



**DOL Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**  
**About Gender Marker designations name changes on identity documents, and**  
**Identity protections for LGBTQIA2S+ Washingtonians**

**August 1, 2025**

1	<b>Q</b>	<b>Can I change my gender on my Washington state driver license or identification card?</b>
	<b>A</b>	<b>Yes!</b> Washingtonians can change their gender marker on their state-issued identification cards (ID) or driver licenses (DL), including enhanced IDs and DLs.
2	<b>Q</b>	<b>What gender designations are available, and what can I change my designation to?</b>
	<b>A</b>	Washington state offers three gender options: female [F], male [M], and gender x [X]. You may change between any of the three designations.
3	<b>Q</b>	<b>Will other states recognize my gender x designation?</b>
	<b>A</b>	Some states may allow individuals to identify as female [F], male [M], or x [X] Washington is one of 22 states and the District of Columbia that allow people to choose gender x [X] or either female or male on their driver license or identification card. This <a href="#">Identity Document Laws and Policies</a> <sup>1</sup> website shows which states allow gender x. <a href="#">Through the Driver License Compact, (DLC)</a> , an agreement between states in the USA, if your Washington state license is current and valid (not suspended or expired) you are legally able to drive in all other states regardless of gender marker.
4	<b>Q</b>	<b>What happens if the gender marker on my Washington identity documents, such as a state driver license, does not match my federal documents, such as a passport?</b>
	<b>A</b>	In Washington state, there is no legal obligation to have consistent gender markers on various documents, and you should obtain the gender marker on each document that is most comfortable for you.  However, different gender markers on documents <b><i>may cause administrative confusion if you show them at the same time, or if there is a discrepancy between the gender marker on your ID and the marker in your official record.</i></b> Although a conversation with an agent <b><i>may</i></b> result in acceptance of inconsistent documents, there is a chance that not <b><i>all</i></b> agents in <b><i>all</i></b> states will accept documents with inconsistent gender markers.
5	<b>Q</b>	<b>How do I change my gender marker on my Washington ID or DL?</b>
	<b>A</b>	It is a very simple process explained on our <a href="#">update gender designation</a> page at <a href="http://www.dol.wa.gov">www.dol.wa.gov</a> . You can also fill out the change of gender designation form and take it to a local driver license office (DLO) or mail it to:  <b>Programs and Services, Record Response</b> <b>Department of Licensing</b> <b>PO Box 9030</b> <b>Olympia WA 98507-9030</b>
6	<b>Q</b>	<b>Do I have to have a letter from a doctor or behavioral health provider saying that I qualify for changing my gender designation?</b>
	<b>A</b>	<b>No!</b> DOL recognizes that people know their gender and should not have to provide proof to change their designation.

7	<b>Q</b>	<b>Am I protected from discrimination based on my gender identity and expression and the designation of gender x [X] on my identity documents?</b>
	<b>A</b>	<p>In Washington state, yes. The <a href="#">Washington Law Against Discrimination</a> protects Washingtonians from discrimination based on sexual orientation, which includes gender identity and expression. More information is available in this <a href="#">SOGI Guide</a>.</p> <p><i><b>There is currently NO Federal law that prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity, and many states exclude these protections. Check this site for <a href="#">states with protections</a>.</b></i> <sup>ii</sup></p>
8	<b>Q</b>	<b>Will my updated gender designation be recognized based on the new Federal Executive Order 14168?</b>
	<b>A</b>	<p>The executive order very clearly requires that federal agencies utilize only the F/M binary sex designations and removes all self-determination for gender identity and expression. Federal documents such as passports must display a person's sex assigned at birth.</p> <p>Passports and other identity documents showing gender x [X] will be accepted until they are up for renewal. All new passports must show a person's sex assigned at birth.</p>
9	<b>Q</b>	<b>Can I change my name on my state identity documents?</b>
	<b>A</b>	<p>Yes, but it is a little more complicated. Since your state issued ID or DL is an identity document, the name displayed must be your legal name and must match the name on your social security card.</p> <p>To complete a name change, you should:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Familiarize yourself with <a href="#">the law</a></li> <li>2. Read <a href="#">Name Changes in Washington Courts</a></li> <li>3. Find out <a href="#">which court</a> you need to petition</li> <li>4. File a petition in the district court</li> <li>5. Pay the filing fee, the cost varies by court</li> <li>6. Attend the hearing</li> <li>7. Apply for a new Social Security card with your name change <a href="https://www.ssa.gov/personal-record/change-name">https://www.ssa.gov/personal-record/change-name</a></li> </ol>
10	<b>Q</b>	<b>Once my name change is granted, can I have the record of my name change sealed?</b>
	<b>A</b>	<p>Yes. There are several steps to have a name change sealed that involve both the courts and the Department of Licensing.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Petition for and obtain a Sealed Name Change (SNC) order through a WA Superior Court. You can get help and find forms at <a href="https://www.washingtonlawhelp.org/name-change-guide#chapter-8">https://www.washingtonlawhelp.org/name-change-guide#chapter-8</a></li> <li>2. Contact the DOL <b>Identity Management Team (IMT)</b> at 360-902-3915, directly. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Our call center and Driver Licensing Offices (DLOs) can also help connect you to the IMT. Call 360-902-3900 to reach our contact center.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

