

CALIFORNIA DRIVERS LICENSE & CALIFORNIA IDENTIFICATION CARD

When to apply for a California driver's license or identification card

The California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) recommends waiting at least 30 days after your arrival in the U.S. before applying for either card. The DMV must verify your immigration status with the BCIS database and it takes at least 30 days for the information to be available from INS. Your application for either card may be delayed for months if the BCIS data is not accessible by the DMV at the time you apply. Your chances of a smoother and faster application process are increased if you already have a Social Security card.

If you are not planning to drive in the U.S., you should obtain a California Identification card.

The DMV issues the California Identity Card (ID) with your photo on it. This is an easily recognizable form of ID used for cashing checks and proving your age.

- An appointment is recommended (please see www.dmv.ca.gov)
- You will need to present your passport, 1-94, visa documents, and your Social Security card, if you have one. The fee is \$21.00 (as of July, 2006).
- You will be given a receipt. If you do not have a Social Security card, you will be given further instructions to take to the Social Security Administration office.
- There is a three to eight week wait for the card if your application is "clear" when the DMV verifies your immigration documents.

To apply for an original driver license if you are over 18, you will need to do the following:

- Visit a DMV office (make an appointment for faster service)
- Complete application form DL 44 (An original DL 44 form must be submitted. Copies will not be accepted.)
- Give a thumb print
- Have your picture taken
- Provide your social security number
- Verify your birth date and legal presence
- Pay the \$26 application fee (as of July 2006)
- Pass a vision exam
- Pass a traffic laws and sign test. There are 36 questions on the test. A passing score is at least 31 correct answers. You have three chances to pass.

You will then be issued a permit if you have not been licensed before. When you practice, you must have an accompanying adult who is 25 years of age or older with a

valid California license. This person must be close enough to you to take control of the vehicle if necessary. It is illegal for you to drive alone.

If you have a license from another country, or have never had a license, you will be required to take a driving test. If you have a license from another state in the U.S., the driving test can be waived.

California Drivers License Test

To take your driving test, you will need to

- Call a Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) office to set up an appointment. (Driving tests are not given without an appointment.) DMV is located at:

6400 Manila Avenue
El Cerrito, CA 94530
Phone number: 800/777-0133
www.dmv.ca.gov

- Provide proof of financial responsibility (car insurance)

You have three chances to pass the driving test. If you fail, you may practice for a while and make another appointment. There is no waiting period, but you must make an appointment. If you fail to complete the driving test successfully on the first attempt, you must pay a \$5 fee for each additional driving test that is administered under an application for an original or renewal license.

After you pass your driving test, you will be issued an interim license valid for 60 days until you receive your new photo license in the mail. Double-check your address before you leave the DMV and tell the DMV representative if you have moved or if your address is incorrect. If you have not received your license after 60 days, call 800/777-0133 and they can check on the status for you. Have your interim license with you to provide information when requested.

If your name is different on your birth certificate and/or legal presence document than the one you are currently using, you will need to provide an additional document, such as a marriage certificate, dissolution of marriage, adoption or name change document that shows your current name.

Birth date verification and legal presence requirements

The California driver license and ID card have been declared as primary identification documents in this state by the California legislature.

State law requires every applicant for an original California identification (ID) card and/or driver license to show verification of birth date and proof of legal presence within the United States to help safeguard the accuracy and integrity of departmental documents.

Only the original or a certified copy of one of the following documents is acceptable:

- Birth Certificate or passport issued from a U.S. territory

- U.S. Passport
- U.S. Citizen Identification Card
- Certificate of Naturalization or Citizenship
- Resident Alien Card
- Temporary Resident Identification Card
- Canadian Passport or Birth Certificate
- Nonresident Alien Canadian Border Crossing Card
- **Valid foreign passport with a valid Record of Arrival/Departure (form 1-94)**
- Employment Authorization Card
- Mexican Border Crossing Card with valid 1-94
- A valid foreign passport with a “Processed for 1-551” stamp
- Permanent Resident Re-entry Permit
- Refugee travel document
- Certificate of Identity with a valid 1-94
- Valid 1-94 stamped “Refugee,” “Parole or Parolee,” “Asylee,” or Section 207, Section 208, Section 209, Section 212d(5), HP or PIP Notice of Action (1-797 Approved Petition)
- Immigration judge’s order granting asylum
- Valid 1-94 with attached photo stamped “Processed for 1-551 temporary evidence of lawful admission for permanent residence”
- U.S. Border Crossing ID card and Visa with valid 1-94

