



An Extended Guide · No. 1992

Ohio Mobile ID: Your License in Apple or Google Wallet

Add it safely, use it wisely
— and still carry your card

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! Read this first — keep carrying your real card

An Ohio Mobile ID is a handy copy of your license that lives on your phone, but it does not replace the plastic card in your wallet. The state is clear about this: you must keep carrying your physical Ohio license or ID. Think of the phone version as a convenient companion, not a replacement — and never hand your unlocked phone to anyone who asks to 'see your ID.'

Your license, now on your phone

Ohio now lets you add your driver's license or state ID to Apple Wallet or Google Wallet, so you can show it with a tap. This guide walks you through what it is, who can get one, how to add it, and how to use it safely — all in plain English.

I'm Bill, and I run Bill's Home Tech here in Portage County, Ohio. I've spent 30+ years helping folks get comfortable with the gear in their lives, patiently and without the jargon. Think of this guide as me sitting at your kitchen table, walking you through it one step at a time.

A Mobile ID is genuinely useful — but it's also brand new to a lot of folks, and anything involving your identity deserves a little care. We'll take it slow, and I'll be honest about what it does and doesn't do.

★ No question is too small

If you'd like a hand adding yours, or you just want to understand it before you try, call or text me at (330) 200-8042. I'm glad to walk you through it — there's nothing to buy.

The whole guide, on one page

If you remember only these things, you've got the heart of it.

- ❑ An Ohio Mobile ID is an official copy of your license in Apple Wallet or Google Wallet. It's free and completely optional.
- ❑ It does NOT replace your plastic card — keep carrying that too, always.
- ❑ You need a valid Ohio driver's license or state ID to add one.
- ❑ You add it once, verifying it's really you with a quick face scan.
- ❑ When you use it, you approve exactly what's shared — you don't hand over your phone.
- ❑ It works at places with the right reader, including many (not all) TSA airport checkpoints. Bring your real ID as backup.

✓ One idea to hold onto

A Mobile ID is a convenience, not a requirement. If it feels like more than you need right now, that's perfectly fine — your regular license does everything it always has.

What a Mobile ID actually is

Let's clear up the biggest confusion first, because the name makes it sound like more than it is.

An Ohio Mobile ID is a verified, official version of your driver's license or state ID that the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles lets you store in your phone's wallet app. It carries the same core information as your card and can be checked by a business or agency that has a compatible reader.

What it is NOT is a replacement for your plastic license. The state is very plain about this: the Mobile ID is a companion, and you must keep your physical card on you. If a reader is down, a clerk isn't set up for it, or your phone battery dies, your real card is what carries the day.

It also isn't a tracking device or a way for the state to watch you. It simply sits in your wallet app until you choose to show it, the same way a boarding pass or a store card does.

✓ A good way to picture it

Think of it like a photo of your library card saved on your phone — except this one is verified by the state and can be checked electronically. Handy to have, but you'd still keep the real card.

Who can get one, and what you'll need

The requirements are simple, and most Ohioans with a license already meet them.

You'll need

- A valid Ohio driver's license or Ohio state ID card — the physical one in your wallet.
- A supported phone (we cover exactly which ones on the next page).
- A few quiet minutes and good lighting for a quick face scan that confirms you're really you.

A reassuring note

You do not need a 'REAL ID' star on your license to add a Mobile ID — a standard Ohio license or ID works. And it costs nothing. If your license is expired or close to it, renew the physical card with the BMV first; the Mobile ID is built from a current, valid credential.

★ Not sure if yours qualifies?

If you're unsure whether your license is current or supported, that's an easy thing to check together. Send me a message and we'll sort it out before you start — no guessing.

Which phones and wallets work

Ohio supports the two big wallet apps. Here's the honest picture of what works today.

iPhone — Apple Wallet

Ohio Mobile ID has worked in Apple Wallet since 2024. You'll need a reasonably recent iPhone and an up-to-date version of its software; you can also carry it on a paired Apple Watch. If your iPhone is several years old, it's worth checking it can update before you start.

