What is changing?

The REAL ID Act is a federal law to enhance the security of state-issued driving credentials. Starting October 1, 2021, Kentucky’s standard driver’s licenses with the Kentucky Unbridled Spirit logo will no longer be accepted to board commercial flights within the U.S., or enter into military bases, nuclear power plants or any federal building that requires identification. Kentuckians may use a federal form of identification, like a passport, passport card or military ID, to maintain these travel and access benefits. Kentuckians can also choose to apply for a Kentucky REAL ID (credentials featuring a star icon). REAL IDs will be available at regional licensing offices in portions of the state and are not required before the enforcement date. These card versions work as a driver’s license, permit or personal ID card, plus they are accepted for domestic air travel, military base entry and entry into restricted federal buildings.

REAL ID Application Documents

1 PROOF OF IDENTITY
Certified birth certificate, passport, permanent resident card, etc. (no photocopies, applicants under 18 must provide birth certificate)

2 PROOFS OF RESIDENCY
KY driver’s license with current home address, utility bill (must be less than 1 year old), etc.

1 PROOF OF SOCIAL SECURITY
Social Security card, current tax year W-2 or 1099 form (no photocopies of social security card, SSN may not be handwritten)

1 PROOF OF NAME CHANGE (if applicable)
If the current legal name is not displayed on all of the proof documents, bring legal document linking the name change.

Kentuckians applying for a REAL ID card must present one (1) valid proof of identity, one (1) valid proof of social security number and two (2) valid proofs of residency. If an applicant’s name or gender doesn’t match on the proof documents, additional documentation (like a marriage certificate or divorce decree) may be required. A detailed list of acceptable documents is available on the REAL ID KY website. The online IDocument Guide quiz provides a customized list of documents an applicant will need to present. Some acceptable documents have strict requirements (i.e. no photocopies of birth certificates, documents must be unexpired).
The cost of all identity credentials will change to factor in the doubled life cycle and enhanced security features. Cards with a four-year lifespan are half the cost of an eight-year credential.

New standard driver’s license
$43 → 8 years valid

New standard personal ID card
$23 → 8 years valid

New standard motorcycle license
$43 → 8 years valid

REAL ID driver’s license
$48 → 8 years valid

REAL ID personal ID
$28 → 8 years valid

REAL ID motorcycle license
$48 → 8 years valid

CDL costs vary by type and endorsement combination. Contact the Division of Driver Licensing CDL section for more details at (502) 564-1257.

Non-U.S. citizens may obtain any standard credential for the listed cost, plus a $30 application fee. Visit drive.ky.gov for more.

REAL ID-Compliant Cards

Acceptable forms of ID for U.S. commercial air travel include the following valid and unexpired credentials:

1. Kentucky’s REAL ID card versions or other REAL ID-compliant cards offered by other states
2. U.S. passport
3. U.S. passport card
4. DHS trusted traveler card (Global Entry, NEXUS, SENTRI, FAST)
5. U.S. Department of Defense ID, including IDs issued to dependents
6. Permanent resident card
7. Border crossing card
8. DHS-designated enhanced driver’s license
9. Federally recognized, tribal-issued photo ID
10. HSPD-12 PIV card
11. Foreign government-issued passport
12. Canadian provincial driver’s license or Indian/Northern Affairs Canada card
13. Transportation worker identification credential (TWIC®)
15. U.S. Merchant Mariner Credential

Military bases and federal buildings like the White House, that require ID, will accept REAL IDs. For a list of other acceptable forms of identification, contact the base or building directly before visiting.

KYTC Regional Driver Licensing Offices

Kentucky is creating regional driver licensing offices across the state to make new REAL ID compliant driving and identity credentials available to Kentuckians who prefer to use them for travel and access benefits. A complete list of licensing offices is available at www.realidky.com. Residents may apply for standard non-compliant credentials (driver’s license, permit, personal ID) at KYTC Regional Driver Licensing Offices or their local Circuit Court Clerk’s offices (Fayette County residents may only apply at KYTC Regional Driver Licensing Offices).

License Renewal vs. Upgrade

If you request a REAL ID and your current license expires within six months of the date you apply, you may renew your license for either four or eight years. If your current license expires more than six months from the date you apply, you may pay $15 to upgrade to the REAL ID license that will keep the same expiration date as your current card (you’re eligible to renew your license once you’re within your six-month renewal period).

Revised 10/16/20