Oregon Driver Licenses

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Roughly 3.3 million people are licensed to operate vehicles in Oregon. The state agency responsible for licensing drivers is the Driver and Motor Vehicle (DMV) Services Division of the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT).

DMV reports that it serves approximately 9,500 customers daily at 58 local offices (see figure 1) and five dealer service centers, and answers over one million customer phone calls annually. In 2025, about 164,000 new driver licenses were issued in Oregon, and an additional 271,000 licenses were renewed.

DMV offers many of its services and documents online through its DMV2U portal, allowing users to access services at any time, including weekends.[1] Still, numerous services that can only be completed in person, such as applications for a first-time REAL ID license and on-road driving tests.

Getting a Driver License

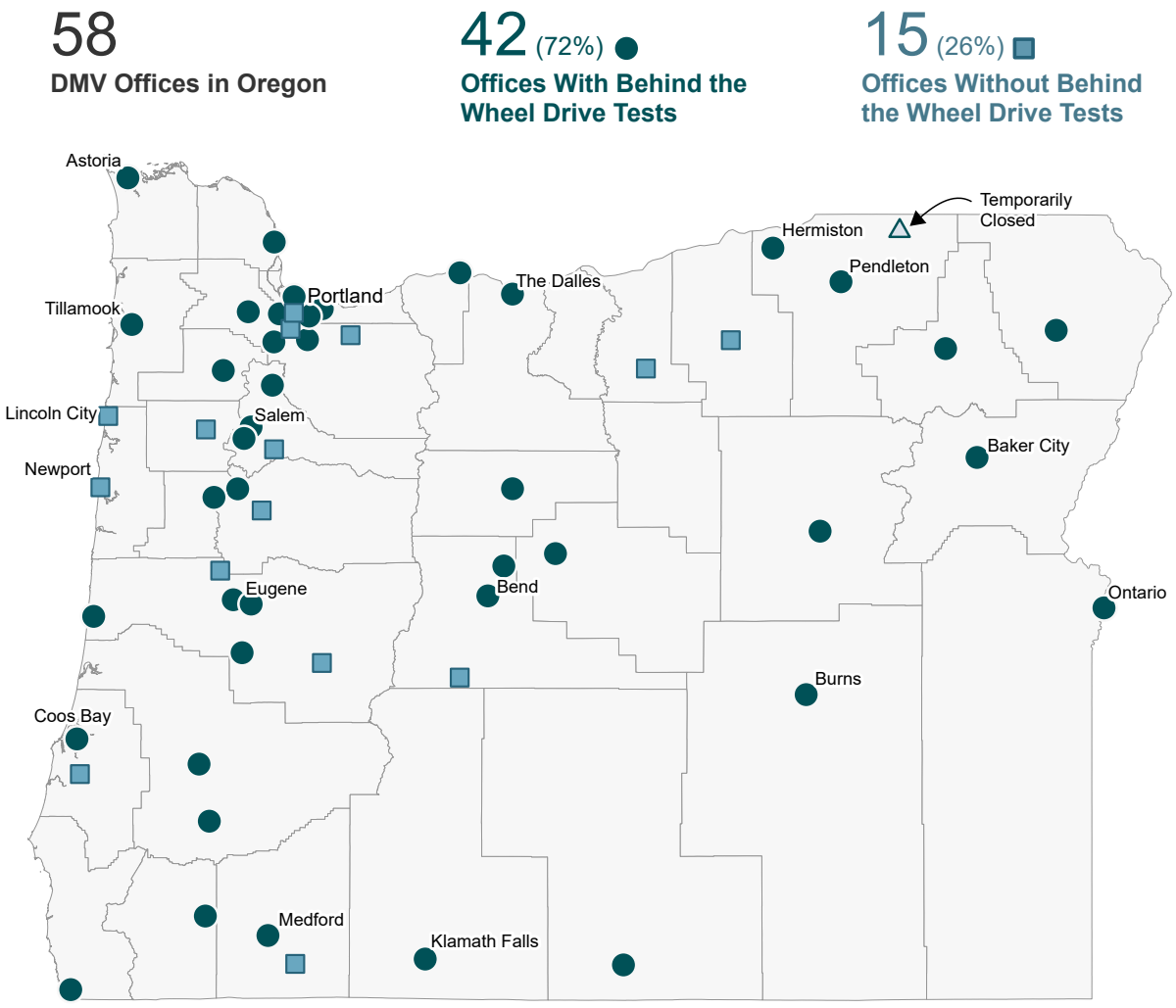
Oregon offers several types of licenses. Like most states, it has a graduated licensing system that allows younger drivers to progress through a series of restricted permits or licenses to gain experience before qualifying for a full license. Most licenses are valid for eight years. To renew a license, applicants complete an application, provide proof of physical address and identity, take a new photograph, pass a vision test if they are age 50 or older, and pay the renewal fee. Many license holders can renew online every other renewal cycle.

