REAL ID dates and safety tips.



Have questions about the REAL ID? We have real answers.

To start, here's what REAL ID is and how it came to be. In 2005, the U.S. Transportation Security Administration (TSA) enacted the REAL ID law to enhance travel safety. The law has since protected air travel, airport security checkpoints and other federal facilities like nuclear power plants and military bases with improved security measures.

As part of the REAL ID regulations, you may have recently heard about REAL ID cards. Starting this fall, it will be helpful for you and your adult family members to apply for and obtain REAL IDs for domestic travel. But what are the cards? What can they do? And what safety tips do you need to keep in mind? We've gathered all of the answers for you.

Do I need a REAL ID for future travel?

Yes … and no. If you don't get your REAL ID, you'll need another qualifying federal document like a passport, Global Entry card, U.S. military ID or Enhanced ID when you travel domestically after October 1, 2021. Note: A driver's license will no longer be accepted for U.S. travel.

What's the ID deadline?

Mark your calendar, the enactment date for REAL ID is October 1, 2021. As of that date, individuals and families will either need to obtain REAL IDs or carry other accepted documentation when traveling domestically.

How can I apply?

You can apply for a REAL ID card at your state driver's license agency or local Department of Motor Vehicles. Here's what you'll need to bring:

- Your birth certificate or passport
- A Social Security card or tax form such as a W-2
- Two proofs of address
- If you've recently gotten married and changed your name, you'll also need to bring your marriage certificate.

What safety tips should I keep in mind?

- You can apply in person only. REAL IDs cannot be obtained online or by mail. If you receive messaging telling you otherwise, ignore these claims and never hand over important documentation. You must visit your local Department of Motor Vehicles to apply.
- REAL ID cards will be marked with a gold star at the top. Look for the marking on yours to ensure it's compliant before traveling. If you're unsure, contact your state driver's license agency.
- Mandates vary by state. Make sure to research yours so you're well versed in safety and steps. Explore your state's regulations here.

For even more peace of mind, talk to a local, independent agent about supplemental identity theft protection services offered by insurance companies.