



# Driving Privilege Cards (DPCs)

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## KEY FINDINGS

- Driving Privilege Cards (DPCs) were established by 2005 General Session S.B. 227.
- DPCs can only be used to provide legal driving privilege and cannot be used as a source of government identification or age verification.
- DPCs are valid for a limited time of less than eighteen months, from the date of issuance until the individual’s birth date in the following year.
- Utah is one of 19 states (plus DC) that offers driving privileges to individuals who cannot prove lawful presence in the United States, which may include individuals legally in the country.
- Between 2009 and 2023, the Driver License Division issued an average of 35,003 DPCs annually, including new cards and renewals.

## Background

DPCs are issued by Utah’s Driver License Division under the Department of Public Safety. DPCs were established in the 2005 General Session in [S.B. 227 \(Bramble/Lockhart\)](#). Prior to the passage of this bill, it was possible for individuals who could not prove lawful presence to obtain a Utah Driver License.

DPCs allow individuals who cannot prove their lawful presence in the U.S. to drive legally in Utah. However, individuals must provide evidence of their Utah residence, such as two pieces of recent mail, utility bills, or rental contracts, and proof of identity.

**Figure 1: Sample Driving Privilege Card (Source: Utah Driver License Division)**



Source: [Utah Ann. Code 53-3-207](#)

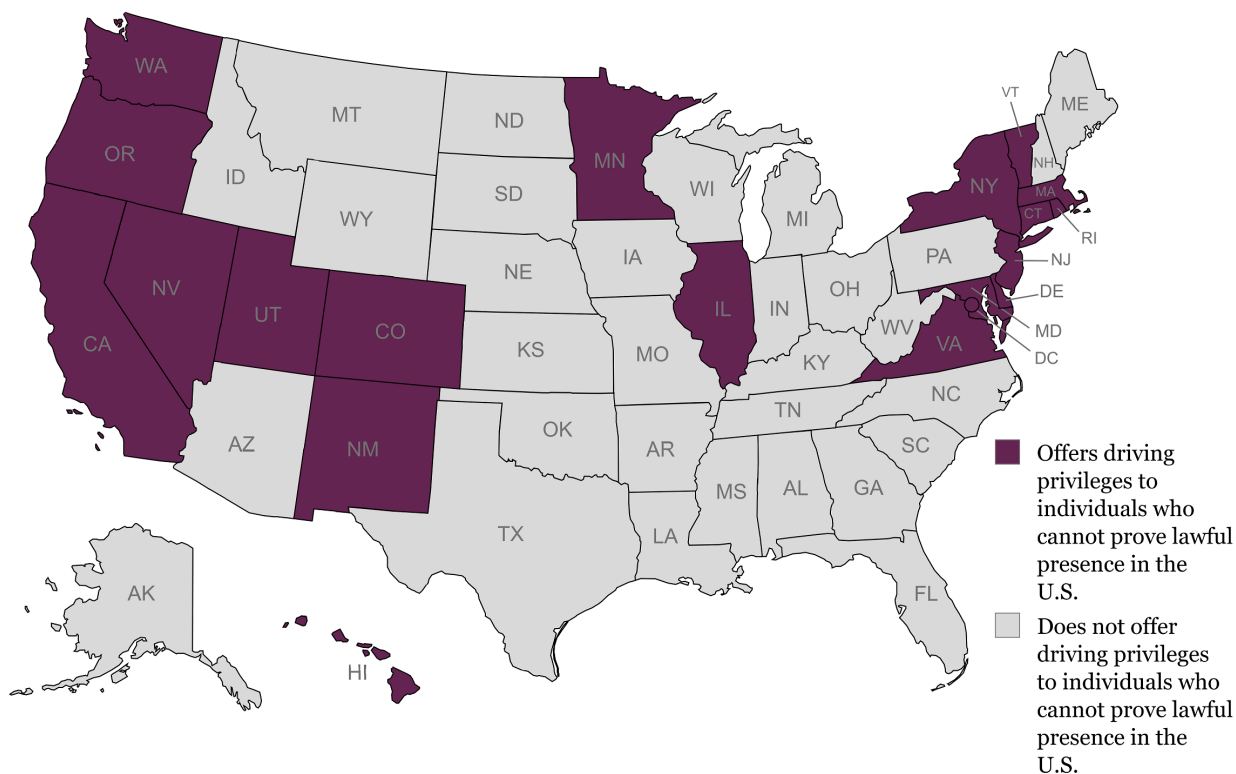
Notes: *Utah Ann. Code 53-3-207 describes the required information a DPC must contain, including a phrase like "FOR DRIVING PRIVILEGES ONLY – NOT VALID FOR IDENTIFICATION".*



DPCs are valid for a limited time initial time period of less than eighteen months, from the date of issuance until the individual’s birth date in the following year.<sup>1</sup> Per [Utah Code 53-3-207\(12\)](#), DPCs cannot be used for government identification or age verification purposes, such as picking up prescriptions, traveling via airplane, purchasing alcohol, or voting. Individuals with a DPC are also ineligible for a Commercial Driver License (CDL).

