



WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT THE REAL ID

By Dev Berger | Managing Editor

Many people are confused about REAL ID requirements made worse by a May 7 application deadline. Issues causing the confusion were the long history related to the REAL ID Act, the varied implementations by states, and the shift in emphasis from counterterrorism to immigration control for having the REAL ID. Some people are also unclear if they already have a REAL ID, or if they need to obtain a new one, especially if they have recently renewed their driver's license.

Here's a summary of information about the Real ID in California taken from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) website, that you can always access for more information.

WHAT IS IT AND ITS PURPOSE?

In California, a REAL ID is a state-issued driver's license or ID card meeting federal security standards, allowing you to board domestic flights and enter federal facilities.

HOW OBTAINED?

Obtaining the REAL ID, involved visiting a DMV office in person, providing proof of identity, California residency, your Social Security number, and completing an online application. Incidentally, although you could start the application online, you had to complete it in person at a DMV office.

	
WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE	The REAL ID in California has a golden bear and a star on the card.
OPTIONAL (REQUIRED IN SOME CASES)	While a REAL ID is optional, it is needed to board domestic flights and access certain federal facilities after May 7, 2025.
ALTERNATIVE IDs	You can use a valid passport or certain other accepted forms of identification as an alternative to a REAL ID for domestic flights and federal facilities.

If you missed the California May 7, 2025, REAL ID deadline, you're able to fly with alternative forms of identification, but it might require additional screening. Acceptable alternatives include a valid U.S. passport, a Green Card, or other forms of identification issued by DHS. You can find a comprehensive list of accepted alternatives on the TSA website,

Remember, you have the option to apply for a REAL ID when you renew your California driver's license.

Source for article: Department of Homeland Security