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Strength in Numbers 95,000

LEGISLATIVE ACTION ALERT

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"Don't be left at the airport terminal"



TSA Warns Travelers Without REAL ID Could Miss Their Flights Beginning May 7, 2025

Beginning May 7, travelers without a REAL ID-compliant form of identification should “expect additional screenings” that may lead to “delays and the possibility of not being allowed into the checkpoint, and that includes our TSA PreCheck passengers,” a senior official at the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) told Forbes, adding that 80% of TSA PreCheck members have a passport.

“We are used to dealing with people who lose their wallets and IDs,” the official said, “and we have ways to vet passengers and make sure we’re satisfied the person standing in front of us is the person they say they are.”

“The goal is not to impact those passengers who are prepared with their REAL ID, passport or another acceptable form of ID,” the official said. Enforcement “may look different at every airport” and security lines may be longer at smaller airports where “we don’t have the option to set up a separate lane for those without a REAL ID,” the official said.

Uncredentialed passengers flying on a round-trip ticket risk being cleared for the outbound flight but not the return, the official noted, “since additional screening will happen every time you go through a TSA checkpoint at a federalized airport.” The May 7 deadline for REAL ID has been two decades in the making. Enacted by Congress in the aftermath of 9/11 terrorism attack on the United States, the REAL ID Act of 2005 mandates a higher set of minimum-security standards for issuing state-issued driver's licenses and ID cards necessary to enter federal buildings and fly domestically. The original deadline for compliance was 2008, but it took until 2020 for all states to make their driver's licenses REAL ID-compliant. The enforcement deadline was delayed further during Covid-19 pandemic due to backlogs in motor vehicle offices.

The TSA has an online quiz to help travelers know whether their state-issued driver's license is a standard ID or a REAL ID. In general, a REAL ID has a star in the upper right corner. The TSA will accept more than a dozen other forms of identification, including passports, passport cards, military IDs, DHS trusted traveler cards (Global Entry, NEXUS, SENTRI, FAST) and U.S. permanent resident cards. “If you went to the DMV and are just waiting for your REAL ID hard copy to come in the mail, bring both the paper copy of the REAL ID and your old ID and we will accept that as long as we can verify both of those IDs,” the TSA official said.

2.1 to 2.7 million. That's how many passengers were screened every day so far in April at airport security checkpoints around the country, according to TSA throughput data. In January, a government report estimated that only 56% of Americans would have a state-issued REAL ID by the May 7 deadline. In a news release, the TSA said 81% of travelers at TSA checkpoints are currently presenting an acceptable credential. That leaves 19% of passengers who are arriving at airports without REAL ID-compliant identification, or potentially 400,000 and 513,000 passengers who could be subject to additional screening every day in the first weeks of enforcement.

“We knew it was going to be complex to implement, but we weren't going to kick the can down the road anymore,” the TSA official told Forbes. “It's been 20 years. We are doing this.”

What Should Passengers Expect?

The TSA's goal is to “implement this in a way that doesn't overly impact the operation during the really busy time,” the official said, adding travelers with a REAL ID should arrive at the airport two hours before departure, “like you do any other time that you fly.” Those without a compliant ID should add an additional hour, “because it's most likely they're going to encounter some of these additional screening measures.”

How much disruption we'll see at airports as REAL ID enforcement begins. While airlines have spent months alerting passengers to the impending change, they recognize some passengers who ignore the warnings will have their travel plans upended.

In some states, the TSA accepts mobile driver's licenses that are REAL ID-compliant at airports equipped with digital ID readers—using facial recognition— instead of traditional paper means of identification, like a driver's license or passport.

"Don't be left at the airport terminal" TEAMSTERS GET YOU REAL ID DRIVERS LICENSE

DELAWARE

https://dmv.de.gov/DriverServices/drivers_license/secureID/index.shtml

NEW JERSEY

<https://www.nj.gov/mvc/realid/>

PENNSYLVANIA

<https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dmv/driver-services/real-id.html>