Android — Google Wallet

As of the end of August 2026, Ohio Mobile ID also works in Google Wallet on Android phones. You add it to the wallet tied to your personal Google account, and you can keep it on one phone at a time.

A note on Samsung and other apps

At the time of writing, Ohio lists Apple Wallet and Google Wallet. Samsung Wallet is not on the list yet, and support can change over time. Because this is the kind of thing that updates, check the Ohio BMV's Mobile ID page for the current list rather than taking any single article's word for it.

! Beware look-alike 'ID apps'

The only place to add your Ohio Mobile ID is the wallet app already built into your phone (Apple Wallet or Google Wallet). If a search result or text points you to some other 'official Ohio ID app' to download, be very skeptical — that's a common trick.

Adding it on an iPhone, step by step

The phone walks you through it, but here's the whole path so nothing surprises you. Have your physical license in hand.

- **Open the Wallet app** — the one that looks like a billfold, already on your iPhone.
- **Tap the plus sign** in the top corner, then choose the option to add a driver's license or state ID.
- **Choose Ohio** when asked for the state.
- **Scan your physical card**, front and back, when prompted — lay it on a dark, non-shiny surface in good light.
- **Do the quick face scan**: follow the prompts to move your head slightly so it can confirm you're a real, live person.
- **Wait for the BMV to verify** and confirm. It may take a little while, and you'll get a notification when it's ready.

✓ If the scan won't take

Good, even lighting and a plain dark background fix most scanning trouble. No glare, no cluttered table. If your hands are unsteady, prop the phone against something or ask someone to hold the card flat for you.

Adding it on an Android phone

The idea is the same on Android, through Google Wallet. Keep your physical card handy.

- **Open the Google Wallet app** and make sure it's updated.
- **Tap 'Add to Wallet'**, then choose the option for an ID card.
- **Choose Ohio** from the list.
- **Scan your physical license**, front and back, following the on-screen prompts.
- **Complete the face check** that confirms you're really you.
- **Let it verify.** Once approved, the ID appears in your wallet.

One phone at a time

Your Mobile ID lives on a single phone tied to your own account. If you later switch phones, you remove it from the old one and add it fresh on the new one — more on that later in the guide.

★ Rather have company for this?

Adding an ID is one of those things that's easier with a patient person beside you the first time. That's exactly the sort of visit I do — call (330) 200-8042 and we'll get it on there together.

How you actually use it — and stay in control

This is the part that surprises people in a good way: you never hand your phone to anyone.

When a business or agency with a compatible reader needs to check your ID, you hold your phone near their reader, the same way you'd tap to pay. Your phone shows you exactly what's being requested and asks you to approve it with your face or fingerprint. Only then is anything shared.

Often, only the piece that's needed gets shared — for instance, whether you're over 21, without revealing your home address. You approve each check; nothing leaves your phone on its own.

! The golden rule: don't unlock and hand it over

A legitimate Mobile ID check happens by tapping your phone to a reader while you hold it — you are never asked to unlock your phone and pass it to someone. If anyone asks you to do that to 'verify your ID,' stop. Use your physical card instead, and keep your phone in your hand.

Where it works today — and where it doesn't

A Mobile ID is only useful where there's a reader for it, so it's worth knowing the honest lay of the land.

Places it may be accepted

- Many — but not all — TSA airport security checkpoints (we cover travel in detail later).
- Some Ohio state and government buildings, and Ohio casinos.
- Certain apps and businesses set up to verify ID or age electronically.

Places it does NOT replace your card

- Voting at your Ohio polling place — the Mobile ID is not an accepted voter ID; bring your physical ID.
- International travel or crossing a border — you need your passport.
- A traffic stop — keep your physical license reachable; don't assume every officer is set up to read a phone ID.