Currently, 19 states and the District of Columbia, including neighboring states Nevada, New Mexico, and Colorado, offer driving privileges to individuals who cannot prove lawful presence in the United States.

**Figure 2: Status of driving privilege in 50 states**



*Notes: Utah offers DPCs to individuals who do not qualify for a Utah Driver License under federal REAL ID standards. This may include individuals legally in the U.S. (e.g. humanitarian parolees).*

*Source: [National Conference of State Legislatures](#)*

**REAL ID**

In 2005, Congress passed the REAL ID Act to create a national security standard for driver licenses and identification cards as a response to 9/11. This law created requirements for proof of identity and proof of lawful presence in the United States to qualify for a REAL ID compliant credential.



Unlike other states, Utah only offers driver licenses and state ID cards that are REAL ID compliant. Therefore, individuals who cannot prove lawful presence in the U.S. are not eligible for a Utah Driver License and must obtain a DPC to drive legally.

Individuals who cannot prove legal or lawful presence in the United States include undocumented immigrants and individuals legally paroled in the U.S. (see the sidebar on the following page for a detailed explanation). This category includes recent Ukrainian and Afghan Humanitarian Parolees, because parole is not one of the legal statuses included in the REAL ID Act.

### **“Parole” as an immigration term**

Parole, also known as “humanitarian parole” or “advanced parole,” is a temporary designation granted by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to allow certain noncitizens to enter or temporarily remain in the U.S. This term is not related to “parole” or “parolee” as used in a criminal justice context. Parolees are eligible to apply to work in the U.S. and are generally paroled into the country for less than one year.

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), U.S. Customs and Border Patrol (CBP), and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) all have the authority to designate “parole” status. Parole can be given for “urgent humanitarian reasons,” which is not defined, or if it would result in “significant public benefit,” which is also not defined.

Parole was first used in 1956, when President Eisenhower admitted 30,000 Hungarian parolees into the country. After Congress enacted the Refugee Act in 1980, parole has generally been used to admit groups who are not classified as refugees, including Cubans, Haitians, and individuals from the Soviet Union. Current parole programs include the Uniting for Ukraine program, which allows Ukrainian citizens to receive parole into the U.S., and the Afghan resettlement program following the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021. The Biden administration also created a new parole process for Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, and Venezuelans in 2023.

### **➤ Who is eligible for a Driving Privilege Card?**

To qualify for a Utah Driver License, individuals must provide proof of citizenship, legal permanent resident status (“green card”), or lawful presence in the U.S., such as a valid work or student visa, refugee or asylee status. For individuals who do not qualify for a driver license, a DPC is the only option to drive legally in the state (see Page 5 for information on driving in Utah with an international driver license).

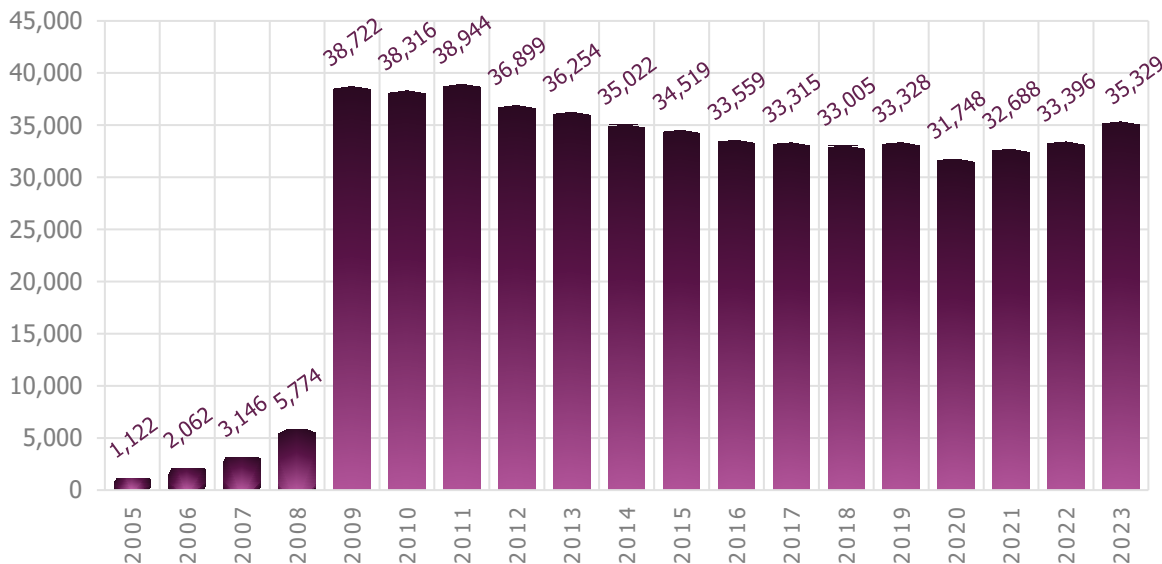
Individuals who may apply for a DPC include:

