*Spring 2021*

**REAL ID & THE STATE OF MAINE**

Enforcement of REAL ID requirements will begin **May 3, 2023**. At that time, the Department of Homeland Security will no longer allow any federal entity to accept your standard Maine license or State ID card for federal identification purposes.

**Until May 3, 2023, Maine credentials (driver’s licenses and IDs) will be accepted as valid identification for federal purposes, such as entrance to federal facilities and boarding commercial aircraft.**

The Maine Bureau of Motor Vehicles is issuing Real ID-compliant licenses and IDs at all its [branch offices.](https://www.maine.gov/sos/bmv/locations/index.html)

Those who have a valid license or ID will not be required to renew it prior to its expiration date, unless they choose to do so because they desire/need a Real ID-compliant credential. Upon renewal, you will have the option of getting a Real ID-compliant credential or opting out. Those who opt out will be issued a standard Maine license, which is not compliant with Real ID requirements.

Beginning May 3, 2023, those with non-compliant credentials will need to produce a passport or other acceptable identity document for federal purposes that require identification, such as boarding commercial aircraft and accessing secure federal facilities.

In addition to the [standard license requirements](http://maine.gov/sos/bmv/licenses/index.html), Real ID applicants must have their photograph taken and provide the following documentation, copies of which will remain on file with the BMV:

* One document that [establishes identity](https://www.maine.gov/sos/bmv/licenses/identity.html), date of birth, and proof of U.S. citizenship, [lawful permanent residence, or temporary lawful status in the U.S.](https://www.maine.gov/sos/bmv/licenses/legalpresence.html)
* Provide Social Security number or proof of ineligibility. It is not required to provide the actual Social Security card.
* Two documents to establish [proof of residence](https://www.maine.gov/sos/bmv/licenses/residency.html) in the State of Maine, such as a utility bill, paycheck stub or mortgage statement (P.O. Box is not acceptable).

HISTORY OF REAL ID & MAINE

The Maine Legislature passed a law in 2007 prohibiting the state from participating in the REAL ID Act of 2005 (Title 29A, §1411). The reasons for their decision were many, ranging from privacy concerns to implementation costs. The Act places certain requirements upon states in the licensing process, in an effort to improve security. Some of the more contentious aspects include the use of biometric screening such as image verification technology on license photos and the retention of copies of identifying documents, such as birth certificates, in a centralized database.

The Secretary of State, who oversees the Bureau of Motor Vehicles, is bound by Maine law and therefore was barred from issuing REAL ID licenses and identification cards in the State of Maine while this law was in place.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) granted waivers to Maine and several other states on the deadline to become Real ID compliant, but declined to issue another extension to the State of Maine in October 2016. As a result, Maine licenses and IDs were no longer considered acceptable forms of identification at federal facilities.

In response to constituent concerns to this enforcement, the Maine Legislature passed [LD 306, "An Act To Require State Compliance with Federal REAL ID Guidelines"](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/bills_128th/billtexts/SP009202.asp) a bill sponsored by Senator Bill Diamond. LD 306 was signed into law by Gov. LePage on April 29, 2017. It repealed the previous law and requires the State of Maine to comply with the federal REAL ID Act.

The Department of Homeland Security rejected Maine’s request for a waiver in October 2016, so the state was out of compliance, with no waiver, until an additional waiver was granted on June 15, 2017. During this period, Maine license and ID-holders did not have valid ID to access federal facilities.

With the passage of LD 306, the State of Maine was able to request a new compliance waiver from the Department of Homeland Security. This waiver was issued June 15, 2017 and was valid through October 10, 2017. Additional annual waivers were issued for 2017, 2018 and 2019.

In July 2019, the Maine BMV began offering the option of a compliant credential, in preparation for the federal enforcement deadline of Oct. 1, 2020.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Department of Homeland Security in March of 2020 declared an enforcement deadline extension to Oct. 1, 2021.

The enforcement deadline was again extended on April 27, 2021 due to the impact of the pandemic, with office closures and other factors making it difficult for people to obtain a Real ID-compliant credential during the past year. The DHS has declared a new enforcement deadline of May 3, 2023.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I NEED TO TRAVEL OR VISIT A FEDERAL BUILDING?

* Maine licenses and IDs will be accepted as valid identification for boarding aircraft until May 3, 2023, so if you have travel plans prior to that date, you do not need alternate identification to board a plane or enter a secure federal building.
* If you choose not to obtain a Real ID license, you may want to consider getting a passport unless you have an alternate form of ID that is acceptable. This is the portion of the Transportation Security Administration website that lists alternative IDs that are acceptable: <https://www.tsa.gov/travel/security-screening/identification> For passport information, visit the State Department website: <https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/passports.html>
* Please note that REAL ID requirements do not apply to the access of federal benefits, licensing to drive or registering to vote. Additionally, a REAL ID is not required to enter a federal courthouse; a regular Maine license/ID will suffice.
* To learn more about REAL ID, visit [www.Maine.gov/realid](http://www.Maine.gov/realid) and the DHS website: <https://www.dhs.gov/real-id-public-faqs>