

Published on *SeniorNavigator* (<https://seniornavigator.org>)

What is REAL ID?

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A REAL ID is an optional, upgraded version of your driver's license or ID card that has a star in the right corner.

Beginning May 7, 2025, the [federal government](#) will require you to present a REAL ID compliant driver's license or ID card, or another federally approved form of ID, in order to board a domestic flight or enter a secure federal facility or military base (some military bases may already require REAL ID or a federally approved form of ID*).

Since REAL ID is optional in Virginia, you may not need one if you already have another [federally accepted](#) form of ID, like a valid U.S. passport or military ID, or don't travel by plane. However, if you do want one, we encourage you to apply as soon as possible.

Standard License vs REAL ID License

| APPLICABLE USES | STANDARD LICENSE | REAL ID LICENSE |
|--|------------------|-----------------|
| Drive | Yes | Yes |
| Vote or register to vote | Yes | Yes |
| Verify your identity at banks, utility companies and retail stores | Yes | Yes |
| Apply for or receive federal benefits | Yes | Yes |
| Access health or life preserving services | Yes | Yes |
| Enter federal facilities requiring ID* | No | Yes |
| Access military bases* | No | Yes |
| Board domestic flights beginning May 7, 2025 | No | Yes |

* Secure federal facilities and military bases have the authority to set their own identification requirements. Please verify requirements prior to your visit. Effective immediately, some military bases may no longer accept non-REAL ID compliant credentials, which display “Federal Limits Apply.”

How to Apply for a REAL ID

Existing DMV customers

You can **replace or renew your driver’s license or ID card** with one that is REAL ID compliant.

You have two ways to do this:

- QUICKEST OPTION: [Start the application online](#) before visiting a customer service center **or**
- Fill out a paper application at a [customer service center](#)

First-time driver's license/ID applicants in Virginia

You can choose to make your license/ID a REAL ID when applying.

You have two options when applying:

- QUICKEST OPTION: [Start the application online](#) before visiting a customer service center **or**
- Fill out a paper application at a [customer service center](#)

Please bring the following items to DMV:

1. One proof of identity.
2. Two proofs of Virginia residency.
3. One proof of [legal presence](#).
4. Proof of your Social Security number (SSN), if you have been issued one. If you know your SSN, DMV can verify it electronically.
5. If your name appears differently on your proof documents: Proof of name change

6. \$10 fee, plus the cost of the driver's license or ID card you're applying for. See [fee chart](#).

Note: For example, a standard driver's license renewal costs \$32, while a standard driver's license replacement costs \$20.

See [acceptable documents guide](#).

Note: All documents must be originals and will be subject to verification. However, printouts of acceptable [online residency documents](#) can be used as proof of residency. Temporary documents and photocopies of documents will not be accepted.

Are there other websites that I can use to get a REAL ID?

No. Any website claiming to pre-scan and upload your REAL ID documents from home is not affiliated with DMV. Customers should not submit any images of personal documents to such websites, as they will not be sent to DMV and could be used for fraudulent purposes.

You may fill out a [REAL ID application in advance](#). However, this process will not ask you to scan and upload documents.

REAL ID Is Optional for Virginians

Virginia does not require you to get a REAL ID compliant license or ID card. If you stick with a standard license or ID, it will display "Federal Limits Apply" the next time you renew.

Beginning May 7, 2025, if you do not get a REAL ID, you must have an alternate form of federally accepted identification (valid U. S. passport, U.S. Department of Defense ID, Transportation Worker Identification Credential, etc.) to board a domestic flight or enter a secure federal facility or military base.

See the Transportation Security Administration's full list of [federally accepted identification](#).

Note: Secure federal facilities and military bases set their own identification requirements. Please verify requirements prior to your visit. Effective immediately, some military bases may no longer accept non-REAL ID compliant credentials, which

display "Federal Limits Apply."

Have more questions?

Get answers at [REAL ID FAQs](#).

Want this info in pamphlet form?

See our printable [REAL ID brochure](#)

Article Source

Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV)

Source URL

<https://www.dmv.virginia.gov>

Last Reviewed

Wednesday, July 10, 2024