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DHS Announces Streamlining Measures To Help States In Issuing REAL IDs



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WASHINGTON – Today, after soliciting ideas, solutions and proposals from the public, states, private sector, and relevant associations, DHS Acting Secretary Chad F. Wolf sent letters to state governors informing them of increased flexibility regarding electronic submission of required documents for REAL ID applications. Specifically, the states may now add the pre-submission of identity and lawful status source documents, through a secure electronic process, prior to an applicant’s in-person DMV visit, and physical presentation of those same documents for authentication and verification by DMV personnel. The result will be a faster, more streamlined process for DMVs and the American public.

“Ensuring every state is REAL ID compliant by October is one of the Department’s top priorities. That is why we have solicited ideas, solutions and proposals from the public, private sector, state governments, and relevant associations in an effort to provide greater flexibility to states for faster, streamlined issuance of REAL IDs,” said Acting Secretary Wolf. “While progress has been made, the real work is still ahead because approximately two-thirds of all licenses are presently not compliant with REAL ID. Rest assured, our Department will continue to examine other viable options to improve upon this process and continues doing everything it can to inform Americans on the requirement to obtain a REAL ID before the full enforcement deadline later this year.”

DHS is providing greater flexibility to states to aid in faster and streamlined issuance of REAL IDs:

- Ensuring every state is REAL ID compliant by October is a top priority.
- 48 of the 50 states are presently issuing REAL IDs, and all states are on track to be REAL ID compliant in the next few months. Nearly 100,000,000 Americans already have REAL IDs.
- DHS is focused on ensuring more citizens can acquire them from their state before the enforcement deadline of October 1, 2020 at which a REAL ID or compliant alternative will be required for domestic air travel.

DHS is taking proactive steps to help the states comply with the REAL ID implementation deadline:

- After soliciting ideas, solutions and proposals from the public, states, private sector, and relevant associations, the DHS letters to 56 state governments (including territories) are informing states of greater flexibility being provided by DHS with regard to electronically receiving of required documents from applicants in advance of physically coming into a DMV with the documentation for the purpose of obtaining a REAL ID.
- The states may now add the pre-submission of identity and lawful status source documents, through a secure electronic process, prior to an applicant’s in-person DMV visit, and physical presentation of those same documents for authentication and verification by DMV personnel.
- DHS expects that these measures will result in reduced wait times at DMVs so more individuals can become REAL ID compliant through a streamlined process, without the manual labor of scanning, copying and filing of paper materials typically performed on site.
- Although DHS is permitting states to undertake these new options, they are not required.

DHS has been listening to the states in an ongoing dialogue between DHS and stakeholders to ensure all air travelers are REAL ID compliant:

- To encourage the submission of ideas and solutions from across the Nation, DHS issued a Request for Information (RFI) on November 7, 2019, requesting substantive business and technical proposals that could streamline the REAL ID application requirements while still ensuring the security and protection of identity information.
- The RFI period closed on December 9, 2019 with the Department receiving 69 submissions from the public, states, private sector, and major associations. DHS has expedited its review of the proposals and is working with the White House Office of Management and Budget and Congress, as necessary, to implement viable solutions.
- While DHS has just concluded the analysis of the RFI, this new action to provide greater latitude to states is one viable option that the Department could act on right immediately via guidance. DHS continues to look at what other actions are possible from a range of perspectives, regulatory and statutory.
- Since the REAL ID Act was enacted in 2005, DHS has worked extensively with every state to provide time, technical assistance, and make grants available to support compliance with the REAL ID Act security requirements.
- Importantly, the Department has been increasing its overall education and awareness efforts with national organizations, the travel industry, state governments, federal agencies, and Congress – including the National Governors Association and the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators – to emphasize the importance of getting the American public prepared for the REAL ID deadline and to solicit their ideas for making it easier for Americans to obtain a REAL ID.

While progress has been made, the real work is still ahead because approximately two-thirds of all licenses are presently not compliant with REAL ID.

- DHS urges the states, District of Columbia, and U.S. territory officials to act to ensure that all their eligible residents obtain driver’s licenses or identification cards that meet these enhanced security standards.
- At the end of January, DHS reported that the states have collectively issued more than 95 million REAL ID-compliant driver’s licenses and ID cards (34%) out of 276 million total cards.
- While this is a noteworthy improvement over the 67 million REAL ID-compliant cards reported a few months earlier, DHS urges the American public to get a REAL ID immediately and not wait until the deadline.
- DHS continues doing everything it can to inform Americans on the requirement to obtain a REAL ID or acceptable alternative ID before the full enforcement deadline for domestic air travel.

Read More: [DHS Steps Up REAL ID Education and Awareness Efforts](#)

Topics: [REAL ID](#)
Keywords: [Acting Secretary Chad Wolf](#), [Department of Homeland Security \(DHS\)](#), [REAL ID Act of 2005](#)

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