



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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## Summer Travel May Require An Enhanced Driver License or a U.S. Passport

JOHN A. DEFRANCISCO July 27, 2009

If you are planning on taking a road trip to Canada or Mexico, or maybe a cruise to Bermuda or the Caribbean this summer, a New York State Driver License will no longer be enough for you to cross the border and gain entry back into the United States.

In years past, American Citizens could easily travel to the bordering countries of Canada and Mexico, as well as Bermuda and the Caribbean with a Driver License or Non-Driver ID. However, because of heightened security on our nation's borders, as of June 1, 2009, American citizens are required to have federally-approved identification to visit bordering countries and return to the United States.

While your initial thought might be to get a passport, you may want to consider getting a New York State Enhanced Driver License (EDL) or an Enhanced Non-Driver ID. The EDL allows for a convenient and cost-effective method of crossing the U.S. border by land or sea. However, an Enhanced Driver License cannot be used for air travel, and it can only be used to go to Canada, Mexico, Bermuda or the Caribbean.

The benefit of an EDL is that it only takes about 2 weeks to process, while a passport takes about four weeks. Also, it only costs about \$30 to receive an EDL, which is valid for eight

years, while a passport costs about \$100 and is valid for 10 years.

You can apply for an Enhanced Driver License or Non-Driver ID at your local Department of Motor Vehicles. To receive your EDL or Non-Driver ID you must provide proof of U.S. citizenship and two proofs of New York State residence. Children under the age of 16 also may apply for a Non-Driver ID. For a complete listing of accepted documents please visit <http://nysdmv.com/forms.htm>.

You can apply for a U.S. passport at the Onondaga County Clerk's office. For more details regarding applying for a passport you can visit the U.S. Department of State's Web site at [http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport\\_1738.html](http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html).

If you do take a trip this summer, I hope that your travels are fun-filled and safe.