The REAL ID Act – What You Need to Know

The REAL ID Act is a law requiring travelers carrying a driver's license from certain U.S. states and territories to carry a second U.S. government-approved form of ID when travelling by air. The REAL ID Act – an Act of Congress that modifies U.S. federal law pertaining to security, authentication, and issuance procedures standards for the state driver's licenses and identity documents, as well as various immigration issues pertaining to terrorism – has been in effect since 2005, but it was implemented in phases. The fourth and final phase takes effect on January 22, 2018.

Who is affected?

Twenty-seven states and territories are currently non-compliant, and they must meet federal requirements to add extra security features to their driver's licenses by the deadline of January 22, 2018. Travelers living in any of these non-compliant states could be required to use an alternative approved ID, which includes a U.S. passport or a military ID, in addition to their state-issued driver's license. Of the 27 non-compliant states, however, all but six of those have been granted extensions until October 2020. The six states and territories without extensions are:

- Illinois
- Minnesota
- Missouri
- New Mexico
- Washington
- American Samoa

What can travel managers do?

It is important to share this information with your travelers. Know which states are not in compliance, either through the map graphic provided or by checking the compliance status online. If the state or territory is not compliant, travelers from those areas must use an alternative ID from the U.S. Transportation Security Administration's approved list of acceptable IDs. Some of those alternative IDs include:

- U.S. passport
- U.S. passport card
- DHS trusted traveler cards (Global Entry, NEXUS, SENTRI, FAST)
- U.S. military ID (active duty or retired military and their dependents, and DoD civilians)
- Permanent resident card
- Border crossing card

For more information about the REAL ID Act, visit the TSA's Frequently Asked Questions.