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## **By 2020 You'll Need a 'Verified' Drivers License Before It IDs You for a Flight: Cameron on Transportation**

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Something like 1.73 million Americans board airplanes every day.

Each of them must go through a very necessary screening by the Transportation Security Agency. But beginning in late January, a lot of passengers will be denied boarding because they don't have the right kind of identification.

You can thank (or blame) the [Real ID Act](#) passed by Congress in 2005 after 9/11 to make sure people are who they claim to be. As any teen can tell you, it's too easy to obtain a fake ID. If teens can do it, so can terrorists.

Because most people rely on their driver's license as ID, it's been up to states to gain compliance with the federal rules. A lot of those states are not in compliance, but Connecticut has passed the test, sort of.

If you've recently renewed your Connecticut license you know you were given an option: get a "regular" license or a "verified" ID. To get a verified license you needed to bring [extra proof](#) to the DMV: a U.S. passport, birth certificate, original Social Security card, etc.

Look at your Connecticut license and you'll easily see the difference. If yours has a gold star in the upper right corner, you're verified. No gold star, NOT verified — meaning that as of 2020 your license will NOT be enough ID to get you on an airplane. That license clearly says "Not for Federal Identification." But for now, any CT driver's license will get you past TSA for domestic flights.

Sure, you can always use your U.S. passport as ID. It's the gold standard and requires all kinds of identity proof to be issued. But if you don't have a passport and don't have a gold star on your Connecticut driver's license, starting in 2020 you'll have to start thinking about taking Amtrak or driving.

Only about 40 percent of all Americans have a passport. Compare that to countries like Canada (60 percent) or the UK (70 percent). Considering the fact that millions of Americans have never been out of the country, why would they need one? (P.S. Isn't it amazing how those same people always say the USA is #1, having no point of comparison?)

Leaving aside the paranoids who think that having a passport is an invasion of privacy because they are now embedded with [RFID chips](#) containing who-knows-what kind of information about you, we should all have a passport. And getting one is pretty easy.

There are more than 8,000 passport offices in the U.S., most of them post offices or libraries that will process applications certain days each month. But the [main passport office](#) for our state is in Stamford. You can also file your application by mail, but only for renewals. First time applicants must appear in person with all their documentation.

Mind you, U.S. passports are not cheap: \$110 for first time applicants, plus a \$25 application fee. Renewals are also \$110 and "[expedited](#)" passports are an extra \$60.

Turn-around time on your application can be anywhere from two to six weeks. There are also private services that claim to be able to get you a new passport in one day, but they'll cost you.

So the bad news is: if you don't have a passport already, you may need one eventually. The good news is, December is a great time to apply as it's the passport office's "slow season," compared to the summer travel rush.

- [Check Out This Airline If You're Going to France: Cameron on Transportation](#) (July 28)
- [Think Air Travel's Crazy? You Don't Know the Half of It: Cameron on Transportation](#) (Oct. 7)
- [Cramming Passengers on Planes Is Not Just Uncomfortable, It's Also Unsafe](#) (May 19)

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