

Press Release

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DHS DETERMINES 13 STATES MEET REAL ID STANDARDS *Remaining States Provided Additional Time to Comply*

WASHINGTON— On December 20, 2012, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) determined that thirteen states have met the standards of the REAL ID Act of 2005 (“Act”) for driver’s licenses and identification cards and has granted a temporary deferment for all other states and territories.

Currently, DHS has determined that Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Iowa, Indiana, Maryland, Ohio, South Dakota, Tennessee, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming have met the Act’s requirements. The Department commends these states on the substantial progress in working toward these goals and the improvements in security for state-issued driver’s licenses and identification cards since 9/11.

Other states have not provided sufficient information, at this time, for DHS to determine if they meet the Act’s requirements. These states will have an opportunity to respond with additional information before DHS makes a final determination. DHS will continue to receive and review state submissions on a rolling basis.

Beginning January 15, 2013, those states not found to meet the standards will receive a temporary deferment that will allow Federal agencies to continue to accept their licenses and identification cards for boarding commercial aircraft and other official purposes.

DHS’s goal is to implement the REAL ID Act, as required by law, in a measured, fair, and responsible way. In the coming weeks and months, DHS will, in consultation with States and stakeholders, develop a schedule for the phased enforcement of the Act’s statutory prohibitions to ensure that residents of all states are treated in a fair manner. DHS expects to publish a schedule by early fall 2013 and begin implementation at a suitable date thereafter. Until the schedule is implemented, Federal agencies may continue to accept for official purposes driver’s licenses and identity cards issued by all states.

Secure driver’s licenses and identification documents are a vital component of a holistic national security strategy. Law enforcement must be able to rely on government-issued identification documents and know that the bearer of such a document is who he or she claims to be.

The REAL ID Act, passed by Congress in 2005 enacts the 9/11 Commission's recommendation that the Federal Government "set standards for the issuance of sources of identification, such as driver's licenses." The Act establishes minimum security standards for license issuance and production and prohibits Federal agencies from accepting for official purposes those documents issued by a state unless DHS determines that the state meets the minimum standards.

Official purposes, as defined in statute and regulation, are accessing a Federal facility, boarding federally-regulated commercial aircraft, and entering nuclear power plants. DHS has twice modified the statutory deadline in order to allow states more time to meet the statutory requirements of the Act in a period of declining state revenues.

To assist states further in meeting this challenge, from FY2008 to 2011, DHS awarded \$263 million in grants to improve the security of state identification credentials.

For more information, DHS has posted frequently asked questions on its website at <http://www.dhs.gov/secure-drivers-licenses>.

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