✓ When in doubt, your real card wins

Acceptance is growing but still spotty. The simple rule: carry your physical license as you always have, and treat the Mobile ID as a bonus for the places that take it.

Two ways people come to this — and both are fine

Some folks are setting this up for themselves; others are helping a parent or spouse get it onto their phone. Both are common, and the steps are the same — only the hand-holding differs.

If you're setting it up for yourself

You're curious, you travel or go places that might take it, and you'd like the convenience. Wonderful — just go in with clear eyes about what it does.

- Add it once, then mostly forget about it until a reader asks for it.
- Keep your physical card on you exactly as before.
- Make sure your phone has a lock screen and Face ID or a fingerprint set up first — that's what protects it.

If you're helping a parent or relative

You want to make their life a little easier without taking anything away from them. The kindest approach is to set it up together and leave them feeling in control.

- Do it on their phone, with their card, while they watch — it's their ID.
- Reassure them the plastic card still works everywhere it always did.
- Write down, in plain words, where it might come in handy (the airport) and where it won't (voting).

★ I help with both

Whether it's your phone or you're helping mom or dad with theirs, I'm happy to sit down and get it set up calmly, with no rush. Call (330) 200-8042.

Your privacy, in plain terms

It's natural to wonder what the state and your phone can see. Here's the honest answer.

The Mobile ID sits in your wallet app and does nothing until you choose to present it. When you do, you approve what's shared, and often only the specific detail needed is handed over — not your whole record.

The design goal is to share less, not more. A bartender checking your age can get a yes-or-no on 'over 21' without seeing your address or license number. That's genuinely better for your privacy than handing over a card that shows everything at once.

✓ A fair question to ask any business

If a store or app wants to scan your Mobile ID, it's perfectly reasonable to ask what they're collecting and why. A trustworthy business will have a simple answer.

Keeping it safe on your phone

A Mobile ID is only as secure as the phone it's on, so a few basics matter more than ever.

- ❑ Set a lock screen — a passcode, Face ID, or a fingerprint. Never leave the phone with no lock at all.
- ❑ Turn on 'Find My' (iPhone) or 'Find My Device' (Android) so a lost phone can be located and, if needed, erased.
- ❑ Keep your phone's software up to date — those updates include security fixes.
- ❑ Don't share your phone passcode casually. It's the key to everything, including your ID.

★ Let's lock it down together

If you're not sure whether your phone's lock screen and Find My are set up, that's a five-minute check I'm glad to do with you. It protects far more than your ID — call (330) 200-8042.

If you lose your phone, or get a new one

Don't panic — a Mobile ID is recoverable, and a lost phone is not a lost identity.

If your phone is lost or stolen

Use another device or a computer to open Find My / Find My Device, where you can lock the phone or erase it remotely. Your Mobile ID is protected behind your lock screen, and you can always fall back on your physical card while you sort out a replacement phone.

When you get a new phone

Because your Mobile ID lives on one phone at a time, you remove it from the old phone (or erase that phone) and add it fresh on the new one, the same way you added it the first time. It's a quick re-do, not a big ordeal.

✓ Your card is your safety net

This is yet another reason the state asks you to keep the physical card: whatever happens to the phone, your real license still does its job.

Common mistakes to sidestep

A handful of easy slip-ups account for most of the frustration. Now you'll know them in advance.

- **Leaving the physical card at home** because 'it's on my phone now.' Don't — carry both.
- **Downloading a random 'ID app'** instead of using Apple Wallet or Google Wallet. Only the built-in wallet is official.
- **Scanning in poor light**, then wondering why it won't verify. Good light and a plain background fix it.
- **No lock screen on the phone**, which leaves the ID exposed if the phone is lost. Set Face ID or a passcode first.
- **Assuming it's accepted everywhere.** Acceptance is still growing; always have your card.

