

REAL ID FAQs*

What is REAL ID?

Passed by Congress in 2005, the REAL ID Act enacted the 9/11 Commission's recommendation that the Federal Government "set standards for the issuance of sources of identification, such as driver's licenses." The Act established minimum security standards for state-issued driver's licenses and identification cards and prohibits Federal agencies from accepting for official purposes licenses and identification cards from states that do not meet these standards. These purposes are:

- Accessing Federal facilities
- Boarding federally regulated commercial aircraft
- Entering nuclear power plants

When will REAL ID be enforced?

The final enforcement deadline is October 1, 2020. By this date, not only must all states be issuing Real ID-compliant licenses or IDs, but individuals must also have visited their state's driver's licensing agency and obtained a REAL ID compliant card, or acceptable alternative such as a U.S. passport, if they wish to fly on commercial aircrafts or access federal facilities.

What happens on October 1, 2020?

Federal agencies, including DHS and TSA, may only accept state-issued driver's licenses and identification cards as identification for purposes of accessing federal facilities - including TSA airport security checkpoints - if the license or card was issued by a REAL ID compliant state in accordance with the REAL ID security standards (meaning the license or card must include the REAL ID compliant star marking). Enhanced Driver's Licenses (EDL) issued by Washington, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, and Vermont are considered acceptable alternatives to REAL ID-compliant cards and will also be accepted for official REAL ID purposes. Most EDLs do not contain the star marking and this is acceptable.

How do I get a REAL ID?

Visit your state's driver's licensing agency website to find out exactly what documentation is required to obtain a REAL ID. At a minimum, you must provide documentation showing: 1) Full Legal Name; 2) Date of Birth; 3) Social Security Number; 4) Two Proofs of Address of Principal Residence; and 5) Lawful Status.

States may impose additional requirements, so check with your state's driver's licensing agency website, before visiting them in person, for additional guidance and assistance.

How do I know if my license or identification card is REAL ID compliant?

REAL ID-compliant cards will have one of the following markings on the upper top portion of the card. If the card does not have one of these markings, it is not REAL ID-compliant and won't be accepted as proof of identity in order to board commercial aircraft.

When will I need to change how I travel domestically?

Beginning October 1, 2020, every state and territory resident will need to present a REAL ID compliant license/ID, or another acceptable form of identification, for accessing Federal facilities, entering nuclear power plants, and boarding commercial aircraft. The card, itself, must be REAL ID compliant unless the resident is using an alternative acceptable document such as a passport or passport card, or state-issued Enhanced Driver's License. The Act does not require individuals to present identification where it is not currently required to access a Federal facility (such as to enter the public areas of the Smithsonian) nor does it prohibit an agency from accepting other forms of identity documents (such as a U.S. passport or passport card).

Will minors need to have driver's licenses/ identification cards to fly domestically?

No. TSA does not require children under 18 to provide identification when traveling with a companion within the United States. The companion will need acceptable identification.

What happens to travelers who show up without a compliant license? Will TSA turn them away?

Travelers who do not present a REAL ID-compliant license or acceptable alternative beginning October 1, 2020 will not be permitted through the security checkpoint.

Is a passport my only other option?

No. TSA accepts several other forms of identity documents. For more information on acceptable forms of identification for boarding aircraft, please visit TSA's website at <https://www.tsa.gov/travel/security-screening/identification>.

Adult passengers 18 and over must show valid identification at the airport checkpoint in order to travel.

Real ID Driver's license

U.S. passport

U.S. passport card

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Can I use my REAL ID card to cross the border into Canada and Mexico and for international travel?

No. REAL ID cards cannot be used for border crossings into Canada, Mexico or other international travel.

Can I use my REAL ID for sea (cruise) travel?

No. REAL ID cards cannot be used for international sea cruise travel.

Do I need a passport if I have a REAL ID?

If you are traveling internationally you will still need your passport. If you are traveling domestically, you will only need one valid form of identification – either your REAL ID or another acceptable alternative such as a passport or passport card, not both.

For further information, please visit:

<https://www.dhs.gov/real-id-frequently-asked-questions>

*Information from Homeland Security