

OUR VIEW

Time to plan ahead for Real ID

In just over a year — Oct. 1, 2020 — Oregonians will have to have beefed up identification to board a commercial airplane, enter most federal buildings or visit a nuclear power plant. An exception will be made for visits to a Social Security office that’s not in a federal building, according to Cindy Malone of the Social Security Administration’s regional media office in Denver, Colorado.

There may be a problem getting the new, souped-up driver’s license that is Real ID in time to use it by that day, however.

That’s because Oregon won’t be issuing the new licenses until July 2020. It cannot do so because a state law passed in 2009 barred the Department of Transportation, which issues licenses, from spending money on Real ID requirements unless that money came from the federal government.

The law was rescinded in 2017, no doubt because it became clear the Transportation Security Administration was unlikely to give Oregon more time to comply with Real ID. Too, DOT is in the midst of a computer system overhaul that will allow it to store information to comply with the law.

Real ID came about for a really good reason. It was adopted by Congress in 2005 and was a direct result of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States. It requires those applying for a Real ID card to provide a birth certificate or valid passport, as well as proof of a Social Security number. The whole point is to make air travel, nuclear plants and federal offices safer.

There are other options. People with valid passports or certain other federal ID will still be able to fly, though they will not be able to enter military bases. Too, people with standard old Oregon driver licenses can legally continue to use them for driving and other everyday activities.

Meanwhile, if you fly frequently, you should begin planning for Real ID soon. The Department of Transportation has information on its website to get you going.

