

NJ expanding access to REAL ID appointments

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The New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission has increased appointment access for REAL IDs on Thursdays as the May 7 REAL ID deadline approaches.

A March 4 press release from the commission stated that this is to begin March 20 at licensing centers across the state, adding nearly 4,500 new appointments each week. These appointments are to include license renewal appointments and REAL ID non-renewal appointments so customers, regardless of when their license expires, will be able to upgrade to a REAL ID.

"Over the last few months, we've seen a dramatic increase in demand for REAL ID from our customers, and we've repeatedly added and reallocated appointments to better meet that demand," Latrecia Littles-Floyd, the commission's acting chief administrator, said in the press release.

"The new initiative announced today will expand access further, helping to service more customers who need or want to get a REAL ID. If you have a passport or another federally accepted ID, you may continue to use it to meet federal REAL ID requirements, or until you are able to obtain a REAL ID driver license or ID at a convenient time."

Those interested in scheduling an appointment can book the additional timeslots beginning the morning of March 14.

Beginning April 5, the commission is also to host new REAL ID Mobile Unit Events on Saturdays across the state.

What is a REAL ID?

A REAL ID, compliant with the REAL ID Act, is meant to apply higher security standards for state-issued licenses and identification cards, according to [usa.gov](https://www.usa.gov).

A REAL ID is essentially an upgraded version of your state identification card or license. It has a small star in the upper righthand corner.

When is the REAL ID deadline in New Jersey?

Beginning on May 7, a REAL ID or acceptable substitute is needed for those who plan to access certain areas of federal government facilities and military installations, nuclear power plants or, most commonly, domestic flights on federally



The REAL ID NJ driver's license has a white star in gold in the upper right corner.

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regulated commercial airlines.

While a REAL ID is not mandatory (you can still use other forms of identification), it may be a more convenient option for those who fly frequently.

What can you use instead of a REAL ID?

If you don't have a REAL ID ready by the deadline, there are still some options available so you don't miss your flight.

These documents include a passport, a permanent residence card, U.S. Department of Defense ID, and more. A full listing can be found on the TSA website.

The acceptable substitutes may also be used to enter some of the more restricted areas of federal facilities.

How do you get a REAL ID?

Those who plan on picking up a REAL ID should start by making an appointment through the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission website to find the closest appointment available at their local vehicle center.

When preparing for the appointment, you should bring the following:

- Two proofs of residential address (such as bank statements from the last 60 days or tax receipts).
- One proof of Social Security number.
- And six points of ID, which can be found in more detail on the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission website.

Kaitlyn McCormick writes about trending issues and community news across South Jersey for the Courier-Post, The Daily Journal and the Burlington County Times. If you have a story she should tell, email her at kmccormick@gannett.com. And subscribe to stay up to date on the news you need.