

The Florida Credentialing Process (Driver licenses and Identification Cards)

Florida law and department processes are designed to provide credentials only to persons showing documentation of legal presence.

How did Florida arrive at its current position?

- Florida began issuing credentials only to those legally present in the U.S. in 1999. (See Ch. Law 99-248.) Credentials issued to undocumented persons prior to this law change would have remained valid through 2005.
- On January 10, 2002 the 16th Statewide Grand Jury issued its report in Case No: SC 01-1095 regarding identity theft in Florida and made several recommendations. Throughout the next several years the DHSMV gradually began implementing the recommendation of the report.
- In 2002, all credentials issued to temporary residents were given an expiration date that coincided with the expiration of their authorized stay in the U.S. or two years, whichever is less. In addition, the department began scanning all identity documents presented by lawfully permanent residents and temporary residents and retaining the images in a secure database. (See Ch. Law 02-259.) Licenses issued prior to the law change would have remained valid through 2008.
- In 2002, the department began to populate its database with legal presence information based on the information already in its possession or based on data that could be electronically verified.
- In 2005, the federal government passed the Real Id Act which contains minimum issuance standards for states to follow when issuing a credential. Included in the list of standards is a requirement that credentials only be issued to individuals who can document legal presence.
- In 2008, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security published the final rules associated with the Real Id Act which established with greater specificity the issuance standards.
- The department began requiring citizens to provide identity documents upon renewal and also began scanning and retaining those documents on January 1, 2010.

The current process for obtaining a credential:

For citizens:

- A U.S. birth certificate or a valid Passport
- Proof of Social Security Number
- Two proofs of residence address
- If a name change has occurred, then proof of the name change is also required.

For lawfully permanent residents and temporary residents:

- A valid Foreign passport or foreign government issued ID and
 - Alien Registration or “Green Card” (Form I-551) for all lawful permanent residents or
 - Evidence from Department of Homeland Security of lawful presence for temporary residents
- Proof of Social Security Number if issued
- Two proofs of residence address
- If a name change has occurred, then proof of the name change is also required

All documents presented by the applicant are scanned and the scanned images are stored by the Department. Only law enforcement personnel and members of the department have access to the stored images.