

Ask Anne

Worried about the new document requirements for getting a driver license? Never fear! Anne is here! Anne answers some frequently asked questions to help you understand all these new requirements.

Question: Why do I have to bring more documentation to get a driver license?

Anne: The federal REAL ID Act of 2005 set new standards for the issuance of driver licenses and identification cards. REAL ID was developed in response to the 9/11 Commission recommendation that the U.S. improve its system for issuing identification documents.

The goal of REAL ID is to improve the integrity and security of state-issued driver licenses and identification cards, in order to help fight terrorism and reduce fraud.

Question: Does Florida issue REAL ID licenses and ID cards?

Anne: Yes. The REAL ID Act became effective nationwide on May 11, 2008. Florida began issuing REAL ID licenses and ID cards on January 1, 2010.

Question: Will my new card look different?

Anne: Yes. The new license will have a gold star in the upper right corner signifying that you are Real ID compliant.

Question: Do I need a REAL ID license?

Anne: Yes. The Department of Homeland Security expects to announce dates to require a REAL ID to board commercial flights or enter federal facilities no sooner than 2016. Your current Florida driver license or ID card will continue to be valid as identification for federal purposes until October 1, 2020.

Question: Will I still be able to renew my license online after January 1, 2010?

Anne: Yes. You are allowed to renew one time by a convenience method (Internet or mail). Your next renewal must be in a driver license office. For example, if you renewed your license online in March 2010, you will need to visit a driver license office for your next renewal.

Question: Will I be able to have both a REAL ID driver license and a REAL ID identification card?

Anne: No. Each individual can only hold a REAL ID driver license or a REAL ID identification card, but not both simultaneously. If you currently hold both, one will be cancelled the next time you renew.

Question: Can I get my REAL ID license/card before the expiration date on my current license or ID card?

Anne: Yes. A normal Class E license can be renewed up to 18 months prior and a Commercial Driver License up to 12 months prior to the card's expiration date. We encourage early renewals, so don't wait until your expiration date!



ANNE M. GANNON
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