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REAL ID Deadline Extended Again

After years of numerous delays, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security has once again extended the REAL ID enforcement deadline from May 3, 2023, until May 7, 2025.¹

What is a REAL ID?

A REAL ID is a type of enhanced identification card. The REAL ID Act, passed by Congress in 2005, set minimum security standards for state-issued driver's licenses and identification cards. Under the Act, residents of every state and territory are required to have a REAL ID-compliant license/identification card, or another acceptable form of identification (such as a passport), in order to:

- Access federal facilities
- Board federally regulated commercial aircraft
- Enter nuclear power plants

When traveling internationally, you will still need your passport for identification purposes, including travel to Canada or Mexico. If you are traveling domestically, you will only need to show your REAL ID or another acceptable alternative.

In order for a REAL ID license or identification card to be compliant, it must have a star marking on the upper portion of the card. Enhanced Driver's Licenses that are issued in Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Vermont and Washington do not have a star marking but are still acceptable alternatives to REAL ID-compliant cards and will be accepted for official REAL ID purposes.

How Do You Get a REAL ID?

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) oversees the enforcement and implementation of the REAL ID Act, but each state's driver's licensing agency has its own process for issuing REAL ID-compliant license/identification cards.

In order to obtain a REAL ID, you will need to provide documentation that shows your:

- Full legal name, date of birth, proof of lawful presence (e.g., U.S. passport, birth certificate)
- Social Security Number (Some states may not require physical documentation of your Social Security Number.)
- Two proofs of address of principal residence (e.g., driver's license, utility bill)

If you have a name change (e.g., marriage, divorce or court order), you will also need to bring in documentation that demonstrates proof of your name change. States may impose additional requirements, so be sure to contact your state's driver's licensing agency for more information.

1) U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2023

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