    - Special characters that are not standard letters or numbers (e.g., \*, etc.)
    - Vowels (A, E, I, O and U)
    - The letters Q and V
    - Elimination of these letters reduces both confusion (e.g., between a zero and the alpha character O) and the potential creation of unacceptable words.

## Why change?

The new driver license number format is more sustainable. We are running out of possible letter and number combinations using the old format. The new, randomly

generated numbers gives us billions of possible combinations so we will not run out in the near future. Additionally, this means a customer can maintain their license number even after a name or credential change.

- It is more secure because it does not use protected personal information. The randomly generated number will not relate to an individual's name or birthdate.

## When will this change happen?

We will implement the new driver license numbers when we launch our new driver system called DRIVES on September 4, 2018.

## How will we make the change happen?

After September 4, every person receiving a new card for the first time in Washington will receive one with the new format.

People who already have a license or ID will get the new number at their next issuance event after September 4—when they renew their license, or replace it for some reason.

## How long will it take to make the change?

It will take six years after September 2018. Conversion will happen gradually as DOL issues first-time licenses, and as we issue renewals and replacements. **This means we'll have both driver license number formats in circulation until 2024.**

This long rollout will make it easier for customers and DOL to get used to the change.

## How will we notify business partners of this change?

We are in the process of sending formal communication about this change and will continue through August.

We will update our external website to inform business partners and customers of this changes. We will also provide brochures to our Licensing Service Offices to give customers more details about the change.

*If you have any questions about the new numbering format, please email [drivesr2questions@dol.wa.gov](mailto:drivesr2questions@dol.wa.gov)*