



Commonwealth of Kentucky Transportation Cabinet

Matthew G. Bevin, Governor

Greg Thomas, Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Media Contact: Naitore Djigbenou

502.782.4829

Naitore.Djigbenou@ky.gov

Jordan Smith

502.782.4828

Jordan.Smith@ky.gov

Upcoming changes to state licenses give Kentuckians options to stay on the move

Citizens can choose between standard or travel credential; all cards will arrive in mail

FRANKFORT, Ky. (August 13, 2018) – The credential Kentuckians rely on most to verify their identities will undergo major upgrades in 2019 to enhance security and to keep travelers on the move. Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) officials today announced the launch of the Confident Kentucky initiative to improve the security of state driver’s licenses and introduce a new Voluntary Travel ID credential that meets federal standards to board U.S. flights and enter select federal facilities.

“A license is more than a pass to drive – it’s used widely for everything from making age-restricted purchases to signing a lease,” said KYTC Secretary Greg Thomas. “Ensuring the security of Kentucky’s credentials while offering options to residents is a priority of the Cabinet, and the upcoming changes accomplish both goals. We want to begin the conversation early about this transition to help Kentuckians stay informed and updated as we move toward implementation.”

Through a phased rollout of the new credentials beginning in January 2019 and extending statewide by the spring, all Kentucky driver’s licenses, permits and personal IDs will have new security features, will arrive in the mail 5-10 business days after residents apply at their local Circuit Court Clerk’s office and will transition to an eight-year lifespan. New pricing will be in place to account for the doubled renewal cycle and additional security features. Once implemented, Kentuckians can request a license, permit or personal ID in one of two versions to best suit their needs: a standard credential or a Voluntary Travel ID credential.

“We’re expanding choice even further by offering applicants over the age of 21 the option between a four-year credential or an eight-year credential during the first four years of this new system,” said Department of Vehicle Regulation Commissioner Matt Henderson. “Starting January 1, 2023, all licenses and IDs will

be valid for eight years. Starting with the 2019 rollout, all CDL credentials will be valid for eight years to maximize convenience for Kentucky's 136,000 commercial drivers whose livelihoods depend on driving credentials and have work schedules that may conflict with traditional office hours."

In addition to operational changes, residents will notice new equipment at Circuit Court Clerk offices to improve efficiency and to provide a more engaging application experience. Kenton County Circuit Court Clerk John Middleton – who served as the immediate past president of the Circuit Court Clerk Association President and worked closely on changes with the project team – shared more details about what Kentuckians can expect when visiting an office after the rollout.

"All Circuit Court Clerk offices will be outfitted with new equipment to process applications faster, and customers will have a chance to verify the accuracy of their personal information, such as name spellings and home addresses, before the application is submitted," said Middleton. "All applicants will leave our offices with a 30-day temporary document that can be used as a driving credential. The applicant's current credential will be altered and returned to be used in conjunction with a temporary document to board U.S. flights until the requested card arrives in the mail."

New credential for air travel and federal facility access

At the recommendation of the 9/11 Commission, the REAL ID Act of 2005 set new requirements nationwide for identification that federal agencies, such as the Transportation Security Administration, may accept for domestic air travel and entrance to certain federal facilities. On October 1, 2020, Kentucky's standard licenses will no longer be accepted to board U.S. flights or enter military bases. The Commonwealth's new Voluntary Travel ID is a state-maintained, federally compliant license accepted at airport security checkpoints and military bases.

Standard driver's licenses and permits will remain acceptable to drive, vote, access federal and social benefit services (such as VA hospitals, Social Security offices, and federal courthouses) and for general identification purposes (such as signing a lease or purchasing age-restricted goods). A Voluntary Travel ID credential offers the benefits of a standard credential and is federally accepted to board U.S. flights and access restricted federal facilities.

As long as Kentucky is under an extension from the Department of Homeland Security, a standard driver's license and ID card can be used to board U.S. commercial flights—until REAL ID enforcement begins October 1, 2020. Kentucky is one of 22 states and U.S. territories currently under extension and expects to maintain extensions until enforcement begins in 2020. At that point, travelers will need a new Voluntary Travel ID, or another [acceptable](#) form of identification, to pass through airport security checkpoints. Air travelers under the age of 18 do not need a Voluntary Travel ID if they are accompanied by an adult with acceptable documentation.

Legislative action, through the passage of House Bill 410, authorized KYTC to make necessary changes to maintain federal access and travel benefits to which citizens are accustomed.

"We listened to comments and concerns from Kentuckians and developed a legislative solution that preserves choice for residents to select a secure credential that works best for their needs," said Rep. Jim DuPlessis. "This law paved a path for Kentucky to revamp its issuance model to comply with federal requirements and modernize operations."

Kentucky is currently compliant with most of the provisions necessary to be deemed federally compliant. The main area of non-compliance is related to the state's decentralized system of more than 140 credential issuance locations. Compliance would require every issuance facility to meet costly security standards – a

change that is not financially viable. The changes announced today will move the production of credentials from over-the-counter to a single secure facility, ensuring optimal security and saving taxpayers between \$13-15 million in required upgrades.

Identity verification and new pricing

The new licensing system is a reset across the board for all identity verification documents. To renew a standard driver's license or personal ID, applicants will only need to surrender their current license. First-time applicants or those requesting a new Voluntary Travel ID credential will need to present documentation verifying identity (e.g. a certified birth certificate, passport or Permanent Resident Card), social security number (e.g. a social security card), and proof of residency (e.g. a utility bill or lease; two proofs required for a Voluntary Travel ID). Personal identification cards require the same verification documents as a license.

Arriving prepared at a local Circuit Court Clerk office with acceptable documentation will save applicants from potential repeat trips. A list of acceptable documentation is available on drive.ky.gov/confidentky.

"We know how valuable time is to our residents who often visit our offices during the workday," said Middleton. "We strongly encourage Kentuckians to take the time now to learn what documents are needed to apply for the credential that best suits their needs. Some applicants may need to budget time to update identity documents to reflect their current name before requesting a new credential."

A new eight-year standard driver's license will be \$43, and a new eight-year Voluntary Travel ID will be \$48. Four-year credentials are half the cost. Non-U.S. citizens (excluding permanent residents) seeking a new standard credential will visit any Division of Driver Licensing Regional Field Office, pay a \$30 application fee to cover federal verification charges and processing, and receive an approval letter to request the credential at their local Circuit Court Clerk office. More complete pricing, including information for motorcyclists and CDL holders, is available at drive.ky.gov/confidentky.

The new look of Kentucky driver's licenses and more details about the security features will be unveiled in September, once the design process is complete. A rollout schedule will be available this fall. Kentuckians are encouraged to find out what documentation they need when applying before the changes take effect to allow enough time to gather needed source documents or update legal names.

To learn more about the upcoming changes, please visit drive.ky.gov/confidentky.

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Editor's Note: Interview footage of Commissioner Henderson is available [here](#).