! The one that matters most

If you take a single caution from this page: never download an 'Ohio ID' app that a text or web ad points you to. Scammers build fakes to harvest your identity. The real thing is only ever in your phone's own wallet app.

Scams that ride on the 'digital ID' idea

Any new, official-sounding thing gets copied by crooks. Here's how to spot the fakes without losing a wink of sleep.

The common trick is a text or email claiming to be from the BMV or 'Ohio Mobile ID,' urging you to click a link to 'activate' or 'verify' your digital license, often with a sense of urgency. The link leads to a convincing fake page that steals whatever you type.

The truth is calmer: you add a Mobile ID yourself, from inside your phone's wallet app, whenever you feel like it. No one needs to text you a link to make it happen, and the BMV won't demand you act right now or lose your license.

! When a message pushes you to hurry, slow down

Urgency is the scammer's favorite tool. If a message about your ID tries to rush or scare you, don't click. Go directly to the official BMV website on your own, or call them using a number you look up yourself — never the one in the message.

Myths and facts

Let's put a few worries to rest.

Q: 'It replaces my license, so I can leave the card home.'

Myth. It's a companion. Ohio asks you to keep carrying the physical card, and you'll be glad you did the first time a reader is down.

Q: 'The state can track me through it.'

Myth. It sits in your wallet app and shares nothing until you approve a specific check. It's not a location tracker.

Q: 'It costs money to add.'

Myth. Adding an Ohio Mobile ID is free. Be suspicious of anything that asks you to pay to 'activate' one.

Q: 'If someone steals my phone, they have my ID.'

Mostly myth, if your phone has a lock screen. The ID is protected behind your passcode or Face ID, and you can erase a lost phone remotely.

✓ Trust the calm version

In almost every case, the scary story is the wrong one. The real Mobile ID is quiet, free, and firmly under your control.

Using it when you travel

The airport is where a Mobile ID is most likely to earn its keep — with a couple of important caveats.

The TSA accepts mobile IDs from participating states at security checkpoints equipped with the right reader — but not every airport or lane is set up, and the list changes. So a Mobile ID can speed things along where it's supported, and do nothing where it isn't.

Two firm rules for flying: always bring an acceptable physical ID too (your license or passport), because an officer can still ask for it; and remember a Mobile ID is for domestic ID checks — international travel needs your passport. We cover airport digital ID in depth in its own guide.

! REAL ID is being enforced — in phases

For flying within the U.S., you need a REAL ID-compliant license (the one with a star) or another accepted ID like a passport. Enforcement is being phased in, so a non-compliant card may mean delays. If you're unsure what your card is, check well before a trip — don't find out at the airport.

Costs and the fine print

There's refreshingly little here, which is how it should be.

Adding an Ohio Mobile ID is free and voluntary. You still renew your physical license on its normal schedule with the BMV, and you still pay the regular fees for that card — the Mobile ID doesn't change any of that.

If your license information changes — a new address, a renewal, a name change — you'll update your Mobile ID so it matches your current card. The phone version is built from your real credential, so the real one stays the source of truth.

✓ Free means free

Because it's free, any message or site asking for a payment to 'get' or 'keep' your Mobile ID is a red flag. The only money involved is the normal BMV fee for your actual license.

A simple get-started checklist

Keep this handy when you sit down to add yours.

- ☐ My Ohio license or state ID is current (not expired).
- ☐ My phone is a supported model and its software is up to date.
- ☐ My phone has a lock screen — passcode, Face ID, or fingerprint.
- ☐ I'm using the built-in Apple Wallet or Google Wallet, not some other app.
- ☐ I have good light and a plain, dark surface for the card scan.
- ☐ I understand I'll keep carrying my physical card no matter what.

★ Want a second set of hands?

If any line above gives you pause, let's do it together. I'll make sure it's set up right and that your phone is locked down safely. Call (330) 200-8042.

Common Questions

The questions I hear most about Ohio Mobile ID, answered plainly.

