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REAL ID Delay Acknowledged by BMV as Compliance Becomes Mandatory for Domestic Travel

With REAL ID now required for domestic air travel, BMV acknowledges issuance delays for Virgin Islanders and urges residents awaiting reissued cards to check for notifications, as only federally compliant IDs will be accepted at airports starting today.

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Delta Airlines at the Cyril E. King Airport in St. Thomas in April 2025. By. ERNICE GILBERT, V.I. CONSORTIUM.

The V.I. Bureau of Motor Vehicles has acknowledged delays in issuing REAL ID-compliant identification cards, just as the federal requirement for domestic air travel takes effect today, May 7.

“We apologize for any inconvenience that the delay in issuing REAL-IDs has caused,” said BMV Director Barbara Jackson-McIntosh, who assured residents that those previously issued a non-REAL ID will be notified when their new compliant cards are ready for pickup. “If you were issued a non-REAL ID, you will be re-issued a REAL-ID and will be notified to come into the offices to pick up your REAL-ID,” she stated.

The BMV emphasized that individuals with a valid REAL ID do not need to take further action unless their license or ID has expired. “If you currently have a valid REAL-ID... it is valid for travel and driving,” McIntosh clarified.

The new federal standard requires all travelers flying within the United States to present a REAL ID-compliant form of identification when boarding commercial flights. Standard driver’s licenses or ID cards that are not REAL ID-compliant are no longer accepted for domestic air travel.

REAL ID cards involve a stricter verification process, which, according to the BMV, can take up to 30 days to complete once an application is submitted. In light of this, residents are encouraged to renew their licenses up to three months prior to the expiration date to avoid last-minute disruptions to travel plans.

Alternative forms of identification—such as a valid passport, green card, or other legal travel documents—remain acceptable for international travel and may be used in lieu of a REAL ID where applicable.

To facilitate the process, residents may visit bmv.vi.gov, click on “Contact” to reach the Customer Contact Center, or make appointments online. Direct phone lines are also available: (340) 713-4268 (St. Croix), (340) 774-4268 (St. Thomas), and (340) 776-6262 (St. John).

For convenience, QR codes linking to appointment scheduling and contact resources are available in official notices and digital materials.