



Information Alert

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Real ID: Brief 4

Requirements for the Real ID Compliant Card

This is the fourth brief in a series summarizing the regulations for implementation of the Real ID Act of 2005. This brief relates to several sections of subpart B of the regulations, which focus on the features of the Real ID card. Brief 5 will address regulations for the non-compliant card and temporary cards. A copy of the regulations and other NCSL resources on the Real ID, including other briefs, are available at: <http://www.ncsl.org/realid>

Minimum Data Element Requirements

The Real ID Act prescribes that a certain set of information and features appear on Real ID compliant, state-issued driver's licenses (DL) and identification cards (ID). The law stipulates the following nine as minimums:

1. The person's *full legal name*;
2. The person's *date of birth*;
3. The person's *gender*;
4. The person's DL or ID *number*;
5. A *digital photograph* of the person;
6. The person's *address of principal residence*;
7. The person's *signature*;
8. *Physical security features* designed to prevent tampering, counterfeiting, or duplication of the document for fraudulent purposes; and
9. A common *machine-readable technology*, with defined minimum data elements.

NCSL, governors and motor vehicle administrators made a number of recommendations addressing data element requirements. They include: requiring the capture of up to 125 characters for full legal name; requiring the federal government to adopt and universally apply common naming conventions to its systems; and, with input from states, developing and applying naming truncation guidelines to all systems accessed under the Real ID. In addition, states recommended that the regulations provide states the necessary flexibility to engineer their system and business processes as it relates to the capture of facial images as long as the image is captured when a DL/ID is issued and before a credential is denied.

The regulations detail the statutorily included nine elements that must be included on the face of the Real ID and add the following to the list:

10. *Issue date*;
11. *Expiration date*;
12. *State or territory of issuance*; and
13. *DHS approved security marking*.

The *full legal name* for the Real ID card must be identical to the name shown on the identity document used to obtain the DL/ID (see Brief 2 for more on identity documents). Any name variations due to marriage, divorce, adoption, or court order must be documented. States must maintain a complete record of an individual's name history. The regulations adopt the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) 9303 Standard for the name as it will appear on the face of the DL/ID. This standard requires Latin alphabet characters, allows a total of 39 characters on the face of the card, and provides standards for truncation of longer names.

Each DL/ID must display a unique *card number*. As federal law prohibits the display of a person's Social Security Number (SSN) on a DL, states must generate a different and unique document number.

States must capture a full facial *digital image* of everyone applying for a DL/ID. If a DL/ID is issued, the image must appear on the face of the card; photographs may be black and white or color. If a DL/ID is not issued, DHS requires that states retain the image for at least five years, regardless of the reason for non-issuance. Digital photographs should comply with ICAO standards, including diffused lighting over the full face eliminating shadows or “hotspots,” a full face image from the crown to the base of the chin and from ear-to-ear, and prohibition of veils, headdresses or eyewear that obscure facial features or the eyes or create shadows. DHS contends that the law makes no allowances for the exclusion of facial photographs based on religious or other beliefs, but states may issue non-compliant DL and ID in such cases. An applicant’s photo should be taken upon reapplication, but not less frequently than every 16 years.

The person’s *address of principal residence* must appear on the face of the card. Conforming to recommendations from NCSL, governors, and motor vehicle administrators, the regulations allow for a state exemption processes for confidential addresses (of judges, victims of domestic violence, protected witnesses, etc.) and applicants with no fixed address be continued.

The person’s *signature* must meet the size, scaling, cropping, color, borders, and resolution requirements stated in existing American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA) standards.

The regulations require states to use the existing AAMVA standard 2D bar code for the *machine-readable technology* on the card. DHS requires that the PDF-417 2D bar code approved by AAMVA store the minimum data elements – expiration date, bearer’s name, issue date, date of birth, gender, address, unique DL/ID number, DL/ID format revision date, inventory control number, and state or territory of issuance. DHS is not requiring encryption of this machine-readable information.

The card shall also include a *DHS approved security marking* to indicate the card’s level of compliance with the Real ID— full v. material compliance (see Brief #1).

Physical Security Features

The Real ID Act requires states to utilize multiple layers of *physical security features* on a DL and ID that are not reproducible using commonly used or available technologies in order to deter forgery and counterfeiting and to promote an adequate level of confidence in the authenticity of the document.

NCSL, governors and motor vehicle administrators recommended that the regulations establish performance requirements for DL/ID cards rather than mandating use of a specific set of security features. Recommendations also included initiating an advisory group composed of document security experts from federal and state agencies to establish national performance criteria and creating a testing program, in cooperation with states, to determine the resistance of DL/ID cards to tampering, counterfeiting or duplication for fraudulent purposes.

The final regulations require states to employ three levels of card security features for Real ID compliant DL/ID:

- Level 1 must provide for easily identifiable visual or tactile features to allow a cursory examination for rapid inspection;
- Level 2 provides for an examination by trained inspectors with simple equipment; and
- Level 3 provides for inspection by forensic specialists.

For example, a state would choose several features, such as tamper-proof printed information, an optically variable feature or an ultraviolet (UV) responsive feature, and satisfy each level of security required under the final regulations.

However, the regulations do not mandate specific security features or card stock for DL/ ID cards. States must conduct a review of it’s DL/ID design and submit a report to DHS that indicates the ability that the card design is resistant to compromise and document fraud. DHS may request an independent laboratory conduct analysis regarding the card’s security features. States must also notify DHS whenever a security feature is modified, added or deleted.

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