



COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
TRANSPORTATION CABINET
transportation.ky.gov

Andy Beshear
GOVERNOR

Jim Gray
SECRETARY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contacts: Naitore Djigbenou
502.782.4829
Naitore.Djigbenou@ky.gov

Allen Blair
606.748.3716
Allen.Blair@ky.gov

Kentuckians Encouraged to Get REAL ID Ahead of Holiday Season Air Travel
Average wait times have been cut by over half at Driver Licensing Regional Offices thanks to staff hirings and new line management systems

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Dec. 2, 2025) – With the holidays quickly approaching, Team Kentucky is encouraging Kentuckians to secure a REAL ID before boarding a commercial flight within the United States to ensure a smooth travel experience. Thanks to several customer service improvements, in-and-out times at Driver Licensing Regional Offices have been significantly reduced in recent months, making it easier to upgrade or renew a license.

REAL ID enforcement took effect on May 7, 2025, requiring anyone flying domestically or visiting a military base to present a REAL ID-compliant credential, such as a valid passport or a REAL ID driver's license, permit or ID card. State law gives Kentuckians the choice of a standard or REAL ID license or ID, and about 45% have opted for a REAL ID-compliant card. Since the start of REAL ID enforcement earlier this year, the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) recorded its highest issuance month on record, issuing more than 130,000 credentials in May. From January through October, more than 1.1 million state credentials have been issued, including more than 21,000 permits to 15-year-olds.

"This summer, after hearing concerns from Kentuckians about the in-and-out times at our Driver Licensing Regional Offices, KYTC implemented major changes to improve the customer experience and decrease wait times for services like obtaining a REAL ID," said **Gov. Andy Beshear**. "These changes are making a real difference, and Team Kentucky will continue to build on that progress so people can spend less time in line and more time getting where they need to go."

Average in-and-out times in offices across the state have dropped dramatically in recent months. **From April through October 2025, average walk-in customer wait times fell from 49 minutes to just 14 minutes, and average appointment wait times dropped from 25 minutes to 11 minutes.**

The reduction in wait times is the result of several targeted efforts, including:

- Hiring approximately 125 additional full-time contracted staff this summer.
- Encouraging Kentuckians renewing a credential to use our “Skip the Line” tool to determine whether they are eligible for online or mail-in renewal options, which has freed up office capacity for those who need in-person visits.
- Launching a new line management and text message check-in system to streamline service.
- Opening a fifth location in Louisville – Kentucky’s highest-population city – to better serve Jefferson County and surrounding areas.

To provide even more access, KYTC continues to host Saturday service hours once a month and pop-up licensing events in counties without a regional office. While appointments at offices are suggested, walk-ins are always welcome. Online and mail-in license renewal options remain available for Kentuckians who have a completed vision screening form from an eye specialist or approved medical provider. REAL ID requests must be made in person and are issued by mail within 10–15 days.

“Don’t wait until the holidays to make sure your ID is ready for takeoff,” said **KYTC Secretary Jim Gray**. “If upgrading to a REAL ID driver’s license, be sure to arrive prepared with the right documentation to avoid a repeat trip.”

Customers can find out what documents to bring and locate their nearest regional office by visiting realidky.com and taking the IDocument Guide quiz for a personalized list of accepted documents.

Kentuckians can also use the “Skip the Line” quiz tool at drive.ky.gov to determine whether they can renew their ID by mail or online, or whether they need an in-person visit.

The federal Transportation Security Administration (TSA) also recently announced that it will refer all passengers who do not present an acceptable form of ID and still want to fly an option to pay a \$45 fee to use a modernized alternative identity verification system, TSA Confirm.ID, to establish identity at security checkpoints beginning on February 1, 2026. However, this option does not permanently replace the need for a REAL ID and is only functional for a 10-day travel period.

###

TEAM 
KENTUCKY



transportation.ky.gov