Q: Do I still have to carry my regular license?

Yes — always. The state treats the Mobile ID as a companion to your physical card, not a replacement. Keep the plastic card on you.

Q: Does it cost anything?

No. Adding an Ohio Mobile ID is free. You still pay the normal BMV fee for your actual license when you renew it, as before.

Q: Which phones can use it?

Recent iPhones through Apple Wallet, and Android phones through Google Wallet (added in late August 2026). Samsung Wallet isn't on Ohio's list yet. Check the BMV page for the current list.

Q: Can I use it to vote or fly internationally?

No to both. It's not an accepted Ohio voter ID, and international travel needs your passport. It can be used at some TSA domestic checkpoints, but bring a physical ID too.

Q: Is it safe if my phone gets lost?

It's protected behind your lock screen, and you can erase a lost phone remotely with Find My. Set a passcode or Face ID and you're in good shape — and your physical card still works meanwhile.

★ Still have a question?

That's what I'm here for. Call or text me at (330) 200-8042 and I'll give you a straight, plain-English answer — no jargon, no sales pitch.

The quick recap

Tear this page out for the fridge if you like.

- ❑ Add it from Apple Wallet or Google Wallet — never a random app.
- ❑ It's free, and it's optional.
- ❑ Keep carrying your physical card, every time.
- ❑ Set a lock screen and turn on Find My before you rely on it.
- ❑ Tap to a reader to use it — never unlock and hand over your phone.
- ❑ Great at participating airports; not for voting or border crossings.
- ❑ Ignore any text or link telling you to 'activate' your ID in a hurry.

✓ You've got this

It really is simpler than it sounds. Add it once, keep your card, lock your phone, and enjoy the convenience where it's offered.

You don't have to do this alone

You just have to remember that a friendly, patient person is one call away.

I hope this guide made putting your Ohio ID on your phone feel a little less daunting and a lot more doable. Keep it in a drawer with your other home papers, come back to a page whenever you need it, and don't worry about memorizing anything.

When you'd rather have a hand, that's exactly what I do. I come to your home, work at your pace, and never make you feel rushed or silly for asking. A first visit is a flat \$99, and for the parts that don't need me on-site I can often help right on your screen for \$49. Every visit comes with a 30-day, come-back-free guarantee. I'm a tech helper, not a bank, a lawyer, or a financial advisor — for disputes, taxes, or legal questions I'll help you reach the right people and prepare what you need.

★ Bill's Home Tech — real help, close to home

Call or text me at (330) 200-8042, or visit BillsHomeTech.com. Serving Atwater and all of Portage County. 30+ years of patient, plain-English tech help — and if you're ever not 100% happy with a visit, I'll make it right or refund it. That's a promise. — Bill

Mobile ID vs. Your Plastic Card

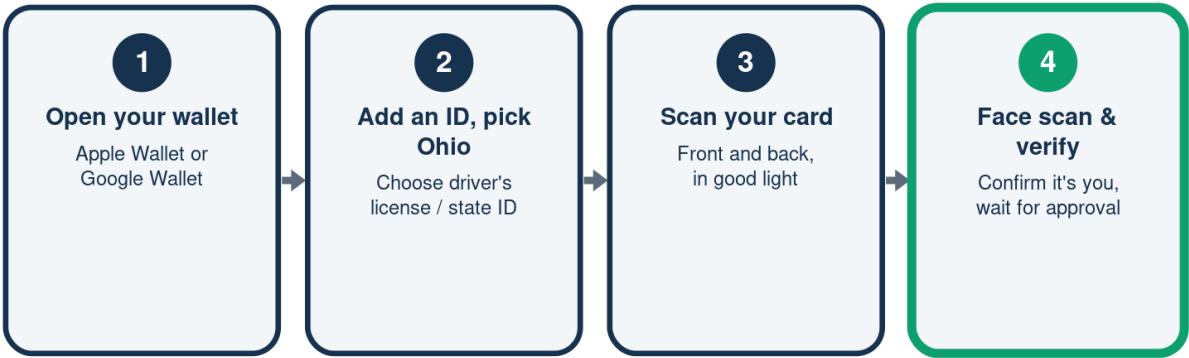
The phone version is a companion, not a replacement