		<p>3. IMT will reach out to you to explain the process, answer any questions, and get the following information to help build the new record:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b. Your former and current name and date of birth.</li> <li>c. Note that <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. If you are applying for a DL or ID and have not changed your name or obtained a new SSN, IMT will direct you to the Social Security Administration first.</li> </ul> </li> <li>d. Your physical description.</li> <li>e. Your residential and/or mailing address(es). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Note: if you plan to use the Address Confidentiality Program (ACP) because of past domestic violence or other risk factors and are not yet enrolled, you will have to reach out to the <a href="#">Secretary of State's Office</a>. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. If you are already enrolled in the ACP program, you will need to provide a copy of the front and back of your ACP card to the IMT staff.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>f. Your phone number.</li> <li>g. A copy of the sealed name change court order. You will not be asked to explain why you are seeking to have your record sealed, and the copy of the order you provide to DOL will be destroyed.</li> <li>h. Information on credentials and traffic sanctions/suspensions outside of Washington.</li> <li>i. Preferred office location times for an in-person appointment.</li> </ul> <p>4. You will need to pay all fees associated with an original driver license or ID card.</p> <p>5. The <b>Customer Relations Division Training and Policy Unit</b> will set up an appointment for you at your preferred Driver Licensing Office (DLO).</p> <p>6. IMT will contact you to confirm the DLO appointment, they will give you instructions about what to do before and after you get your new license or ID and answer any questions. They will also provide you with a phone number to call after you get your new license or ID or if any issues come up.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. IMT will ask you to let them know if you come in for a renewal or a replacement to make sure our Facial Recognition System (FRS) recognizes your face connected to your new name.</li> </ul> <p>7. After you get your new license or ID, our staff will make sure that your old record is placed on hold and that there is no information about your sealed identity attached to your new license or ID.</p> <p>8. Our staff will check our facial recognition records to ensure that your recognized image is linked to your new identity information.</p>
11	<b>Q</b>	<b>How long will it take to have my name change records sealed?</b>
	<b>A</b>	The court timeline varies but for most people it is between 30 and 90 days. Once you have your court order, if your paperwork is complete, the Identity Management Team

		<p>can usually complete their work within 1-2 business days; however, the entire duration varies based upon several factors such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you have lived in multiple states and have driver records in multiple locations.</li> <li>• If you have a history of driving infractions.</li> <li>• If there are other legal issues such as child support orders.</li> <li>• Backlogs in the courts where your petition for a legal name change has been submitted.</li> </ul>
12	<b>Q</b>	<b>Are there other situations I need to consider once I have completed my sealed name change process?</b>
	<b>A</b>	<p>Yes, a sealed name change may not remove all indications of your previous name including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Owning a vehicle under your former name.</li> <li>• You are seeking an Enhanced Driver License (EDL) or an Enhanced ID (EID) to meet federal REAL ID requirements.</li> <li>• Holding a disabled license plate or placard under your former name.</li> </ul> <p>You should address these issues with the Department of Licensing to avoid compromising your sealed name change.</p>
13	<b>Q</b>	<b>What happens if someone submits a public records request for sealed name changes?</b>
	<b>A</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>We recognize the importance of safeguarding our customers' private information.</b> Several laws protect driver and vehicle owner's personal information.</li> <li>• For drivers who apply for a new Washington State Driver License or identification card after a name change done under court seal, we do not retain a copy of the sealed name change court order. Once your sealed name change is finalized, there is nothing else on your record that shows there was change.</li> </ul>

If you have any questions regarding name or gender marker changes including those changed under a sealed court order, please contact our Identity Management Team at: 360-902-3915

If you have questions regarding public disclosure, please contact: [PublicRecords@dol.wa.gov](mailto:PublicRecords@dol.wa.gov) or call 360-902-7150

For questions related to DOL's commitment to equity, inclusion, accessibility, civil rights, or language access, please e-mail: [DOLEquityandInclusion@DOL.WA.GOV](mailto:DOLEquityandInclusion@DOL.WA.GOV)

For general inquiries about the Department of Licensing or any of our services, please call: 360-902-3900

***DOL - Helping every Washington resident live, work, drive, and thrive***

<sup>i</sup> The Movement Advancement Project (MAP), founded in 2006, is a private non-profit thinktank that provides research-based data mapping on democracy and equity-related policies. The Department of Licensing has no affiliation with the Movement Advancement Project. DOL encourages readers to look carefully at each state's laws and policies pages found by clicking on any state in the interactive U.S. map provided by MAP.

<sup>ii</sup> See citation i above.