



## INFORMATION BULLETIN

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***DATE: September 17, 2008***

***SUBJECT: New York State EDL's***

***SOURCE: New York State News Release***

Commissioner David J. Swarts of the Department of Motor Vehicles, joined by many Federal, State and local officials as well as business and economic leaders from across the state, today announced the availability of the Enhanced Driver License (EDL) at all DMV locations across the state. The new license document will expedite border crossings and improve the upstate economy because it can be used instead of a passport at land and sea exchanges between the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Bermuda and the Caribbean.

Governor David A. Paterson said, "This is a prime example of how, during these difficult economic times, smart planning can boost the New York economy. The availability of this new license will help to ease long lines at New York-Canada border crossings, allowing commerce to flow more freely and securely. It represents a major step forward that will help the Upstate economy, particularly in the western part of the state, and offers a convenience for all New Yorkers who travel in North America."

The EDL allows citizens to carry a single, secure document that meets their driving, identity, and land and sea border crossing needs. Under current federal regulations, it can also be used for domestic air travel. All license classes, including commercial and motorcycle, can be converted to an EDL.

For many years, Canadians and U.S. citizens have been exempt from presenting a passport or other secure document to enter the United States.

Under the federal government's Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI), beginning June 1, 2009, the number of documents U.S. citizens can present when returning to the United States from Canada, Mexico, Bermuda or the Caribbean will be limited to a handful of Department of Homeland Security-approved, highly secure identification cards. The Enhanced Driver License meets this requirement.

"The new federal mandate for border crossing requires a passport or other federally recognized documents such as an EDL," said Commissioner Swarts. "By expediting cross-border travel, New York's EDL will help ensure that the Upstate economy does not suffer from the federal travel mandate and the DMV is pleased to make the new documents available to our customers."

The EDL is expected to benefit the Upstate economy by expediting land and sea border crossings. Currently, more than 468,000 New York State jobs are supported by U.S.-Canada trade. In 2006, the U.S.-Canada merchandise trade was valued at more than \$400 billion.

Recent statistics show that Canadians made more than 2 million visits to New York State, spending more than \$600 million and New York residents made nearly 2 million visits to Canada, spending more than \$500 million.

Secure and reliable documentation is critical for border officials to accurately determine entry into the United States. Between October and December 2007, Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) officers reported more than 1,500 cases of individuals falsely claiming to be U.S. citizens. The technology in the EDL will allow officers to quickly access information on a traveler from secure databases without interfering with the flow of traffic at the border.

To apply for an EDL, applicants are required to visit a DMV office and provide their Social Security card, proofs of identity, citizenship and residency. Enhanced Driver Licenses are the same size as a regular driver license. Applicants will receive their license in approximately 2 to 3 weeks, the same amount of time as a regular driver license. An EDL costs \$30 in addition to any fees required for a driver license or non-driver photo ID, and is valid for 8 years. In comparison, the price of a U.S. passport costs more than \$100.

For further information please visit the Department of Motor Vehicles website at: [nysdmv.com](http://nysdmv.com) or call any DMV Call Center.