Class C Instruction Permit

The first level of driving privilege is the Class C instruction permit, which allows a driver who is at least 15 years old to operate vehicles with restrictions. Most notably, the driver must be accompanied by a licensed driver who is at least 21 years old. To qualify for the permit, applicants must pass a knowledge and vision test and, if under age 18, provide a parent's or legal guardian's signature certifying school enrollment or prove high school graduation or receipt of a GED. Instruction permits are valid for 24 months.

[1] Oregon Department of Transportation, "DMV2U," accessed June 9, 2026, https://dmv2u.oregon.gov/eServices/_/.

Figure 1. DMV Locations in Oregon



Source: Legislative Policy and Research Office.
Data: Oregon Department of Transportation, "Services at Oregon DMV Offices," accessed April 24, 2026, https://www.oregon.gov/odot/DMV/docs/Oregon_DMV_Offices_Checklist.pdf.

Class C Provisional License

The second level of driving privilege is the Class C provisional license issued to drivers ages 16 and 17. To qualify, teens must have held an instruction permit for at least six months. They must also have completed an ODOT-approved driver education course and at least 50 hours of supervised driving experience, or completed at least 100 hours of supervised driving. If the applicant passed an ODOT-approved driver education course that included a drive test, the DMV drive test is waived. If they did not take or did not pass the course, the applicant must pass the DMV driving test.

A driver with a provisional license is subject to the following restrictions for the first year or until age 18, whichever is first:

- The first year: No driving between midnight and 5:00 am except for work or school activities or if accompanied by a licensed driver at least 25 years old
- The first six months: No passengers under age 20 other than immediate family members
- The second six months: No more than three passengers under age 20, not including immediate family members

Standard Class C License

Individuals age 18 and older may qualify for a standard Class C license or a REAL ID Class C license. Both versions allow for the lawful operation of most vehicles under 26,000 pounds, as well as recreational vehicles, fire and emergency vehicles, and towing other vehicles and trailers within weight limits.

To initially obtain a license, applicants complete a process that includes furnishing proof of date of birth, identity, and Oregon residency, as well as a valid Social Security number (SSN) or a statement that they have never been issued an SSN; passing the required knowledge, driving, and vision tests; and paying fees. People already licensed by another jurisdiction are generally exempted from the written and practical tests, provided their most recent license is still in effect or expired less than two years ago. Applicants seeking a REAL ID must meet additional requirements to demonstrate proof of lawful status in the United States; see the "REAL IDs" section below.

Endorsements

Some vehicles require an endorsement in addition to a Class C license to legally operate. An unrestricted motorcycle endorsement requires successful completion of an approved rider education course. Three-wheel restricted motorcycle endorsements do not require training or skills testing; knowledge testing is conducted by DMV.

A farm endorsement allows operation of farmer-controlled or operated vehicles, within certain limitations, that would otherwise require a commercial driver license (CDL).

Commercial Driver Licenses

A CDL is generally required to operate commercial motor vehicles (CMVs)—primarily vehicles over 26,000 pounds. Exceptions exist for recreational vehicles, some farm vehicles, and emergency vehicles operated by emergency personnel. Only those 18 and older qualify for a CDL, and only those 21 and older may operate a CMV in interstate commerce. Applicants must meet all qualifications for a standard driver license and pass the CDL knowledge and skills tests in English. They must also remain certified medically to maintain their commercial driving privileges. Most CDLs are issued for eight years, but a driver's medical certification must be updated at least every two years.

