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In Massachusetts, you're not required to get a REAL ID, but you'll need one for commercial flights, restricted facilities, and nuclear power plants. If your ID has a gold star, it's already compliant. To apply, visit the Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) and provide proof of birthdate, lawful U.S. presence, social security number, and Massachusetts residency. Documentation linking prior names and identity verification for REAL ID applications vary by state; some states require more documentation than others, while still adhering to REAL ID regulations. For instance, if an applicant wears a head covering for religious reasons, the REAL ID Act recognizes this and does not require removal of the head covering for the photograph, as long as it doesn't cover the face or cast a shadow. Applicants' photos are typically taken at the start of the process when submitting completed applications to DMVs. However, if any type of fraud is detected during the process, the DMV may need to capture the applicant's image again, even if no application was submitted. DHS considers several factors when determining whether to grant an extension to a jurisdiction, including the state official overseeing the Driver Licensing Authority, documentation of met and unmet requirements, and participation in progress reviews. If a state's extension expires, it may be banned from accepting federal driver's licenses or identification cards, but DHS can grant a short grace period before requiring REAL ID-compliant documents. The length of a State extension for REAL ID Compliance varies, as determined by the Secretary of Homeland Security. An extension allows states to temporarily meet REAL ID requirements and grants non-compliant driver's licenses and IDs federal acceptance during this period. The public is not expected to be significantly impacted if they reside in compliant states currently under review. DHS recertifies compliant states every 3 years on a continuing basis, selecting around five states for recertification at a time. This process began after the release of new technologies for verification and standardization. DHS may recertify already compliant states to ensure ongoing compliance with REAL ID regulations. The REAL ID Act has specific requirements and guidelines for issuing driver's licenses and identification cards to citizens of the Freely Associated States (FAS), which includes citizens from the Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, and the Marshall Islands. To obtain a REAL ID-compliant license, FAS citizens must meet certain eligibility criteria, including presenting acceptable identity and lawful status documents. The validity period for these licenses will be determined by the state's regular expiration period and will carry the same compliant markings as regular driver's licenses. In some cases, FAS citizens may need to provide an unexpired foreign passport or other valid forms of identification to obtain a REAL ID-compliant license. The REAL ID Modification for Freely Associated States Act was signed into law by President Trump in December 2018 and amends the REAL ID Act of 2005 to authorize states to issue full-term REAL ID driver's licenses and IDs to FAS citizens who meet specific requirements. These requirements include presenting acceptable identity and lawful status documents, which will be verified through the Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) process. FAS citizens who have been residing in the United States as non-immigrants under a Compact of Free Association may also be eligible for a REAL ID-compliant license. However, they must meet all the requirements stated in the REAL ID Act and comply with any additional regulations or guidelines set by the Secretary of Homeland Security. Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and its relation with the US immigration system, particularly concerning driver's licenses and IDs issued by compliant states. Starting October 1, 2020, travelers will need to show a compliant license or acceptable alternative when entering the country from Canada and Mexico for international travel. A REAL ID card cannot be used for these purposes. However, the TSA accepts several documents that can prove your identity, such as a passport. To see what other documents are accepted, visit the TSA website at you do not show a compliant license or acceptable alternative, you will not be allowed to pass through the security checkpoint starting October 1, 2020. Minors under 18 traveling domestically with someone else inside the United States only need proper identification, but the adult traveling with them must have a REAL ID-compliant license or another accepted form of identification. Starting on October 1, 2020, anyone accessing federal facilities, nuclear power plants, or boarding commercial aircraft needs to have a REAL ID compliant license/ID. Although, the Act does not require individuals to present identification for non-federal purposes, agencies can still accept other forms of documents showing your identity. To check if your license or identification card is REAL ID compliant, look for one of five markings on the upper part of the card. If the card doesn't have any of these markings, it's not compliant. The required markings are: a yellow star, black star, yellow circle with a hollow star in the middle, black circle with a hollow star in the middle, and a yellow bear with a hollow star on its hind quarters. You can get a REAL ID by visiting your state's licensing agency, which will require documentation showing your full legal name, date of birth, social security number, two proofs of address, and lawful status. Some states may have additional requirements, so double-check to ensure you meet all the requirements. As of September 5, 2019, 50 territories