

Real ID – Questions & Answers

- Q. What is REAL ID?
- A. REAL ID is a nationwide effort to improve the integrity and security of state-issued driver's licenses (DL) and identification (ID) cards. It establishes standards by which state-issued DL and ID cards are issued. Since the state-issued DLs and IDs are the most commonly used forms of identification in the United States, enhanced security measures will serve both the interests of protection from identity theft and national security.
- Q. Where did REAL ID originate?
- A. The national 9/11 Commission urged the Federal government to "set standards for the issuance of sources of identification, such as driver's licenses." Congress responded by passing the REAL ID Act of 2005.
- Q. Is Iowa going to implement REAL ID?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Why?
- A. On May 11, 2008, individuals from any state which is not in compliance, or has not requested an extension, would be prohibited from using their DLs/IDs for "federal purposes." Federal purposes are defined as boarding commercial aircraft and accessing federal buildings.
- Q. Is Iowa in compliance?
- A. No, no state is; however, Iowa requested an extension of the compliance date and that extension was granted on January 30, 2008.
- Q. How long is the extension?
- A. This extension is good through December 31, 2009. The REAL ID Rules allow a second extension to be granted if 18 "benchmarks" have been met by December 31, 2009.
- Q. What are these "benchmarks"?
- A. Briefly, an applicant for a REAL ID-compliant DL/ID must have his/her photograph taken; sign a declaration that the information he/she is providing is true under penalty of perjury; present documents to verify legal presence in the country, identity, social security number, and address. The Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) must have an approved "exceptions" process for individuals who are unable to provide documents; make reasonable efforts to ensure the applicant does not have DLs/IDs issued in multiple identities; ensure legal presence and social security number are verified through federal systems; ensure DL/ID cards have appropriate security features and have required information on the face of the DL/ID; commit to marking the DL/ID with a federal Department of Homeland Security-approved (DHS) security feature; issue limited-term DLs/IDs tied to end of legal presence in the country; have an approved security plan;

ensure personal information is protected; require all staff issuing DLs to complete Fraudulent Document Recognition and Security Awareness training; ensure that name/fingerprint based criminal history and employment eligibility checks are conducted on all "covered" employees; commit to be in full compliance no later than May 11, 2011; and clearly state on the face of a non-compliant DL/ID that the card is not acceptable for federal purposes.

Q. What is the "security plan"?

A. We do not know. DHS has yet to clarify what security will be acceptable. We anticipate more information on this within the next six months. We expect it to primarily relate to how secure the buildings are where DLs/IDs are produced and where the materials used in making them are stored.

Q. Does the background check apply to both DOT and County Treasurer employees?

A. Yes.

Q. Will Iowa be in full compliance by December 31, 2009?

A. It is unlikely; we anticipate being in material compliance (meeting the 18 benchmarks) and requesting the second extension. A request for the second extension must be filed with DHS no later than October 11, 2009. That extension defers the requirement to begin issuing the first REAL ID document until May 11, 2011.

Q. Does everyone have to have a REAL ID?

A. No, it is an individual choice. There are alternate acceptable proofs for boarding commercial aircraft and accessing federal facilities. The most common is a U.S. Passport.

Q. Will I need a REAL ID to drive my car?

A. No.

Q. If a person decides to get a REAL ID, when does that person need to have one?

A. The requirement to have a REAL ID for "federal purposes" is now phased in based on age: by December 1, 2014, for individuals born on/after December 1, 1964; by December 1, 2017, for individuals who want a REAL ID regardless of age.

Q. What will an individual who wants a REAL ID have to bring to the DOT or County Treasurer's license station?

A. Documents that verify the person's date of birth, Social Security Number, address, and legal presence in the country. As Iowa gets closer to issuing REAL ID-compliant DLs/IDs, DOT will disseminate information about what documents will be acceptable.

Q. Will the REAL ID look the same as the Iowa DL/ID?

A. No. The Federal rules require a REAL ID to be very different in appearance and require that DLs/IDs which are not REAL ID-compliant clearly state that they are not to be used for official "federal purposes."

Q. Will a person be able to apply for a REAL ID at either a DOT or County Treasurer's license station?

A. We believe so.

Q. Will a person be able to have the REAL ID issued "across the counter" as is done now with Iowa DLs/IDs?

A. We do not yet know, but it may not be possible to do so. This is one of the gray areas in the rules and will be worked out over time. Requirements and costs for things such as the DL/ID security features and building security may require the REAL ID DL/ID to be printed at a central facility.

Q. Did Congress provide any funding for this?

A. Yes, there is slightly over \$79M available nationwide to begin the implementation process.

Q. Is that enough?

A. No. However, until there is more definition to the requirements, we cannot estimate the costs.

Q. Will I pay more for the REAL ID?

A. Yes. However, we do not yet know how much more.

Q. What is DOT doing?

A. Draft legislation needed to authorize REAL ID issuance has been developed and is being reviewed for submission to the 2008 General Assembly for their consideration and approval. DOT is also continuing to work with DHS and various national associations to fully understand what needs to be done. DOT is also reviewing the grant requirements and will prepare a grant request on Iowa's behalf for some of the available federal funds.

Q. Have any other states applied for the extension mentioned earlier?

A. Yes, we understand that only a few states have not applied for the extension. The rule allows the extension request to be made until March 31, 2008.