- Humanitarian parolees<sup>ii</sup>



- Individuals who are ineligible for a Social Security Number (SSN) or Individual Tax Identification Number (ITIN), such as international students, spouses, children, and other visitors who are not authorized to work in the U.S.<sup>iii</sup>
- Undocumented immigrants<sup>iv</sup>

**Figure 3: Number of DPCs issued by the Driver License Division, 2005 – 2023**



Source: Utah Driver License Division

Notes: Number of Driving Privilege Cards issued annually by the Driver License Division since DPCs were established in 2005. The Utah Department of Public Safety attributes the increase in the number of DPCs issued in 2009 to program start up and public awareness. Annual cards issued include renewals and new cards.

### ➤ How do you apply for a Driving Privilege Card?

Individuals must schedule an appointment with the Driver License Division and:

1. Provide proof of driving privilege from another state or country. If not applicable, apply for a Utah Learner Permit.
2. Provide required documentation including proof of identity, social security number, and proof of residency (see below for details).
3. Provide fingerprints and photograph taken by an [approved vendor or law enforcement agency](#).
4. Driver License Division takes a photo, examines documentation, performs vision test, and processes fingerprints.
5. Pay required fees, including \$32 DPC fee and \$25 fingerprint processing fee.
6. Pass written knowledge test in English language.<sup>v</sup>



7. Pass driving skills test, if applicable (never had a driver license or out-of-state or out-of-country license is more than five years expired).
8. DPC will be mailed in 4-6 weeks and expires on the individual's birth date in the year after issuance.<sup>vi</sup>

### ➤ **What documentation is required?**

1. Utah Learner Permit or proof of driving privilege from another state or country.
2. Proof of identity, such as a foreign birth certificate or foreign unexpired passport with certified translation, and secondary proof of identity, such as an employee ID, insurance card, or church records.
3. Fingerprints and photograph from an approved vendor or law enforcement agency.
4. Proof of Social Security Number, such as a social security card, pay stub, W-2, or 1099 form that includes full name and social security number, or proof of ineligibility for an SSN or ITIN.
5. Two documents proving Utah residency that display name and address and are dated within the last 90 days, such as a bank statement, current mortgage or rental contract, utility bill, credit card statement, or vehicle title.

### ➤ **Can an individual drive in Utah with a foreign driver license?**

Visitors to Utah can legally drive with an out-of-state or out-of-country license for up to six months, or until residency is established in Utah. Per [Utah Ann. Code 53-3-102](#), Utah residency is established when an individual:

- establishes a domicile in the state (a fixed, permanent home with intent to return)
- remains in the state for more than six months in a calendar year
- accepts employment in the state (other than seasonal work or commuting into the state)
- declares residency by registering a vehicle or obtaining a driver license
- obtains privileges for Utah residents, such as enrolling children in school without paying nonresident fees.

## Conclusion

Utah is one of many states that offers a program for acquiring temporary legal driving privileges within the state to individuals who are unable to prove lawful presence in the United States. Driving Privilege Cards (DPC) allow the Driver License Division to vet individuals who wish to drive legally within the state for driving knowledge through a written and practical test, as well as track previous and future driving records. Individuals with a DPC can register a vehicle and obtain car insurance legally.



## ENDNOTES

<sup>i</sup> [Utah Code 53-3-205\(7\)\(g\)](#) states that a DPC expires on the birth date of the applicant in the first year following the year that the DPC was issued or renewed. According to the Driver License Division, the exact period of validity ranges from less than a year to 18 months, depending on the date the card is issued and the relation to the individual's birth date.

<sup>ii</sup> "Parole" is not an eligible status for REAL ID under the [REAL ID Act of 2005](#) passed by Congress. After the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021, Congress made an exception to allow Afghan Parolees to be eligible for REAL ID. However, not all Afghan evacuees arrived in the U.S. with parole status. This change also does not apply to Ukrainian Parolees or other individuals with parole status who are legally in the U.S.

<sup>iii</sup> While some of these individuals may have legal immigration status in the U.S., they may not have the documentation required to qualify for REAL ID, making them ineligible for a Utah Driver License.

<sup>iv</sup> While undocumented immigrants are eligible for a DPC, the Driver License Division does not have population data that separates eligible applicants by immigration status.

<sup>v</sup> Only individuals applying for a Class D license or individuals applying for a limited-term license who have refugee, asylee, or covered humanitarian parolee status are eligible to take a translated written driver license knowledge test in a preferred language per [Utah Code 53-3-206](#).

<sup>vi</sup> To renew a DPC, an individual must make an appointment with the Driver License Division. DPCs cannot be renewed online. A written knowledge test is required if the individual received a moving violation in the previous year. Fingerprints and other documentation are only required at the time of initial application, unless the individual has moved and needs to provide new proof of address. Per [Utah Code 53-3-207](#), the Driver License Division may not issue a temporary DPC, and a physical card will be mailed.