and states are completely compliant with the REAL ID Act. By May 1, 2025, federal organizations will only accept state identification forms if they are REAL ID-compliant and have a star marking proving it's REAL ID-compliant. Enhanced driver's licenses (EDLs) from these states: Washington, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, and Vermont, do not have the star marking but are still acceptable. The deadline for enforcement is October 1, 2020. Before then, travelers need to visit their state's driver's license agency to get a REAL ID compliant card or another accepted option, like a US Passport. The REAL ID act was passed by Congress in 2005 and puts security guidelines in place for the issuance of identification. Starting on May 7, the Transportation Security Administration will enforce federal laws that require flyers to meet new identification requirements. As of May 2025, U.S. residents must have a Real ID to travel. By May 7, you must have a Real ID to fly domestically or enter certain federal facilities. The requirement comes from the Real ID Act of 2005, which enacted the 9/11 Commission's recommendation that the federal government "set standards for the issuance of sources of identification, such as driver's licenses," according to DHS. This act established "minimum security standards" for state-issued driver's licenses and identification cards, prohibiting certain federal agencies from accepting official purposes licenses and identification cards from states that do not meet these standards. You need to have a Real ID by May 7, 2025. Any individual over the age of 18 who does not have another TSA-approved form of identification to fly domestically must have a Real ID compliant identification card, or driver's license by the enforcement date. However, if you already have another form of TSA-approved form of identification like a passport, then you don't need a Real ID. According to DHS, the best way to find out "exactly what documentation is required to obtain a REAL ID" is to visit your state's driver's licensing agency website. But at a minimum, you will need to provide documentation with your full legal name, date of birth, social security number, proof of address of principal residence and lawful status. To get a Real ID in Massachusetts, you must make an appointment for an in-person visit at an RMV Service Center or AAA branch (if you're a member), according to mass.gov. You must present four identity documents: One proving you're in the U.S. legally, like a passport or birth certificate; One proving your full 9-digit social security number, like a SSN card or a W-2 form that displays the 9-digit SSN; Two proving you live in Massachusetts, such as a current driver's license, a current lease or mortgage, a pay stub dated within 60 days, or certain school or insurance-related documents. It can take up to two weeks for the RMV to send you your Real ID. You don't need a real ID if you have a passport, as it is a TSA-approved alternative. TSA-approved alternatives include: U.S. passport; U.S. passport card; DHS trusted traveler cards (Global Entry, NEXUS, SENTRI, FAST); U.S. Department of Defense ID, including IDs issued to dependents; Border crossing card; An acceptable photo ID issued by a federally recognized Tribal Nation/Indian Tribe; HSPD-12 PIV card; Foreign government-issued passport; Canadian provincial driver's license or Indian and Northern Affairs Canada card; Transportation worker identification credential; U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Employment Authorization Card (I-766); U.S. Merchant Mariner Credential; Veteran Health Identification Card (VHIC). To obtain a Real ID in Massachusetts, you must first make an appointment for an in-person visit at an RMV Service Center or AAA branch. You will need to present four identity documents: one proving your legal status in the US, two proving your Social Security number, and two proving your residency in Massachusetts. To obtain a Real ID or Enhanced Drivers License (EDL) in Massachusetts, one must first determine if they need these documents for travel purposes. The Real ID is a federal program that mandates driver's licenses and state-issued identification cards to meet specific security standards. While a regular driver's license suffices for driving in the state, those looking to travel internationally or use their ID for domestic air travel may require one of these advanced ID cards. The Massachusetts RMV offers both Real IDs and EDLs, with distinct requirements for applicants. For example, proof of identity, Social Security number, and Massachusetts residency are standard documents needed. However, for individuals seeking a free Real ID due to military service, they must present their military ID along with a copy of their DD214. Those planning to renew their IDs can expect specific requirements; documents presented must be original or certified copies, while photocopies are not acceptable. A vision screening certificate is also necessary, and applicants must pay all applicable fees when applying for either license. Visitors should note that Massachusetts does not issue Real ID or EDLs and requires a valid passport to travel internationally from the state. To obtain a REAL ID in Massachusetts, you'll need to provide specific documents, including proof of lawful presence, social security number, and Massachusetts residency. The RMV requires original documents that are not laminated. You can find a full checklist of acceptable documents on the state's website. A REAL ID is required for domestic air travel and entering federal buildings after May 7, 2025. If you don't have one yet, there's no need to rush - but if you plan to fly or require a REAL ID for another purpose, now is a good time to familiarize yourself with the process.

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