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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 7, 2025

One Month Away Until the STAR ID (REAL ID) Enforcement Begins: What You Need to Know

MONTGOMERY -- The Alabama Law Enforcement Agency (ALEA) reminds Alabama residents that the REAL ID Act of 2005, will go into effect on May 7, 2025. This means Alabamians planning to fly domestic in the United States (U.S.) or enter certain federal facilities will need a REAL ID-compliant driver license (known as STAR ID in Alabama) or another acceptable form of identification, such as a passport. In 2012, Alabama began offering STAR IDs statewide to ensure those who wished to obtain a STAR ID were able, well before the federal deadline.

“Currently, citizens who fly domestic are able to use their regular driver licenses or other photo identity cards issued by their state’s Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to board a plane,” explained Holley Cook, Director of ALEA’s Driver License Division. “However, the REAL ID Act changes this. If you plan to use your state-issued ID or driver license to fly within the U.S. then it must be REAL ID compliant after May 7, 2025. In Alabama, the REAL ID is known as a STAR ID.”

The REAL ID Act, passed in 2005, aimed to enhance the security of state-issued identification documents in response to the 9/11 terrorist attacks. **While a STAR ID is optional**, travelers will need some form of federally accepted identification to board a domestic flight in the U.S. This includes a valid U.S. passport or other approved ID. A complete list of acceptable forms of identification can be found on TSA’s website [HERE](#).

Director Cook continued and explained, “If you don’t plan to fly or plan on visiting certain federal facilities, including some military installations, then a STAR ID is not necessary. Your regular Alabama driver license will continue to be valid for driving, voting, and other everyday activities. It is completely up to the individual if they wish to get a STAR ID or not.”

To avoid prolonged wait times, ALEA encourages citizens to schedule an appointment online for STAR ID services [HERE](#).

However, please be advised that STAR ID appointments are filling up fast in Alabama’s larger cities such as Huntsville, Birmingham and Mobile. If appointments are booked in your area, please check other nearby examining offices.

Director of ALEA’s Department of Public Safety (DPS) Jonathan Archer said, “As we approach the May 7, enforcement date, we continue to see an influx of citizens coming into our local

examining offices. We ask everyone to use patience when visiting our offices. We also want to clarify that May 7, simply begins the official enforcement period and is not the last day an individual can obtain their STAR ID. This date is the federal enforcement date of the REAL ID Act and citizens who have not obtained their STAR ID, will still have that ability even after May 7.”

“The STAR ID and the REAL ID Act ensures the safe and secure identification of not only Alabamians, but citizens across the country,” ALEA Secretary Hal Taylor said. “While the STAR ID is only one of a variety of acceptable identification options, we strongly encourage individuals choosing to fly within the U.S. to take this step and obtain a STAR ID. Having a STAR ID well before your travel date will guarantee a smooth and worry-free experience.”

Below are some frequently asked questions and answers to provide further clarification for STAR ID:

1. How do I get my STAR ID?

Individuals must visit an ALEA Driver License Exam Office in-person, with the appropriate documents to obtain a STAR ID. The Agency offers an online guide at: <https://al.accessgov.com/star-id/Forms/Page/star-id/star-id>, designed to assist with the STAR ID application process, as well as to determine eligibility. The online guide also provides ALEA Driver License Examining Office locations across the state.

2. What if my name has changed or documents feature the name of my spouse or parent?

If the applicant’s name has changed from the name displayed on the document presented to verify identity and date of birth, certified documents verifying this change are also required (ex. marriage certificate, adoption, court order). If utility bills or other similar documents feature the name of the applicant's spouse or parent, the applicant must produce a marriage certificate or birth certificate verifying residence address.

3. Can I make an appointment to obtain my STAR ID?

Yes, you may schedule an appointment with ALEA’s Driver License by visiting, <https://alabamadl.alea.gov/> . However, please be advised that appointments in Alabama’s larger cities such as Huntsville, Birmingham and Mobile are filling up quickly. Please do not wait until the last minute. Lines will only get longer the closer we get to the enforcement period.

4. How do I know if I already have the STAR ID or not?

To check if your Alabama driver’s license is a STAR ID, look for a gold star in the upper left corner. Licenses issued on or after April 25, 2022, that are not compliant with the REAL ID Act will display “Not for Federal Identification” at the top.

5. Can I Get My STAR ID After May 7?

Yes. While May 7, 2025, begins the enforcement period for TSA and federal facilities to begin enforcing the STAR ID requirement for domestic flights and access to federal buildings, you can still obtain your STAR ID after this date if you are not traveling immediately.

6. Does my teen need the STAR ID to fly?

TSA does not require children under 18 to provide identification when traveling within the United States. However, since Alabama begins the licensing process with a learner license at age 15, STAR IDs may be issued to ages 15 years and up. Please contact the airline for questions regarding specific ID requirements for travelers under 18.

7. How much is a STAR ID?

The fee for a STAR ID is \$36.25, the same as for a regular Alabama driver's license or non-driver ID card. If citizens choose to wait and obtain their STAR ID at the same time they are renewing their regular license, there is no additional fee from the standard \$36.25 renewal fee.

For more information about the STAR ID and how to obtain it, visit the ALEA website or contact your nearest Driver License Exam Office.

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