



## DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED TO OBTAIN A DRIVER'S LICENSE IN SELECTED REAL ID COMPLIANT STATES

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### REAL ID REQUIREMENTS

To obtain a Real ID compliant driver's license, an applicant must document his or her:

1. identity and birthdate,
2. social security number,
3. principal address, and
4. lawful presence in the U.S.

Acceptable documentation is determined by the Real ID Act, except that each state may determine which documents it will accept as proof of address.

### ISSUE

What documentation does the Real ID Act require states to collect from applicants in order to issue compliant licenses and non-driver identification (ID) cards? Compare the documents required to obtain a license or ID card in five Real ID compliant states (Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Maryland, and Vermont).

### SUMMARY

The Real ID Act is a federal law that requires state driver's licenses and non-driver ID cards to meet certain standards in order to be accepted for federal purposes, such as boarding airplanes or entering certain federal facilities. To issue Real

ID compliant licenses, states must require applicants to prove their (1) identity and birthdate, (2) social security number, (3) principal address, and (4) lawful presence in the U.S. Real ID regulations establish which documents states may accept as proof of these things, except that states may choose which documents to accept as proof of principal address. Consequently, this report focuses on comparing the documents that these compliant states accept as proof of address.

This report compares the documents accepted as proof of address in five Real ID compliant states (Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Maryland, and Vermont). States require applicants to provide two documents to prove their address, with limited exceptions. In general, these documents must (1) list their full name and street



address, (2) come from two different sources, and (3) be relatively recent (e.g., dated within the previous 90 days). At least three states accept hard copies of electronic documents printed from home (e.g., an electronic credit card statement). Of the states we compared, Connecticut and Vermont accept the widest variety of documents, including postmarked mail from any source. Some states (e.g., Delaware) also give new applicants the option of obtaining a noncompliant driver's license or ID card without meeting all the Real ID documentation requirements.

## **FEDERAL REAL ID ACT**

### ***Overview***

The Real ID Act ([Public Law 109-13](#)) is a federal law requiring state driver's licenses and non-driver identification cards to meet certain standards to be accepted for federal purposes, such as boarding airplanes and entering certain federal buildings. Congress passed the act in 2005 to better verify critical identity documents after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. People who do not have licenses or ID cards that meet these federal standards will still be able to travel by air and enter federal buildings, but will find it harder to do so (e.g., travelers may need passports to board a plane). The act is being implemented in phases, and the last phase—which will require a federally compliant ID to board a plane—will begin no sooner than 2016, [according to](#) the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (U.S. DHS). According to the [National Conference of State Legislatures \(NCSL\)](#), residents of Real ID compliant states who hold noncompliant licenses may access federal facilities and board planes with that license until 2020.

As of October 19, 2015, the U.S. DHS's [website](#) indicates that (1) 23 states and territories are Real ID compliant; (2) two states or territories (American Samoa and Minnesota) are noncompliant, indicating that they have not met Real ID requirements or received an extension; and (3) 31 states and territories have applied for or been granted extensions, which allow federal agencies to continue to accept IDs from those states even though they are not yet in full compliance. Most states, including [Connecticut](#), follow U.S. DHS's guidance and place a gold star on the front corner of Real ID compliant licenses and ID cards so that federal officials can identify compliant licenses. Noncompliant licenses issued by Real ID compliant states are generally labeled as "not for federal identification purposes."

Connecticut is Real ID compliant, according to [U.S. DHS](#), and began issuing compliant driver's licenses and non-driver ID cards in 2011. DMV currently [requires](#) all new applicants to go through the identity verification process. Individuals who hold regular, noncompliant licenses may, [upon renewal](#), (1) go through the

additional identity verification process and receive compliant licenses or IDs or (2) decline the additional verification and receive noncompliant driver's licenses or ID cards. If a person changes his or her mind, he or she may return to DMV to get a compliant license, but they will be charged the duplicate license fee (\$30).

### ***Real ID Documentation Requirements***

To be Real ID compliant, states must require applicants to prove their (1) identity, (2) date of birth, (3) social security number (with limited exceptions), (4) principal address, and (5) legal presence in the U.S. ([6 C.F.R. § 37.11](#)). Real ID establishes the minimum documentation necessary to prove these items, but states may require documentation beyond what Real ID requires.

All documentation must be valid and, in most cases, unexpired. State DMVs must verify the documents, electronically if possible, with the documents' issuer (e.g., Social Security Administration). States do not need to verify the documents an applicant uses to prove their principal address.

***Identity and Date of Birth.*** Applicants for a Real ID compliant license or ID card must present at least one of the following documents to prove their identity and date of birth:

1. U.S. passport,
2. certified copy of their birth certificate,
3. Consular Report of Birth Abroad (CRBA),
4. permanent resident card ("green card"),
5. employment authorization card,
6. foreign passport with a U.S. visa and supporting documents,
7. certificate of naturalization,
8. certificate of citizenship,
9. Real ID compliant license or ID card, or
10. any documents U.S. DHS publishes in the federal register.

