NEWS RELEASE

NJMVC
New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission

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As Holiday Travel Season Approaches, REAL ID Appointments Widely Available in NJ

REAL ID Wait Times Plummet from 73 to 3 Days in 2026

New Jerseyans Encouraged to Schedule Appointments Today

TRENTON — With Thanksgiving just weeks away and the holiday travel season fast approaching, REAL ID appointments are widely available at New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission (NJMVC) locations across the state, with average wait times of just three days — a dramatic improvement from the 73-day wait residents faced at the beginning of 2026.

The expanded availability of REAL ID appointments reflects the Sherrill Administration's commitment to making government work better for New Jersey residents. Through targeted operational changes, the NJMVC has dramatically reduced wait times while maintaining high service levels — issuing 750,000 REAL IDs in 2026 and approaching the 1 million milestone for the year.

“Government should make people’s lives easier,” **said Governor Sherrill**. “New Jerseyans were waiting an average of 73 days for a REAL ID appointment, and that was unacceptable. We made operational improvements at the MVC, and now residents can get an appointment in just three days as they prepare for holiday travel.”

“We've made REAL ID appointments more accessible and convenient than ever before,” **said Acting NJMVC Chief Administrator Rosalie Johnson**. “Back in January, New Jersey residents were waiting, on average, over two months to get an appointment. Today, you can schedule an appointment online in minutes and be serviced within days. We’ve cut appointment wait times by 96 percent. This is the kind of progress that New Jerseyans deserve.”

Don't Miss Your Holiday Flight — Schedule Today

Since May 2025, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has required REAL ID-compliant driver licenses or identification cards to board domestic flights. Standard

New Jersey licenses and IDs without the REAL ID star symbol are no longer accepted at airport checkpoints.

Residents who possess a valid U.S. passport, passport card, military ID, or other TSA-approved identification do not need a REAL ID for air travel. However, many residents find REAL ID convenient as their primary form of identification for flying and entering certain federal facilities.

New Jerseyans who need or want a REAL ID are encouraged to schedule an appointment now, with reduced waits and many slots currently available at NJMVC locations statewide.

Strategic Reforms, Dramatic Results

The NJMVC cut wait times by 96% through smart operational reforms — not increased spending. Three key changes made the difference:

- Accepting digital proof of residency — Residents can now use electronic bank statements, utility statements, pay stubs, and other digital documents instead of paper documents, making it easier to prove residency and complete a successful transaction. This simple change has cut failed transactions and repeat customer visits in half at NJMVC agencies statewide.

- Streamlined document verification — Faster verification procedures with expanded document options maintain security and integrity while reducing transaction times and improving the customer experience.

- Expanded service capacity — Streamlined operations enabled the NJMVC to add more appointments systemwide and expand REAL ID services to seven additional agencies in 2026.

"We solved capacity challenges by working smarter, not spending more," **added Acting Chief Administrator Johnson.** "These targeted changes are proof government can deliver better results through creative thinking and improved operations."

Steps to Getting a REAL ID in New Jersey

Step 1: Learn More and Gather Required Documents

Visit the NJMVC's dedicated REAL ID webpage to learn more and gather your required documents. Customers must provide the following to get a REAL ID:

- Two proofs of NJ residency — Customers have many options (e.g., a utility bill, bank statement, mortgage/lease), with a full list available here. Proof of residency can now be provided either as a paper document or on an electronic device like a smartphone or tablet.

- Valid Social Security number (SSN) — Your SSN will be verified with the Social Security Administration. If verification fails, you must provide proof, such as a Social Security card, W-2, or pay stub with full SSN.

- Proof of identity — Customers must provide primary (e.g., U.S. passport or certified birth certificate) and secondary documents that add up to 6 REAL ID Points. These paper-based identity documents must be original or certified copies.

Customers are strongly encouraged to use the online checklist and/or document selector before scheduling an appointment to ensure they have everything that is needed to get a REAL ID.

Step 2: Schedule a REAL ID Appointment

Make a REAL ID appointment on the NJMVC's online scheduler. If you are within three months of the expiration date on your license/ID, you may also upgrade to REAL ID at a renewal appointment.

Step 3: Bring All Required Documents to Your Appointment to Get a REAL ID

Make sure you bring all the required documents from Step 1. Double check. At your appointment, NJMVC staff will verify your documents, take your photo, and issue you a temporary paper license. You will pay the required fee — $35 for a 4-year license/ID; or $11 if you are upgrading ahead of your renewal window and keeping the expiration date on your license/ID — and your REAL ID will arrive by mail within two weeks.

To schedule an appointment or learn more about REAL ID in New Jersey, get started at NJMVC.gov.

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