

Properly Identifying Your Applicants

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When you are taking rental applications from your prospective residents, it is advised that you look at proper identification. This will greatly improve the results of your resident screening efforts, and result in overall lower costs in managing your property. So what can be considered “proper identification”? We can take a cue from documents required when trying to obtain a driver’s license. For one state researched, here are the requirements:

(Reprinted from a publication of the *Minnesota Driver and Vehicle Services Division*)

- A state driver's license, instruction permit, or state identification card that is current or expired for:
 - 5 years or less if it has a photo.
 - 1 year or less if it does not have a photo.
- If you do not have one of the items listed above, you must present one [primary](#) and one [secondary](#) document. The primary document must contain your full name and the month, day, and year of your birth. Any document not in English must be accompanied by a qualified English translation.

If the name on your driver's license, identification card, or permit has changed or the names on your primary and secondary documents do not match, you must also present proof of your legal name change(s). Acceptable proof consists of certified marriage certificates, certified divorce decrees, or other certified court orders. Divorce decrees or other court orders must specify the name change. Your identity and name change documents need to show a clear link between your primary and secondary documents.

If you are a temporary United States resident, you may need to show additional proof of your lawful admission period, such as a form I-20, DS-2019, I-797, or other official immigration document or receipt.

Documents are subject to verification and may not be accepted if altered.

(Primary and secondary identification documents are printed on separate pages to allow you to print this out as a guide when accepting applications)

Primary Documents

- Certified birth record issued by a government bureau of vital statistics or board of health in the United States, District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, or the United States Virgin Islands.
- Certificate of Birth Abroad (FS-545 or DS-1350) issued by the U.S. Department of State.
- Report of Birth Abroad of a United States Citizen (FS-240) issued by a U.S. embassy.
- Certified adoption certificate from a U.S. court.
- Valid, unexpired United States passport.
- Unexpired active duty or retired U.S. military identification card (DD-2 or Geneva Conventions Common Access Card).
- Valid, unexpired passport from a country other than the U.S. with an unexpired I-94 form or with an unexpired I-551 stamp.
- Canadian birth or naturalization certificate with an unexpired I-94 form attached. (Must be presented with a photo Secondary Document issued by a Canadian government agency.)
- One of the following valid, unexpired documents issued by the U.S. Department of Justice or U.S. Department of Homeland Security:
 - Employment Authorization card with photo (I-688 or I-766 series)
 - Permanent Resident or Resident Alien card (I-551 or I-151)
 - Re-entry Permit/Refugee Travel Document (I-327, I-571)
 - Certificate of Naturalization (N-550, N-570, or N-578)
 - Certificate of Citizenship (N-560, N-561, or N-645)
 - United States Citizen Identification card (I-179 or I-197)
 - Northern Mariana Card (I-873)
 - American Indian Card (I-872)

Secondary Documents

- Another primary document.
- Photo driver's license, state identification card, or permit, issued by a U.S. state other than Minnesota, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, or a Canadian province or territory, that is current or expired for five years or less.
- U.S. social security card (nonmetal) or Canadian social insurance card.
- Certified birth certificate from a government jurisdiction other than the U.S., the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, or the U.S. Virgin Islands.
- Certified government-issued marriage certificate.
- Certified U.S. or Canadian court order with full name and date of birth.
- Certified secondary or post-secondary school transcript containing legal full name and date of birth.
- Current secondary school (grades 7-12) student identification card with student's name, photograph, and date of birth or unique identification number.
- Government employee photo identification card from a jurisdiction in the U.S. or Canada.
- Current identification card (DD-1173 or DD-214) issued by the U.S. Department of Defense.
- Unexpired color-photo permit to carry a firearm or concealed weapon, issued by a U.S. police department or sheriff.
- Current pilot's license issued by the Federal Aviation Administration.

Compare the spelling on these identification documents with the spelling on your rental application. Also take a close look at both the Social Security Number and date of birth on the application. If these don't match up, you will need to ask the applicant to clarify the information for you.

Resident screening information is generated from the input provided. Improperly spelled names and incorrect Social Security Numbers and dates of birth will generate reports without much value, and you can bet that it will be the problem resident that tries to supply false information on the application. By verifying the identification information provided by the applicant on your application, you will have greatly improved your efforts at keeping out problem residents.