**Social Security Number.** To prove a social security number, an applicant must present his or her social security card or one of several forms that list a social security number (e.g., a W-2 form). Applicants who present a foreign passport as identification must provide a social security number or demonstrate non-work authorized status. State DMVs must verify the applicant's social security number in the manner required by law.

**Principal Address.** To receive a Real ID compliant license, applicants must provide at least two documents of the state's choice that include their name and principal address. With limited exceptions, the address must be a street address.

**Evidence of Legal Presence in U.S.** Under Real ID, a state DMV's verification of the following documents used to prove identity serves as proof of legal presence: U.S. passport, birth certificate, CRBA, green card, naturalization certificate, or citizenship certificate. Applicants who present an employment authorization card, foreign passport, or a Real ID compliant license or ID card from another state as proof of their identity must either provide one of the other documents listed above as proof of legal presence or a document issued by U.S. DHS or another federal agency that proves their legal presence in the U.S.

## **STATE DOCUMENTATION COMPARISON**

Below, we compare the documentation requirements for obtaining a Real ID compliant license in five compliant states: Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Maryland, and Vermont. Most documents that an applicant must present to obtain a Real ID compliant license or ID card are the same in each of these states, with the exception of address documents, over which states have discretion.

### ***Deviations from Real ID's Requirements***

All of the states we reviewed accept all the documents authorized under Real ID as proof of identity, date of birth, social security number, and lawful status in the U.S. Four of the states, excluding Connecticut, do not require additional proof of any of these items beyond what Real ID requires.

Although Real ID only requires that applicants present one document to prove their identity, Connecticut requires applicants to provide two. At least one must be from the "primary list," which consists of the documents accepted under Real ID. The second document may be on the "secondary list," which includes such documents as noncompliant driver's licenses or ID cards, military IDs, court orders, marriage certificates, school transcripts, or government employee ID cards.

## ***Proof of Address Documentation***

To issue a Real ID compliant license, states must require applicants to prove their address with two documents, but each state may choose which documents to accept.

Of the five Real ID compliant states we compare, Connecticut and Vermont accept the widest variety of documents. Both states will accept postmarked mail from any source as proof of address. Connecticut will accept internet printouts of a large range of documents, and Vermont will allow another person that lives with an applicant to certify an applicant's residency if he or she does not receive mail, regardless of the applicant's age. By contrast, Delaware appears to have the most stringent requirements, as it (1) accepts a small range of documents, (2) does not accept internet printouts, and (3) only accepts non-personal mail.

Below, we discuss the general requirements of proof of address documentation in the five Real ID compliant states we compared. In Appendix I, we compare the specific documents the five states accept as proof of address. We divide them into three categories: (1) postmarked mail, (2) other documents, and (3) certifications. Please note that (1) the table only includes the documentation listed on each state DMV's website as acceptable, (2) state DMVs may accept other documentation not listed here, and (3) items listed in "other documents" or "certifications" may still be accepted by a state if they were mailed and have a postmark.

***General Requirements.*** The states compared in this report have several general requirements in common for proof of address documentation. All five states require the documents to list the applicant's full name and street address, with some exceptions (e.g., Vermont allows applicants to use post office boxes if they live in an area where street names or house numbers have not been assigned). All of the states, except Vermont, (1) require that documents be from two different sources and (2) specify how old the documents may be. The timeframe ranges from no more than 60 days old (Delaware) to a general requirement that they be "current" (Maryland). Connecticut generally requires that documents be no older than 90 days, with certain exceptions.

***Internet Printouts.*** Connecticut, Maryland, and Florida explicitly state that they accept internet printouts of documents as proof of address. Delaware explicitly states that it does not accept printouts of bills, but it is unclear if it would accept printouts of the other documents it accepts (e.g., bank statements). Vermont does not specify whether it accepts internet printouts.

**Certifications.** All of the states we compare allow other people to certify an applicant's address under certain circumstances. In all states, a parent or guardian can prove his or her address and certify that a minor applicant resides with them. Some states allow others to certify an applicant's address in other circumstances, such as for homeless individuals residing in a shelter. In general, if an individual (as opposed to an organization) provides the certification, he or she must prove his or her address or relationship to the applicant, or both.

### ***Noncompliant Licenses***

Real ID regulations allow states to issue both compliant and noncompliant driver's licenses and non-driver ID cards. Of the five states we surveyed, only two states (Delaware and Vermont) allow all applicants (new and renewing) to obtain a noncompliant driver's license that permits the holder to drive but cannot be used for federal identification. In Connecticut and Maryland, new applicants who are U.S. citizens must go through the additional identity verification process and receive a compliant ID, but applicants with foreign documents that cannot fulfill Real ID's requirements (e.g., undocumented immigrants) and renewal applicants that choose not to provide the additional documentation may obtain a noncompliant license or ID. Florida issues only Real ID compliant licenses and IDs. In all of these states, noncompliant licenses and IDs are marked as "not for federal identification."

