HOW TO OBTAIN A CALIFORNIA DRIVERS LICENSE OR IDENTIFICATION CARD
The Department of Motor Vehicle (DMV) is responsible for administering vehicle registration, driver licensing, and identification cards.
There are 4 types of non-commercial driver’s licenses (DL)

1. Basic DL- Class C for standard vehicle or truck.
2. Motorcycle-Class M1 or M2 for 2-wheel motorized vehicles.
3. Travel trailer-Class A for a vehicle over 15,000 pounds gross vehicle weight
4. Motorhome- Class B for a vehicle between 40-45 feet.
1. Complete a Drivers’ License/ID application (www.dmv.ca.gov)
2. Schedule an appointment at a local DMV
3. Visit DMV office and provide the following:
   a. Proof of identity and residency
   b. Pay the nonrefundable application fee ($39)
   c. Have your thumbprint scanned
   d. Pass a vision exam
   e. Have your photo taken
   f. Pass a knowledge test (You have three chances to pass)
   g. Pass a driving test (schedule appointment at DMV)
You must present the following documents to prove your identity:

1. Unexpired foreign passport
2. Valid Visa
3. I-94 form
4. I-20 or DS-2019 form
You must present **two** printed documents that provide proof of CA residency. Acceptable documents are:

1. Rental/lease agreement with signatures of the owner/landlord and tenant
2. A utility bill or cellular phone bill
3. Any school document issued by a US institution that includes your date of birth
4. Medical document
5. Employment document
6. Insurance document including medical, dental, vision, life, home, rental, or vehicle

*All residency documents must list the applicant’s first and last name and the California mailing address must match the mailing address listed on the driver’s license application.*
Before you can get a DL in California, you’ll need to first pass a relevant knowledge test and then pass a driving test. Both of these tests are designed to show that you understand the rules of the road and are comfortable driving the vehicle that the license will allow you to drive.

1. Review the CA Driver Handbook
2. Review sample test knowledge test questions
**KNOWLEDGE TEST VS DRIVING TEST**

**Knowledge Test**- A multiple-choice exam that shows you understand traffic laws and safety. Review the California Driver Handbook and sample driver license test on the DMV website.

**Driving Test**- You are required to take a behind-the-wheel driving test with a DMV examiner to ensure that you can operate a vehicle safely and can apply your knowledge of traffic laws in real-life situations.
After successfully passing the knowledge test, you will be issued an instruction permit.

An instruction permit is issued for the purpose of permitting a student driver to legally practice their driving when accompanied by a licensed CA driver who is at least 21 years of age and has had at least one year of driving experience.
THREE TYPES OF ID CARDS:

1. REAL ID CARD
2. STANDARD ID CARD
3. SENIOR CITIZEN ID CARD
As of May 7, 2025, you will not be allowed to use your driver’s license to board a domestic flight unless it is REAL ID compliant. This requirement will also be enforced on military bases, federal courthouses, and other federal facilities.
A REAL ID is a driver’s license or identification card that is federally accepted as a form of identification. REAL IDs are marked with a gold bear and star.
STEPS TO OBTAIN A CA ID?

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DOCUMENTS NEEDED TO APPLY

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QUESTIONS?
CONTACT: ISS@CSUDH.EDU