There are three different CDL classes:

1. **Class A CDL:** Operate any vehicle or combination of vehicles
2. **Class B CDL:** Operate any single vehicle and tow trailers of 10,000 pounds or less
3. **Class C CDL:** Operate a vehicle less than 26,001 pounds that is designed to carry 16 or more people (including the driver) or is carrying hazardous materials

DMV may issue a Commercial Learner Permit (CLP) to authorize a person age 18 or older to operate a CMV, with a properly licensed driver in the adjacent seat.

Endorsements may be required in addition to a CDL if the applicant expects to operate certain classes of vehicles—such as a school bus, commercial passenger vehicle, tank vehicle, or a double/triple trailer—or to transport hazardous materials.

Commercial driver licensing, though handled by the states, is heavily regulated by the federal government as a regulation of interstate commerce. If Oregon failed to comply with the federal CDL program,[2] it could lose federal highway funds or face decertification, which would prevent DMV from issuing CDLs. Federal regulations place requirements on CDL drivers and their employers. They are amended frequently, and state regulations are updated accordingly. For instance, Oregon statutes allowed for a Limited Term commercial credential program for people legally in the United States for a limited time. Recent changes to federal regulations have significantly changed the types of immigration statuses that qualify, prompting ODOT to phase out the program.

[2] Federal Motor Carrier Security Administration, "Commercial Driver's License Program," accessed June 5, 2026, https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/cdl.

REAL IDs

The federal REAL ID Act of 2005 prescribed minimum standards for state-issued driver licenses and ID cards for them to be acceptable identification for federal purposes, such as boarding airplanes and entering federal buildings. The program is overseen at the national level by the Department of Homeland Security and is administered at the local level by state DMVs. After a series of delays, enforcement began in May 2025. This means that, among other effects, anyone passing through a U.S. airport checkpoint must show a REAL ID or other valid identification, such as a passport or permanent resident card.[3]

First-time applicants for REAL IDs in Oregon must apply in person and provide proof of legal presence in the United States and a verifiable SSN (or proof of being ineligible for a SSN). Proof of legal presence is required in the form of a U.S. birth certificate, U.S. passport, tribal identification document, or certain immigration documents. The applicant's SSN is verified by DMV through the federal Social Security Number Verification System. Individuals who are not citizens can provide documentation that they are legally present in the United States, for example, through a student or work visa, but they are eligible only to receive a limited-term credential that expires on the end date of their legal stay. There is a $30 fee for issuing, renewing, or replacing a REAL ID.

For applicants who do not provide proof of legal presence in the United States, whether by choice or because they cannot provide it, DMV issues non-commercial driver licenses or ID cards.

DMV reports that approximately 53 percent of the credentials issued between July 2020, when the program began, and May 2026 were REAL IDs, and approximately 49 percent of current cardholders have been issued a REAL ID.

While an Oregon REAL ID meets all federal requirements, some states go further. For example, five states (Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Vermont, and Washington) issue what are called Enhanced Drivers Licenses (EDLs), which meet all of the specifications for the REAL ID, but also include confirmation printed on the ID itself that the person is a U.S. citizen and contain a Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) chip to aid U.S. Customs and Border Protection. EDLs can be used at border crossings with Mexico and Canada and when traveling from some areas in the Caribbean.[4]

[3] Transportation Security Administration, "Acceptable Identification at the TSA Checkpoint," accessed June 2, 2026, https://www.tsa.gov/travel/security-screening/identification.
[4] Department of Homeland Security, "Enhanced Drivers Licenses: What Are They?," April 27, 2023, https://www.dhs.gov/enhanced-drivers-licenses-what-are-they.

Suspension and Revocation

Driving privileges may be suspended or revoked by a court or administratively by DMV for many reasons. Driving-related offenses that can result in suspension include convictions for driving under the influence of intoxicants (DUII), egregious speeding, and multiple moving violations in a short period of time. Some suspensions are not related to driving, such as failing to appear in court or to pay child support.

