

I have been contacted by several constituents due to confusion and concern about the validity of a Pennsylvania drivers license as a result of the federal REAL ID Act.

This is the current status of this matter as of Nov. 1, 2016:

Pennsylvania's Act 38 of 2012 which prevents the Commonwealth from doing anything to comply with the federal act-- The Federal Real ID Act. Act 38 was vetted through the State Government Committees in the House and Senate before being approved by both houses of the General Assembly and signed into law by the governor.

The short answer is that Pennsylvania is compliant with REAL ID until 2018 for airline travel through an extension granted by the federal government. They've extended before and may again in the future. Pennsylvania has received extensions from the federal deadline for compliance over the years since we passed Act 38, even though we did not request them.

Persons eventually may have to get a federal passport card to travel on planes which is already required to go to Canada and on some cruises.

According to PennDOT at the time of passage of Act 38, a Real ID compliant driver's license will cost the department \$141 million in startup costs and \$39 million in increased operating costs over nine fiscal years. That would make it very costly to obtain your driver's license if it were Real ID compliant.

So even if Pennsylvania were to comply with Real ID, chances are it would cost you about \$100 for a real ID Driver License, which is only good for four years, while you could obtain a US Passport card now for \$30, which is good for ten years. In the long run, it will probably be much cheaper and more convenient for you to obtain a US Passport Card instead of a Real ID compliant Pennsylvania driver's license.

Also, any PA Real ID compliant driver's license would require persons standing in line at an already overcrowded PennDOT driver license facility with their original raised-seal Birth Certificate. A photocopy or hospital issued birth record is not acceptable to the federal government. Additionally, if you change your address at any time you would be required to physically come in to a PennDOT driver center with proof of residence such as your utility bill in your name or tax records, etc., to prove that you actually live at that address.

As an overview, on January 30, 2017, Phase 1, 2 and 3 would be applied to Pennsylvania residents.

- Phase 1 – Restricted areas (i.e. areas accessible by agency personnel, contractors and their guests) for DHS's Nebraska Avenue Complex headquarters.
- Phase 2 – Restricted areas for all Federal facilities and nuclear power plants.
- Phase 3 – Semi-restricted areas (i.e. areas available to the general public but subject to ID based access control) for most Federal facilities. Access to Federal facilities will continue to be allowed for purposes of applying for or receiving Federal benefits.
- Phase 3a- Facility security Levels 1 and 2
- Phase 3b- Facility Security Levels 3, 4 and 5

It is not clear at this point what other acceptable identification would be in place of or in addition to the Pennsylvania driver's license ID. You may recall the Department of Homeland Security has stated that the individual federal agencies will make that determination, so we will need to explore that question.

- Starting January 22, 2018, passengers with a driver's license issued by a state that is still not compliant with the REAL ID Act

(and has not been granted an extension) will need to show an alternative form of acceptable identification for domestic air travel to board their flight. Passengers with driver's licenses issued by a state that is compliant with REAL ID (or a state that has been issued an extension) will still be able to use their driver's licenses or identification cards.

- Starting October 1, 2020, every air traveler will need a REAL ID-compliant license, or another acceptable form of identification, for domestic air travel.

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