

The Virgin Islands Consortium

BMV to Resume REAL ID Issuance on April 24; Director Clarifies Not All VI Licenses Are REAL ID-Compliant

BMV will resume issuing REAL ID-compliant licenses on April 24. Director McIntosh clarified that not all VI licenses meet REAL ID standards, and residents seeking compliant cards must apply in person with additional documentation.

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The V.I. Bureau of Motor Vehicles has announced that it will resume issuing REAL ID-compliant driver's licenses and identification cards beginning Thursday.

According to BMV Director Barbara Jackson-McIntosh, not all Virgin Islands driver's licenses are REAL ID-compliant. While some residents may hold a REAL ID-compliant

card, others were issued standard USVI driver's licenses that do not meet federal REAL ID standards. The REAL ID option, she explained to the Consortium, requires additional documentation during the application process and must be specifically requested.

As the BMV resumes REAL ID issuance, individuals who previously received a non-REAL ID during the suspension period will now be eligible to receive an updated, compliant version. Those affected will be notified by the BMV to come into the office and complete the process. Ms. McIntosh apologized for the inconvenience caused by the delay in issuing REAL IDs and assured residents that the BMV is prepared to assist those who now wish to upgrade.

For individuals who already possess a valid REAL ID, there is no requirement to update or reapply. "The current REAL-ID is valid for travel and driving," said Ms. McIntosh. However, those whose non-REAL ID has expired and wish to obtain a REAL ID-compliant version must visit the BMV in person and apply with the required documentation.

REAL ID is a federally standardized identification card designed to meet federal security guidelines. It will eventually be required for entry to certain federal facilities and for domestic air travel within the United States. To comply with federal standards, applicants must provide original documentation that verifies their identity, lawful status, social security number, and residency.

Because of these verification requirements, the BMV notes that REAL ID issuance can take up to 30 days from the date of application. Residents are advised to renew early, as licenses and ID cards can be renewed up to three months prior to their expiration date to avoid travel disruptions.

While REAL ID will be necessary for some travel and access to federal buildings, residents are reminded that passports, green cards, and other federally accepted identification documents will continue to be valid for those purposes.

Anyone with questions or in need of further assistance is encouraged to contact the BMV through the "Contact" link at bmv.vi.gov, or by calling one of the local offices:

- St. Croix: 340-713-4268
- St. Thomas: 340-774-4268
- St. John: 340-776-6262

Appointments can also be made online at bmv.vi.gov, and QR codes provided by the agency are available for easy scheduling and additional information.