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Federal Real ID Act

REAL ID poster

The Texas Department of Public Safety is committed to protecting the citizens of Texas by only licensing individuals who are properly identified and can demonstrate their ability to safely operate a motor vehicle on public roadways.

The United States Congress passed the REAL ID Act in 2005 in response to the terrorist attacks on 9/11. The REAL ID Act requires states to adopt and implement uniform standards for the issuance and production of state-issued driver licenses and identification cards if they are to be accepted as identity documents by the federal government. This Act strengthens the integrity and security of state-issued cards in an effort to reduce identity fraud and terrorism.

Beginning October 1, 2020, only state-issued driver licenses and identification cards that are fully compliant with the REAL ID Act will be accepted for official federal government purposes, such as entering secure federal buildings or boarding domestic flights. Texas began issuing REAL ID compliant cards on October 10, 2016, and these cards are marked with a gold circle with an inset star located in the upper right-hand corner, as seen in the examples below.

All Driver License offices will be closed Mon, Sep 2, 2019 in observance of Labor Day.

NOTICE: Driver Responsibility Program (Surcharge) Repeal FAQs



All Texas driver licenses and identification cards, both compliant (star) and non-compliant (no star) are valid until the expiration date shown on the card. If you replaced or renewed your card after October 10, 2016, and have a gold star in the right-hand corner, your card is REAL ID compliant and no further action is required on your part. You may continue to use your compliant card for federal identification purposes until it expires.

If your card does not have the star, you can continue to use the card after October 1, 2020, but it will only be accepted for state-related purposes such as driving (driver license only), banking, and voting. It will not be accepted as identification for federal purposes.

For additional information on the REAL ID Act, how it may impact you, and renewing or replacing your card, visit our Frequently Asked Questions below.

1. What is REAL ID?

2. How did the REAL ID Act impact the Texas driver license and identification card issuance process?

3. Is Texas compliant with the REAL ID Act?

4. How does Texas complying with the REAL ID Act benefit me?

5. What would have happened if Texas had chosen not to comply with the REAL ID Act?

6. What do I need to do?

7. Why was a notice mailed to me asking me to renew early?

8. I don't fly on domestic flights or visit federal facilities. Do I still need to get a compliant card?

9. I have both a Texas driver license and identification card. Can I keep both?

10. Does the REAL ID Act create a national database of driver information?

11. Do REAL ID compliant marked cards contain an electronic chip?

12. What happens if I do not currently have a REAL ID compliant Texas driver license or identification card and do nothing until after October 1, 2020?

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