



## TSA Imposes New Fees on Travelers Without REAL-ID



*TSA checkpoint at MEM International Airport (formulanone photo)*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – This week, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) [announced](#) that they will begin issuing fines of \$45.00 against anyone who enters airport security without a REAL-ID-compliant form of identification starting February 1, 2026. This is a notable increase from the \$18.00 penalty first floated by the agency just last month.

REAL-ID [compliant identification includes](#) any driver's license or state-issued ID card with a star symbol in the corner (or a bear symbol in California), a United States Passport or passport card, any form of photo-ID issued by a federally recognized tribe, an Enhanced Driver's License/ID, and DOD ID (including IDs issued to dependents), among others.

The controversial REAL-ID program was authorized in 2005 in response to recommendations of the 9/11 Commission to enforce stricter acceptable IDs for airline

travel. The program's full implementation was delayed several times due to public opposition to the program, technical complications, and more recently, the COVID-19 pandemic. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) finally implemented the program in full on May 7, 2025. Through the Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2006, Congress authorized the TSA to collect a fee for those who seek alternative authentication methods.

The TSA initially announced an \$18.00 fee for alternative authentication methods, which was published in the Federal Register on November 20, 2025. In the [press release](#) issued on December 1, however, the TSA announced the new authentication system – [TSA Confirm.ID](#) – that will be used to process the verification for travelers who enter the airport security line without an acceptable ID. The same day, another Federal Register Notice was published, which cited the government's incurred costs of rebranding the TSA Confirm.ID program as the reason for increasing the fine to \$45.00. The press release also emphasized that these travelers should expect delays.

The Navajo Nation Washington Office has been proactively advocating to the Department of Homeland Security since the end of the COVID-19 pandemic to take into consideration the burdens that the REAL-ID program places on those living in Indian Country. NNWO met with then-Secretary Mayorkas and other DHS leadership in 2024 to request technical support for tribes to develop REAL-ID compliant Tribal IDs, and to issue renewed guidance to TSA to remind them that Tribal-IDs are acceptable IDs for air travel.

In recent meetings with tribal leadership from DHS in 2025, they reaffirmed the validity of Tribal-IDs under the REAL-ID program. Still, some officers at TSA and other DHS agencies dispute the acceptance or authenticity of Tribal IDs. NNWO is continuing to engage with DHS and federal partners to push for the rights of Native Americans and to reaffirm Tribal Sovereignty regarding Tribal IDs under the REAL-ID authorities.

### **KNOW YOUR RIGHTS:**

Per TSA's [own policies](#), TSA officers must accept Tribal IDs. If the ID cannot be scanned, they may ask for a second scannable ID to confirm, but this does not incur the \$45.00 penalty.

If you encounter issues with TSA or any other DHS agency, not accepting your tribal photo identification, report them immediately to the Department of Homeland Security and to NNWO: [Tribal.Affairs@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:Tribal.Affairs@hq.dhs.gov) and [Info@NNWO.org](mailto:Info@NNWO.org).