

# The facts about REAL ID compliance and Washington State

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) recently informed Washington state of their decision to deny our request for a compliance extension for [REAL ID](#) requirements. This means starting as early as January 2016, standard Washington state driver licenses and ID cards may no longer be accepted as a standalone identity document at some secure federal facilities. This does not affect commercial airline travel at this point. The Department of Licensing has issued [Enhanced Driver Licenses and Enhanced ID Cards](#) since 2008. These will continue to be federally acceptable documents and can be obtained by Washington residents who are U.S. citizens.

Even under REAL ID, most services provided by the federal government do not require identification to be presented, and that will not change. Washington residents who do not have a federally compliant document will still have access to federal courts, Social Security offices, national parks, and, at this time, boarding flights at commercial airports.

At some point in the future, Washington residents who do not have a federally compliant document will need to use an approved second form of ID with their standard Washington driver license/ID card for boarding domestic commercial airline flights. DHS has indicated that they will announce “the timing and nature” of enforcement for commercial airlines in December, 2015 and that the date will be *at least* four months from that time. They have provided no further information to states.

It is important to remember that this change will not have significant impacts on typical Washington residents at this time. Most residents don't regularly visit the secured areas of federal facilities. Washingtonians are encouraged to investigate all of their options for obtaining a federally compliant document like a [U.S. Passport/Passport Card](#), state Enhanced Driver License/ID card, or other ID documents (see below) that will be acceptable by federal agencies to enter secure federal facilities. This includes nuclear power plants, military facilities and other facilities that require ID to enter.

- Washington is among 24 states that have been operating with a REAL ID compliance extension because our regular driver licenses and ID cards do not meet all 41 different REAL ID requirements. DHS denied our state's request for another compliance extension which makes our state subject to the REAL ID enforcement schedule. This means our regular driver licenses and ID cards may no longer be accepted at certain secure federal facilities and nuclear power plants – the Department of Homeland Security has not announced a specific date for enforcement to begin at commercial airports.
- State law currently prohibits the expenditure of state funds to comply with the REAL ID Act. See [RCW 46.20.191](#) and [43.41.390](#).
- The Department of Homeland Security compliance schedule indicates REAL ID requirements may be enforced at commercial airports any time after December 31, 2015. However, the exact date remains unknown and at whatever point they announce the date, there will be at least 4-months between the announcement and the date the commercial airport requirements will take effect. DHS has been unclear about specific dates.
- Since 2008, Washington state has issued Enhanced Driver Licenses and Enhanced ID Cards that federal officials have certified for use as proof of identity for federal purposes. These documents can be used for any purpose a REAL ID compliant license can be used for and have the additional benefit of being an acceptable form of identification at U.S. land and sea border crossing stations in the Western Hemisphere. They are available to U.S. citizens.

- Over the past several years, DOL has met many of the REAL ID requirements (21 out of 42) just by adopting national best practices for driver license and ID card security—things we would have done regardless of the REAL ID Act. In addition, we will meet several more of the REAL ID requirements once we move to a new driver license and ID card central issuance system in 2017. Many of the REAL ID requirements will be costly for the state to comply with.
  
- Additional forms of identification acceptable for federal purposes include:
  - DHS trusted traveler cards (Global Entry, NEXUS, SENTRI, FAST)
  - U.S. military ID (active duty or retired military and their dependents, and DoD civilians)
  - Permanent resident card
  - Border crossing card
  - Airline or airport-issued ID (if issued under a TSA-approved security plan)
  - Federally recognized, tribal-issued photo ID
  - HSPD-12 PIV card
  - Foreign government-issued passport
  - Canadian provincial driver's license or Indian and Northern Affairs Canada card
  - Transportation worker identification credential