New Mexico IDs no longer acceptable for entry into most federal entities

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Several federal agencies are no longer accepting identification documents (IDs) issued by the State of New Mexico as a result of implementation of the REAL ID Act, Pub.L. 109-13, 119 Stat. 302, enacted May 11, 2005. The REAL ID Act bans federal agencies from accepting IDs that do not measure up to the ID standards promulgated by the federal government.

The Federal government has delayed implementation of the REAL ID Act for years. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has been pressuring several states, including New Mexico, into compliance. DHS has been enforcing the legislation for access to military bases, nuclear power plants and most federal facilities and it has plans to extend the ID requirements for air travel after January 22, 2018.

As of January of 2016, around twenty states were in compliance with the REAL ID law, with several of the remaining states being granted exemptions until later in 2016. However, Illinois, Missouri, New Mexico, and Washington were denied an extension beyond January 10, 2016, making them officially non-compliant. Consequently, certain government installations are prohibited from accepting IDs issued by the State of New Mexico.

Tips for UNM Researchers:

• UNM personnel are advised not to rely on New Mexico-issued IDs as a proper form of identification issued in the U.S. when visiting most of U.S. federal agencies.

• Instead, a valid unexpired U.S. passport or a U.S. passport card (or compliant state’s ID for residents of those states) should be used as a proof of ID issued in the U.S. when visiting the federal agencies and their installations.

• The relevant entities encompass most federal agencies, including Department of Defense, Department of Energy, military bases, and national labs but also less obvious agencies such as the National Science Foundation.

• When planning a visit to a federal facility or military base, contact the facility or the base to determine what identification will be accepted.

Some federal agencies may accept other IDs as alternate forms of ID. For information about what other IDs may constitute acceptable form of ID by that particular federal agency or installation, please contact that specific agency or installation. DHS advises to contact the agency in charge of your visit in any case to confirm what alternate forms of ID are accepted or what procedures the facility follows for persons without acceptable identification.

For updates to the list of affected federal agencies and the associated requirements, please visit the New Mexico MVD web site page on Real ID Information, at http://www.mvd.newmexico.gov/real-id-information.aspx and the DHS web page on REAL ID implementation, at http://www.dhs.gov/real-id-frequently-asked-questions.