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## What does a REAL ID card look like? What does the REAL ID star mean?

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REAL ID card:

- Looks the same as any other Iowa driver's license and ID card.
- Contains the same information.
- Is made of the same materials.
- Has the same security features designed to prevent tampering, counterfeiting, or duplication.



The only difference is that a REAL ID card will have a star verification mark on the front of the card in the upper right corner.



The REAL ID star indicates to officials and employees controlling access to federal facilities that require identification to enter, federally regulated commercial aircraft, and nuclear power facilities that the person holding the driver's license or ID card established their identity, lawful status or presence, and residence in a manner that complied with the federal regulations. The Iowa Department of Transportation began issuing cards with the REAL ID star on Jan. 15, 2013.

REAL ID only affects use of a state-issued driver's license or ID card for these federal purposes. Real ID does not affect any other use of a driver's license or ID card. The lack of a REAL ID star should not prevent use of a driver's license or ID card for any other purpose.

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## Do I have to get a REAL ID card? How do I decide if I need one?

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To start, check your current driver's license or ID card.

- If it already has a REAL ID star, you already have one and you don't need to do anything special to retain it. Just continue to renew your driver's license or ID card as usual, and it will continue to include a REAL ID star.
- If you don't already have an Iowa driver's license or ID card and you are getting a new one or your first one, there is no decision to make. The documents you will need to bring, and the application and issuance process you will follow meets the REAL ID requirements, and the driver's license or ID card issued to you will automatically include a REAL ID star.
- If you already have an Iowa driver's license or ID card but it does not have a REAL ID star, you can decide whether you want to apply for a card that includes a REAL ID star. When you make that decision, you should

consider whether you will need to use your driver's license or ID card as identification to access federal facilities that require identification to enter, board federally regulated commercial aircraft, or enter nuclear power plants.

- You should also consider whether you have other acceptable forms of federal identification that you could use as identification for those purposes instead of your driver's license or ID card (for instance, a valid U.S. passport or passport card, a U.S. Department of Homeland Security trusted traveler card, a permanent resident card, or military ID). A list of Transportation Safety Administration approved documents for travel is available on the TSA's website: [www.tsa.gov/traveler-information/acceptable-ids](http://www.tsa.gov/traveler-information/acceptable-ids)
- If you don't intend or expect to use your driver's license or ID card for those federal purposes, or if you have other forms of acceptable identification you can use, you may decide you don't need to apply for a card with a REAL ID star. If you change your mind or find out later that you do need one, don't worry because you can apply for a duplicate driver's license or ID card before or after Oct. 1, 2020, and request that it be REAL ID-compliant.

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## **What will happen if I don't have a REAL ID card and I try to use it for one of the three federal purposes on or after Oct. 1, 2020?**

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Assuming you don't have another form of acceptable identification to use, you could be subjected to alternate access procedures if you try to use driver's license or ID card that does not have a REAL ID star to:

- Enter a federal facility that requires identification to enter.
- Board a federally regulated commercial aircraft.
- Enter a nuclear power facility.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security, which administers REAL ID, has not defined what alternate access procedures will be for each federal agency, and it is likely that enforcement, access, and screening will vary between different federal activities and facilities.

Each federal agency will determine whether identification documents are needed to access the facilities and places it oversees, and, if applicable, what identification documents are acceptable and what alternate access procedures it will follow. It is important to remember that a REAL ID card:

- Will not be needed to enter any federal facility or place that does not require identification to enter.
- Does not apply to voting or registering to vote; applying for or receiving federal benefits; access to health or life-preserving services, including health clinics and hospitals.
- Does not apply to access to law enforcement and access to constitutionally protected activities, including legal and investigative proceedings.

You will not be prohibited from doing or accessing these things just because your license or ID card does not have a REAL ID star. You can read more about the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's enforcement strategy and schedule at [www.dhs.gov/real-id-enforcement-brief](http://www.dhs.gov/real-id-enforcement-brief).

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## How do I get a REAL ID-marked card?

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Whether you are getting your first Iowa driver's license or ID card or renewing or replacing an Iowa driver's license or ID card that doesn't have a REAL ID star, the process is the same.

You will need to go to an Iowa driver's license station and present documents that prove your:

- Identity.
- Date of birth.
- Social Security number (or immigration number for persons authorized to be present in the United States but not issued a Social Security number).
- Legal status or authorized presence in the United States.
- Residency and residential address in Iowa.

To identify the documents you will need to present, use the Iowa Department of Transportation's web application Prepare for Success [www.iowadot.gov/mvd/realid/success.html](http://www.iowadot.gov/mvd/realid/success.html). Just answer a few questions and the system will create a customized list of the documents you will need to bring with you. You can also review and list of acceptable documents there.

**Once you have a card with a REAL ID star, you will not have to bring these documents again to renew it.** You only have to go through this process one time. After that, renewal cards issued to you will continue to include the REAL ID star without again presenting proof of identity, date of birth, Social Security number, and residency and residential address. However:

- If you are a foreign national with temporary lawful status, you must provide proof of lawful status at each renewal.
- If your name, date of birth, or sex changes, you will have to provide documentation that proves the change. (This is true whether you have a card that has a REAL ID star or not.)

It does not cost more to get a card with a REAL ID star and there are no tests required to add a REAL ID star. The REAL ID star does not affect how long the card is valid.

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## When can I get a card with a REAL ID star? If I need one do I have to get it by a certain date?

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Iowa started issuing REAL ID cards on Jan. 15, 2013, so you can get one at any time.

If you don't already have a driver's license or ID card with a REAL ID star and decide you need one, there is no reason to rush out to get one.

- If your driver's license or ID card will expire before Oct. 1, 2020, you can wait until it is time to renew your driver's license or ID card.
- If your driver's license or ID card will expire after Oct. 1, 2020, or if you are over 70 and have a nonexpiring card issued before Jan. 1, 2014, you can come in at any time before or after Oct. 1, 2020, and apply for a duplicate card marked as REAL ID-compliant. (The fee for a duplicate card is \$10.)

Again, a REAL ID driver's license or ID card is not mandatory, and some people may find they do not need one. We encourage you to review all of our REAL ID FAQs [www.iowadot.gov/mvd/realid/faq.html](http://www.iowadot.gov/mvd/realid/faq.html) to decide whether and when you need a REAL ID card.