

REAL ID: What You Need To Know In NJ

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If you haven't upgraded to a REAL ID yet, it is important to start this process as soon as you can.

As of May 7, 2025, your standard New Jersey driver's license will no longer be enough to board a domestic flight or enter certain federal buildings.

At **The Paton Law Firm**, we understand that government deadlines and document requirements can be overwhelming—especially when they involve layers of paperwork. That's why we've broken everything down for you in this quick, easy-to-follow guide to REAL ID in New Jersey.

So, What *Is* a REAL ID?

The REAL ID Act was passed by Congress in 2005 as a post-9/11 security measure. It requires state-issued IDs—like driver's licenses—to meet certain federal standards. A REAL ID looks similar to your regular license but has a **gold star** in the top right-hand corner.

As of May 7, 2025, you'll need a REAL ID (or a valid passport) to:

- **Board a domestic flight**
- **Enter certain federal buildings**
- **Access military bases**

You **won't** need a REAL ID to drive, vote, get federal benefits, go to the doctor, or enter a post office or courthouse. And if you don't plan to fly or visit federal buildings, you're not required to get one.

What Documents Do You Need?

The New Jersey MVC uses a simple formula: **2 + 1 + 6 = REAL ID**

Step 1: Two Proofs of Address

Bring **two** of the following:

- Utility or credit card bill (dated within the last 90 days)
- Bank or credit union statement (within 60 days)
- Lease or rental agreement (must be unexpired)
- NJ driver's license or renewal form with your address
- First-class mail from a government agency (within 6 months)
- Government-issued tax document or letter (within the last year)
- Parental certification of address (for minors under 18)

Step 2: One Proof of Social Security Number

Choose **one**:

- Social Security card
- Pay stub with your full SSN
- W-2 or 1099 form (issued in the past year)
- You may also enter your SSN directly into the REAL ID application for electronic verification

Step 3: Six Points of Identification

This is where it gets a bit more complex. You'll need a mix of documents that total **six points**, using a combination of **primary** and **secondary** IDs. (You are probably already used to this since it is what is needed whenever you usually go to the Motor Vehicle Commission - MVC)

Here are some examples:

Primary Documents (Higher Points):

- U.S. Passport or Birth Certificate (4 points)
- Certificate of Naturalization (4 points)
- Permanent Resident Card (3 points)

Secondary Documents (Lower Points):

- U.S. school or college photo ID with transcript (2 points)
- Marriage certificate or court order for legal name change (2 points)
- NJ firearm purchaser ID, military ID, or other government-issued cards (varies)

Bring **original or certified copies**—photocopies won't be accepted.

Don't Wait Until the Last Minute

Appointments are required to get your REAL ID at the MVC. Long wait times are still common at some MVC locations. Beat the rush by scheduling your appointment now.

You can make an appointment and see the full list of acceptable documents on the NJ MVC website. [REAL ID | NJMVC REAL ID](#)

Here is a link to the appointment portal: <https://telegov.njportal.com/njmvc/AppointmentWizard>

Legal Tip from The Paton Law Firm

If your name doesn't match across your documents due to marriage, divorce, or legal name change, bring the **supporting legal documents**—like a certified marriage certificate or court order—to avoid delays. These issues are more common than you think, and we can help you prepare.

Source: [REAL ID in New Jersey requirements and documents you need](#)