Texas Immigration LAW COUNCIL

REAL ID ENFORCEMENT BEGINS MAY 7, 2025 WHAT TEXANS NEED TO KNOW

IMPORTANT ALERT: Adults without REAL ID-compliant identification, including immigrants, face potential travel delays and risks with the new requirements. Those without REAL ID who need to travel soon may be unable to board domestic flights and should either check for acceptable alternative IDs or consider other transportation options like driving, taking a bus, or arranging for someone to pick them up.

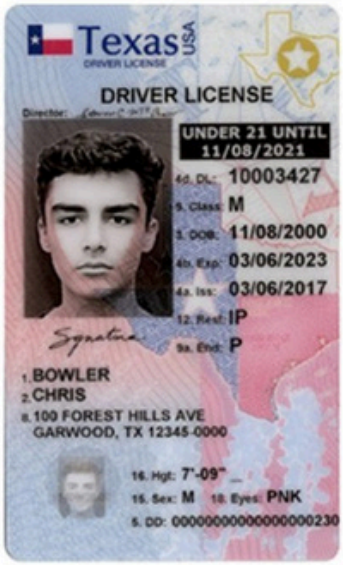
WHAT'S CHANGING

- Starting May 7, 2025, the Transportation Security Agency (TSA) will require REAL ID-compliant identification for domestic air travel and to enter federal facilities like federal courthouses, military bases, etc.
- Non-compliant state IDs will no longer be accepted for these purposes.

WHAT IS REAL ID AND WHY DO I NEED IT?

The requirement stems from the 2005 REAL ID Act, which established "minimum security standards for state-issued driver's licenses and identification cards."

REAL ID Requirements in Texas
Texas began issuing REAL ID compliant driver licenses and identification 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.



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To get a REAL ID in Texas, you must provide:

- Application for an Original Texas Driver License or Identification Card
- Proof of U.S. Citizenship or Evidence of Lawful Presence
- Proof of Residency
- Proof of Identity
- Social Security Number
- Proof of Insurance for each vehicle you own
- Evidence of Texas Vehicle Registration for each vehicle you own (New residents who are surrendering an out-of-state driver license only)

Find a detailed checklist of acceptable documents for each requirement here: https://www.dps.texas.gov/internetforms/Forms/DL-15.pdf.

If your Texas ID or DL doesn't have a gold star, meaning it's NOT compliant with the REAL ID Act, you can still use your current, unexpired Texas driver license or ID to drive and for non-federal ID purposes.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR IMMIGRANTS IN TEXAS

Getting a REAL ID requires proof of identity, state residency, and lawful status in the U.S.
NOTE: The specific "lawful status" categories one needs to fall into for a REAL ID are listed further below and may differ from other immigration statuses that allow authorized stay in the country.

For immigrants without lawful status, attempting to fly with non-REAL ID identification could lead to additional screening, where immigration status might be questioned. This creates heightened risks of detention at airport checkpoints starting Wednesday, May 7, 2025.

ALTERNATIVE IDENTIFICATION FOR AIR TRAVEL

Other acceptable IDs for domestic flights include:

- Valid unexpired passport from any country*
- U.S. passport or card
- DHS trust traveler cards (Global Entry, NEXUS, SENTRI, FAST)
- Permanent resident card (Green Card)
- Border crossing card
- USCIS Employment Authorization Document
- Federally recognized tribal-issued photo ID

**As of publishing this resource, it is unclear if TSA will require a valid visa along with the foreign passport.*

Other acceptable identification documents can be found here: https://www.tsa.gov/travel/security-screening/identification. The list of acceptable IDs is subject to change without notice. TSA strongly encourages you check this list again before traveling, so you do not arrive at the airport without acceptable ID.

WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER MAY 7

- "Phased enforcement" expected to begin, although details have not been fully released
- Non-compliant IDs may result in additional screening
- Risk of being denied entry to secure areas and possible detention if deemed to not have proper immigration status to be in the country
- Possible delays for all at security checkpoints due to new rule implementation

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KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

- ✓ You have the right to remain silent about your immigration status, but be aware that officials may discover this information through other channels.
- ✓ If detained for immigration reasons, you have the right to consult with your attorney.
- ✓ REAL ID is not mandatory for activities such as driving, banking, or, in the case of U.S. citizens, for voting.
- ✓ If you don't have a REAL ID and have concerns, you should consult an immigration attorney before flying or visiting federal facilities.

DON'T HAVE REAL ID? CHECK IF YOU HAVE THE LAWFUL STATUS REQUIRED

Who Qualifies as Having "Lawful Status"

Under the REAL ID Act and subsequent legislation, the following categories are deemed to have Lawful Status for purposes of getting the ID:

- U.S. citizens or nationals
- Lawful permanent residents (green card holders)
- Conditional permanent residents
- Approved asylum seekers or refugees
- People with valid visas
- Those with pending asylum applications
- People with pending or approved Temporary Protected Status (TPS)
- Those with approved DACA or other deferred action status
- People with pending applications to adjust to permanent resident status
- Afghan citizens paroled into the U.S. between July 31, 2021 and Sept 30, 2022, and their immediate family members paroled after Sept 30, 2022

This list highlights categories most relevant to immigrants in Texas. For additional specific categories, check the official DHS FAQ at https://www.dhs.gov/real-id/real-id-faqs

IMPORTANT: IMMIGRANTS WHO DON'T FALL INTO ANY OF THESE CATEGORIES CANNOT OBTAIN A REAL ID.

This resource provides general information only and is not legal advice.
For more detailed information, visit tsa.gov/real-id and consult with an immigration attorney.
Information current as of May 6, 2025