

Date of Hearing: April 21, 2025

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Lori D. Wilson, Chair

AB 1151 (Connolly) – As Amended March 24, 2025

SUBJECT: Driver’s licenses: identification cards

SUMMARY: Requires the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to amend forms used for the cancellation or surrendering of a driver’s license to allow a person 62 years of age or older to apply for an identification card using the same form. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Requires the DMV to issue an identification card bearing the notation “Senior Citizen” to the applicant upon receipt of the amended form.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Allows the DMV to not issue or renew a driver’s license for any person whose license has been suspended or revoked based on a conviction of a traffic violation and until the period has been terminated. (Vehicle Code (VEH) Section 12805)
- 2) Allows the DMV to refuse to issue or renew a driver’s license to any person who has a disorder characterized by lapses of consciousness that may affect the safe operation of a motor vehicle, unless the DMV acquires medical information which indicates the person may safely operate a motor vehicle, (VEH 12806)
- 3) Allows the DMV to issue an identification card in exchange for a person’s surrendered driver’s license based on physical or mental conditions dictated by the individual or by information provided to the DMV, (VEH 13002)
- 4) Allows any person who surrenders their driver’s license without prejudice, to immediately apply for a license to operate vehicles of a higher class, or when a license has been issued through error or voluntarily surrendered to the DMV. (VEH 13100)
- 5) Allows DMV to require the surrender of any driver’s license that was issued incorrectly due to false or incomplete information and upon neglect of the request, allows DMV to suspend the driver’s license until the correction has been made. (VEH 13362)
- 6) Requires all driver’s licenses held by a person to be surrendered to the DMV upon revocation or suspension of privileges to operate a motor vehicle. (VEH 13551 and 14610)
- 7) Requires the DMV to return all suspended licenses or to issue a new license to a person upon the expiration of the period of suspension or revocation, or if the DMV determines that the grounds for suspension, revocation, or cancellation did not exist at the time the action was taken. (VEH 13551)
- 8) Specifies that the issuance of an original or replacement ID card for a senior citizen shall be issued free of charge. (VEH 14902)

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS: A person may have to surrender their driver's license (DL) for various reasons including license renewal, license update to operate a higher class of vehicles, voluntary surrender, clerical errors, medical conditions, and breaking the law. Sometimes a person over the age of 62 is required to surrender or cancel their license. When a license is surrendered or cancelled, DMV revokes that person's driver's license and upon application for an ID card, DMV processes the application and in three to four weeks mails an ID card to that individual. DMV does not issue identification cards on the same day, or provide access to temporary paper identification. This can result in a person not having a DMV-issued ID card. ID cards are essential for day-to-day activities, such as opening a bank account, identity verification for employment, accessing government services and benefits, and traveling by plane.

In California, a REAL ID is a state-issued driver's license or identification card that meets federal security standards. It is necessary for boarding domestic flights and accessing certain federal facilities. REAL ID requires an in-person application for the first issuance of an ID card. The deadline to have a REAL ID or an alternative federally accepted form of ID is May 7, 2025.

According to the author, "A photo identification card can serve many purposes beyond driving or travel, including checking out a book at a library, banking transactions, picking up prescriptions, public welfare programs, retail transactions, and more. When seniors forfeit their driver's license, they should not be penalized for no longer having an identification card in their possession. With this legislation, seniors will be automatically issued an identification card when they give up their driver's license, and will be able to continue to utilize their ID without requiring a visit to the Department of Motor Vehicles."

Committee concerns: According to the DMV, its IT system does not maintain information about ID cards and DLs in the same DMV database. As a result, a person applying for a REAL ID would have to begin the process all over again should they switch from a DL to an ID card, requiring an in-person visit.

Should this bill move forward, the author may want to remove the requirement for DMV to issue an ID card upon receipt of the application form because DMV is not able to review and produce physical cards on the same day. Processing times may vary based on the volume of applications and available staff. The author may also want to consider requiring the DMV's form for the cancellation or surrender of a DL to include instructions on how that person can apply for an ID card. This change should be made for everyone who needs to surrender their license, regardless of age.

This bill would increase the DMV's costs because it requires changes to forms and to its IT system. According to the Legislative Analyst Office (LAO), the Motor Vehicle Account (MVA), the primary funding source for DMV, is expected to fully exhaust its reserves and become insolvent in 2025-26. The LAO recommends that the Legislature should consider MVA cost pressures when evaluating new proposals. LAO argues that "Until a plan is put in place to address MVA's structural deficit, we recommend the Legislature set a high bar for considering approval of any proposals that create additional MVA cost pressures and accelerate the risk of insolvency."

In the Governor's proposed 2025-2026 budget, the Governor warned that "Given the projected fiscal constraints in the MVA by 2025-26, the Administration will continue to prioritize fiscal discipline and will set a high bar for any new workload or initiatives beyond the DMV's existing

operational priorities. By focusing on core operational priorities, the DMV will focus on serving Californians while navigating the MVA's fiscal constraints.”

The DMV is currently piloting digital driver's licenses and identification cards through their mobile driver's license (mDL) pilot program. Under the mDL pilot program, the DMV is streamlining the process for license and ID renewals for participating individuals. While the pilot program ends on June 30, 2026, the future has potential for providing solutions that might address the issues with acquiring identification. The mDL may make it easier in the future to instantly replace an mDL for a mobile identification card should someone's license be suspended or revoked.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**Support**

None on file

Opposition

None on file

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