A person whose license has been suspended may qualify for a hardship permit depending on the reason for the suspension. A hardship permit authorizes driving for various purposes, including work, medical treatment, substance abuse treatment, or other reasons. No hardship permit is available that will allow the operation of a CMV.

DMV has historically suspended or revoked the licenses of around 200,000 drivers each year. The process begins when DMV mails a notice to a driver about a suspension or revocation, providing an opportunity to correct the problem or ask for a hearing. Some drivers may not receive the notice due to failure to update their addresses with DMV, or they may not read the notice they do receive. Some individuals continue driving while suspended. Nationally, estimates of suspended drivers who continue to drive are as high as 75 percent.[5]

Medical Reporting

Nearly every state operates a program to identify drivers who may not be able to drive safely. For older drivers, some states have different renewal periods, require additional vision screenings, or require in-person license renewals. While mandatory retesting for older drivers is uncommon, a few states require driver tests for those older than age 75. Some states suspend driving privileges when individuals are diagnosed with specific medical conditions.

Oregon's At-Risk Driver Program relies on reporting from medical professionals and others to identify people who may need to stop driving.[6] Oregon's law focuses on cognitive and functional impairments that impact driving, rather than age or diagnosis, to identify drivers who should enter the program. There are three reporting types (see table 1).

[5] American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators, "Suspended Future," *MOVE Magazine* 2019, no. 1 (March 2019): https://movemag.org/suspended-future/.
[6] Oregon Department of Transportation, "At-Risk Driver Program for Medical Professionals," accessed June 5, 2026, https://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/DMV/pages/at-risk_program_index.aspx.

Table 1. Components of Oregon's Medically At-Risk Program

Reporting Type	Description
Mandatory Reporting	Primary care providers are required to notify DMV of patients who have "severe and uncontrollable" conditions that affect safe driving.
Voluntary Reporting	Medical professionals, law enforcement, family members, and others may submit an online reporting request to DMV.
Self-Reporting	An individual may choose to relinquish their license and receive a free identification card.

Source: Legislative Policy and Research Office.
Data: Oregon Department of Transportation.

Valid reports under the mandatory program usually result in an immediate suspension. Most people whose licenses are suspended in this way do not regain driving privileges. Those reported under the voluntary program are often required to visit DMV for retesting. Fewer than one-third result in immediate suspension, and most retain or later regain privileges. Under either program, the person may submit additional medical information and request a hearing. DMV employs doctors to review this medical information to determine whether the driver's ability to drive safely is affected by cognitive or functional impairments. Medical providers have civil immunity for reporting, or not reporting, their patients.

Personal Data

DMV securely maintains driver and vehicle records. Most of these are considered public records and can be obtained by submitting a request and paying a fee. However, certain personally identifiable information is protected and only released to the individual whose data it is or to qualified entities, such as law enforcement, parole officers, insurance companies, attorneys, and businesses that verify or correct customer information. DMV responds to approximately 6.5 million requests for records annually.

Under a law enacted in 2005 by the Legislative Assembly, DMV performs biometric checks to help determine whether an applicant has had their identity stolen, has fraudulently applied for a license in the past, or has been issued a license under a different name.

To do this, DMV compares the photo of each applicant for a new, renewal, or replacement license or ID card with the last photo of that person in the DMV database to confirm it is the same person. This "one-to-one" check is performed at the counter when the photo is taken. Overnight, the new photo is compared to all other photos in DMV's database. This "one-to-many" check confirms that the applicant does not have a license issued under a different name. To accommodate the overnight process and for other security purposes, DMV issues all licenses from a central processing center.

Applicants are given a paper temporary license when leaving a DMV office; the plastic card is mailed within a few days.

Other DMV Duties Associated With Licensing

During the process of issuing or renewing a license or ID card, federal and state laws require DMV to administer several other programs: Applicants can identify themselves as potential organ donors. Veterans may have their veteran status indicated on their license or ID card and may authorize DMV to provide contact information to the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs for benefits coordination. Applicants can also identify themselves as deaf or hard of hearing on their license or ID card.

New Motor Voter

State and federal laws require DMV to offer voter registration during the issuance of a license, permit, or ID card.