	Mobile ID (phone)	Physical card
Everyday errands	Where readers exist	Works everywhere
Airport (TSA)	Some checkpoints	Always bring it
Voting in Ohio	Not accepted	Accepted
Lost phone	Protected, erasable	Still in your wallet

Carry both. The card is your safety net when a reader is down.

Adding It in Four Steps

The same idea on iPhone or Android



It's free. Only ever add it from your phone's built-in wallet app.

Safe Use at a Glance

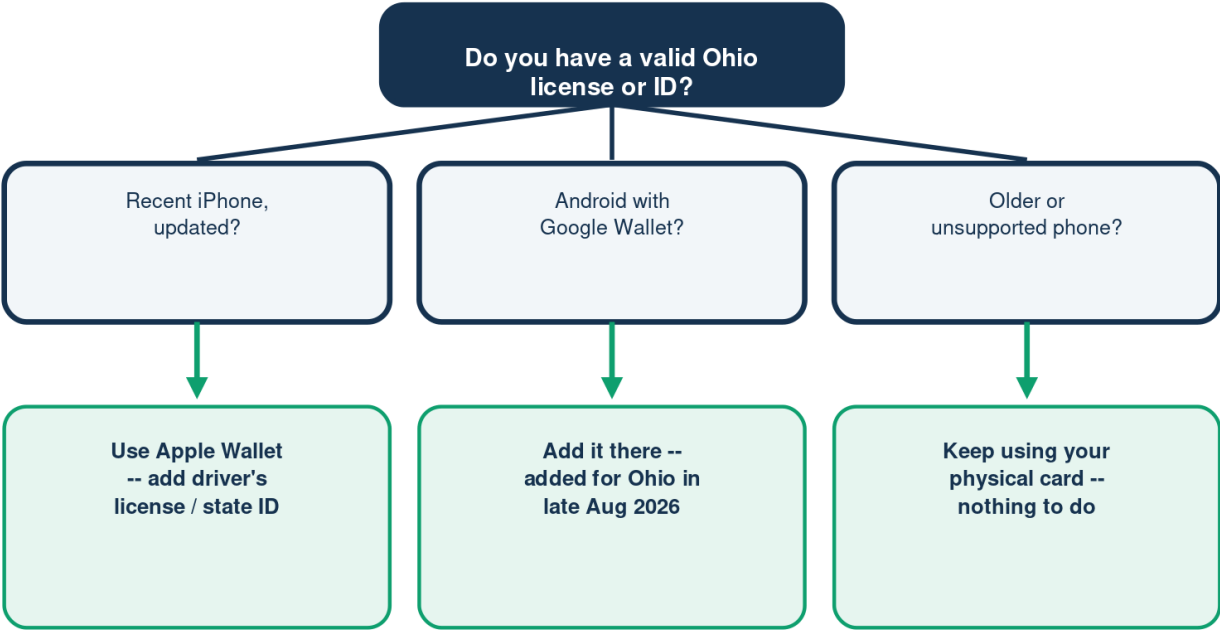
How a real check works vs. a red flag

	Looks right	Red flag
Showing ID	You tap to a reader	Asked to hand phone
Adding it	From your wallet app	A texted 'ID' link
Cost	Free	Asked to pay
Your phone	Locked, in your hand	Unlocked, handed over

You stay in control: tap to share, approve with your face, keep the phone.

Can I Add One?

A quick yes-or-no walk-through



No star / REAL ID is needed to add one, but keep carrying the real card.

Illustration - a schematic, not to scale. Your setup may differ.



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A Note From Bill

A quick note from Bill.

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