States have full discretion over documentation requirements for noncompliant driver's licenses and non-driver ID cards, and the requirements are generally less stringent than those for compliant licenses. Consequently meeting the documentation requirements for obtaining a driver's license may be easier in Delaware or Vermont than in the other three states in our comparison, provided the applicant does not plan to use his or her license or ID as federal identification.

**Appendix I: Acceptable Proof of Address by State**

	<b>Connecticut</b>	<b>Delaware+</b>	<b>Florida</b>	<b>Maryland</b>	<b>Vermont+</b>
<b>POSTMARKED MAIL</b>					
Mail from government agency	X	X	X	X	X
Non-personal mail (e.g., from a business)	X	X			X
Personal mail	X				X
<b>OTHER ACCEPTED DOCUMENTS*</b>					
Address change confirmation from U.S. Postal Service	X	X			
Bank statement	X	X**	X	X	
Boat Registration			X		
Cancelled check				X	
Credit card bill	X	X**	X	X	
Doctor or hospital bill	X				
Educational institution records	X		X		
Electronic benefits transfer (EBT) card					X
Homeowner's or renter's insurance policy or bill	X		X		X
House deed or title			X	X	
Income tax return (no more than 18 months old)				X	
Life insurance policy		X		X	
Lease	X	X	X	X	X
Medicaid or Medicare benefit statement	X				
Motor vehicle insurance policy	X	X	X		
Motor vehicle loan contract, statement or payment booklet	X		X	X	
Motor vehicle registration	X		X	X	
Motor vehicle title			X	X	
Mortgage documents (bills, contract, payment booklet)	X		X	X	
Pay stubs	X	X**			
Professional License			X		
Property tax bill	X			X	X
Property survey	X				
Sales tax or business license				X	
Selective service card			X	X	
Social Security or other retirement benefits statement	X				

Appendix 1 (continued)

	<i>Connecticut</i>	<i>Delaware+</i>	<i>Florida</i>	<i>Maryland</i>	<i>Vermont+</i>
<b>OTHER ACCEPTED DOCUMENTS*</b>					
Utility bill	X	X	X	X	X
Voter registration card	X	X	X	X	
W-2 or 1099 form		X**	X		
<b>CERTIFICATION FORMS</b>					
Parents or Guardians of Minors may certify applicants address	X	X ^	X	X ^	X ^
Parents or Guardians may certify residence of dependents of any age				X ^	X ^
Homeowner or leaseholder may certify residence of applicants living with them					X ^
Homeless shelters and other service providers may certify the address of their residents			X ^	X ^	

X=document is accepted

\*These are documents that are accepted that do not need to be mailed or have a postmark to be accepted. Except for Delaware and Vermont (see below), all the documents listed may, if applicable, be printed out from home. If a box appears blank, the state still may accept the document if it was mailed and the applicant still has the postmarked envelope.

+The acceptability of documents printed at home (e.g., a bank statement or pay stub) in Delaware and Vermont is unclear. Delaware's document list states that "photocopies or printouts of bills will not be accepted," but it does not specify whether other documents it accepts that are not bills may be printed from the internet. Vermont does not specify whether the non-mail documents it accepts can be printed out.

\*\* Delaware accepts "bank account records" and "employment records" generally, so it appears that this document would be accepted. It is unclear whether these documents would be accepted if printed from home.

^Certification fulfills the full proof of address requirement, and the applicant does not need to provide a second document

## **HYPERLINKS**

Connecticut DMV Real ID Document Checklist:

[http://www.ct.gov/dmv/lib/dmv/selectct/selectid\\_accpt\\_docs3.pdf](http://www.ct.gov/dmv/lib/dmv/selectct/selectid_accpt_docs3.pdf)

Connecticut Real ID Frequently Asked Questions:

<http://www.ct.gov/dmv/cwp/view.asp?a=4078&q=477752>

Delaware DMV Document Guide:

[http://dmv.de.gov/services/driver\\_services/drivers\\_license/dr\\_lic\\_secure\\_dl.shtml](http://dmv.de.gov/services/driver_services/drivers_license/dr_lic_secure_dl.shtml)

DHS's Real ID Enforcement in Brief:

<http://www.dhs.gov/real-id-enforcement-brief>

Florida DMV Document Checklist:

<http://www.gathergoget.com/>

Maryland DMV Online Document Guide:

<http://license.mva.maryland.gov/CheckList/default.aspx>

Real ID Documentation Regulations:

<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2012-title6-vol1/pdf/CFR-2012-title6-vol1-sec37-11.pdf>

Vermont DMV Required Identity Documents:

<http://dmv.vermont.gov/licenses/drivers/requirements/identity>

HP:bs