In 2002, after Congress passed the Help America Vote Act, Oregon DMV began electronically exchanging limited customer information with the Oregon Secretary of State to facilitate voter registration. In 2015, House Bill 2177 (referred to as "New Motor Voter") changed the process by which DMV offers voter registration. DMV now automatically sends qualifying customers' information to the Secretary of State, which then sends a mailer that provides an opportunity for the customer to opt out of registration or, if desired, choose a political party.

In 2024, DMV conducted a review of information sent to the Secretary of State Elections Division through the New Motor Voter system. Findings concluded that clerical errors had resulted in just over 1,900 applicants who had not submitted proof of U.S. citizenship being mistakenly registered to vote. While all of these individuals had their voter status inactivated, 42 had cast ballots in at least one election. Forty of those cases have been closed, with the other two still pending with the Secretary of State.[7]

DMV Challenges

DMV faces increased competition for workers from the public and private sectors, which, combined with rising labor costs, has resulted in occasional understaffing at DMV field offices. Scheduling for in-person services, such as on-road driving tests, can take weeks or months, to the point that some customers take their drive tests through third-party businesses or travel long distances to rural DMV field offices. Combined with low staffing levels due to illness or other issues that occasionally close rural DMV

[7] Oregon Secretary of State, "DMV Automatic Voter Registration Error," May 4, 2026, https://sos.oregon.gov/elections/Pages/DMV-Automatic-Voter-Registration-Error.aspx.

offices for a day, this continues to place additional strain on DMV field offices. The Legislative Assembly aimed to address this through Senate Bill 9 (2025), which requires DMV to prioritize local residents in scheduling driver testing.[8]

Separately, in 2019, the Legislative Assembly provided funding for the ODOT/DMV Service Transformation Program, investing $90 million in a new computer system to replace DMV's outdated systems. The system went live in July 2020.

Recent Driver License–Related Legislation in Oregon

In recent years, the Oregon Legislative Assembly has passed several bills related to driver licenses:

- **House Bill 2137 (2021):** It exempts people whose valid driver license from another jurisdiction expired less than a year before from the written driver test requirement. It also allows non-limited term license renewals within two years of expiration instead of one year.
- **House Bill 3055 (2021):** It requires mandatory classroom instruction for CDL training and exempts applicants for a motorcycle endorsement who hold an out-of-state endorsement from motorcycle education course requirements.
- **House Bill 3080 (2021):** It allows financial institutions to swipe a driver license or ID card to collect information while processing an application.
- **House Bill 3125 (2021):** It directs ODOT to create an emergency contact form and make it available on an individual's DMV record.
- **Senate Bill 569 (2021):** It specifies that an employer may only require employees or applicants to provide a valid driver license if the ability to drive is an essential job function or related to a legitimate business interest.
- **House Bill 2099 (2023):** The omnibus bill clarifies ODOT's authority to issue temporary driver permits, modifies provisions for the permanent suspension of CDLs, and modifies the definition of "qualified provider" for driving tests.
- **House Bill 2922 (2025):** It allows park rangers to request that their driving record list their work address rather than their home address.
- **Senate Bill 9 (2025):** It directs DMV field offices to prioritize drive tests by applicants from that county who live within 50 miles of the office, or who reside in a county without a DMV field office.

[8] Senate Bill 9 (2025): https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2025r1/Measures/Overview/SB9.

- **Senate Bill 840 (2025):** The omnibus bill eliminates the one-month moratorium from retaking tests for those who fail an on-road test while holding an instruction permit; requires people whose license is revoked or cancelled to return the document to a DMV office; designates the act of false swearing on another person's driver application or who takes a test on behalf of another person as a Class A misdemeanor; clarifies the use of ignition interlocks for people with a hardship permit; and makes people whose CDL renewal is denied eligible for administrative review.
- **Senate Bill 1005 (2025):** It allows private entities to swipe a person's driver license or ID when providing age-restricted goods or services.
- **House Bill 4041 (2026):** The public safety omnibus bill reduces two categories of driving while suspended from a misdemeanor to a violation and increases the presumptive sentence for fleeing or attempting to elude a police officer in some cases.

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