BILL'S HOME TECH
Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

BILL'S COMPLETE MANUALS

Ohio BMV Online & Ohio Mobile ID

Plates, licenses, REAL ID and your ID on your phone — in plain English

A plain-English guide for every Ohio driver and ID holder

Take your time — you can't break it

Written for you by Bill — Bill's Home Tech

(330) 200-8042 · BillsHomeTech.com

For Ohio BMV Online Services, Apple Wallet & Google Wallet · facts current November 2026

What's Inside

This is your Ohio BMV guide. Read it in any order: start with the part you need today, whether that's renewing your plates, figuring out REAL ID, or putting your license on your phone.

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PART 1

Getting Started

What the Ohio BMV lets you do from home, what still needs a trip to the counter, how to find the real websites, and what to have on the table before you begin.

CHAPTER 1

A Note from Bill

Hello, and welcome. If you live in Ohio and drive, or just carry a state ID, the Bureau of Motor Vehicles is part of your life whether you like it or not. Plates need renewing every year or so. Licenses come due. Addresses change. And every so often a text shows up claiming you owe a fine.

I'm Bill. I've spent more than 30 years working with technology, and these days I help folks here in Portage County, Ohio feel at home with theirs. I wrote this guide the way I'd explain it sitting at your kitchen table: slowly, in plain English, one step at a time.

What this guide covers

- **The Ohio BMV's online services**: renewing your plates, renewing or reprinting your license or ID, changing your address, and checking your driving record.
- **OHID**, the State of Ohio login you'll be asked for.
- **REAL ID**: what the star on your card means, where things stand in late 2026, and what to bring.
- **Ohio Mobile ID**: your license or ID in Apple Wallet on an iPhone, or Google Wallet on an Android phone, and where you can actually use it.
- **BMV scams**: the fake “unpaid toll” and “BMV fine” texts, and look-alike websites.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Fewer trips, less waiting

Many routine BMV chores can be done from your recliner in ten or fifteen minutes. For the ones that still need a visit, a little preparation at home means one trip instead of two. That's the whole point of this guide.

A word about the rules

The BMV's rules and fees are set by Ohio law and change from time to time. I checked the facts here against official Ohio, TSA and Apple pages in November 2026. When the BMV's own screen tells you something different from this guide, trust the screen. And if anything confuses you, call me at **(330) 200-8042**.

— Bill

CHAPTER 2

What You Can Do Online (and What Still Needs a Visit)

The Ohio BMV has two websites that work together. **bmv.ohio.gov** is the information site: rules, fees, forms and news. **bmvonline.dps.ohio.gov** is the **BMV Online Services** site, where you actually get things done. You can reach the second one from the first, so you only need to remember one.

Things you can usually do from home

Service on the site	What it does
OPLATES	Renew your vehicle registration, replace or exchange a plate, replace a registration card or sticker.
DL/ID/CDL Renewal	Renew your driver license or state ID card, if you're eligible.
DL/ID/CDL Reprint	Order a replacement (a “reprint”) of your license or ID.
Change of Address	Update your home address or add a mailing address.
BMV Driving Record	View your unofficial driving record, or order a certified one.
Reinstatement	See what's needed to reinstate a suspended license and pay the fees.
Ohio Mobile ID	Manage the copy of your license or ID in your phone's wallet app.
Where's My DL/ID/CDL?	Check on a card that's being made and mailed.

Things that still need a deputy registrar

- Your **first** Ohio license or ID card, and your first REAL ID (called a “Compliant” card in Ohio).
- A license renewal if you're **65 or older**. Ohio law doesn't allow online license renewal at that age. See *For Drivers 65 and Over* (Chapter 17).
- Anything the website says you aren't eligible to do online. The site will tell you.

GOOD TO KNOW

Deputy registrars are the BMV's local offices

In Ohio, the counters where you get your license and plates are run by **deputy registrars**, local agencies licensed by the state. When this guide says “go in person,” that's where you go.

CHAPTER 3

Finding the Real Ohio BMV Websites

This is the most important habit in the whole guide. Many websites look like the BMV but aren't. Some charge you extra “processing fees” for things you could do yourself. Others steal your information. The real Ohio sites all end in **ohio.gov**.

The addresses to know

Address	What it is
bmv.ohio.gov	The Ohio BMV's main information site.
bmvonline.dps.ohio.gov	BMV Online Services, where you renew, reprint and update.
publicsafety.ohio.gov	The Ohio Department of Public Safety, the BMV's parent agency. Has the office locator.

Getting there safely

1. Open your web browser (Safari, Chrome, Edge, or whatever you normally use).
2. Tap or click the address bar at the top of the screen.
3. Type **bmv.ohio.gov** yourself, carefully, and press Go or Enter.
4. Look for the gray banner at the top that says **An official State of Ohio site**.
5. Once you're there, save it as a bookmark or favorite so you never need to search for it again.

HEADS UP

Be careful with search results

If you search “Ohio BMV renewal,” the first results are sometimes ads for private companies. They can look official. Before you type anything, check that the address ends in **ohio.gov**. If it ends in .com, .org or anything else, back out.

SCAM ALERT

Never start from a link in a text

The Ohio BMV is a favorite disguise for scammers. Don't tap links in texts or emails that claim to be from the BMV. Type the address yourself. *Fake “Unpaid Toll” and “BMV Fine” Texts* (Chapter 30) covers these scams in detail.

CHAPTER 4

What to Have on Hand

Gather a few things before you sit down. Nothing is more frustrating than getting halfway through and having to hunt for a card in another room.

For a plate (registration) renewal

- Your **license plate number**, and the renewal notice if you got one in the mail.
- Proof of insurance information, in case the site asks for it.
- A credit or debit card, or your checking account details, for payment.

For a license or ID renewal or reprint

- Your current **Ohio license or ID card**. The number is on the front.
- The **last four digits of your Social Security number**. The site asks for these to confirm it's you.
- Your email address and its password, or your OHID login if you have one.
- A card for payment.

A few practical tips

- Use a computer or tablet if you have one. The screens are easier to read than a phone.
- Sit somewhere with good light and your reading glasses.
- Leave yourself time. Don't start ten minutes before you have to leave for an appointment.
- Write down any confirmation number the site shows you at the end, or take a screenshot of it.

TIP

Keep everything in one envelope

Keep a single envelope with your renewal notices, insurance card and a note of your plate number. When BMV time comes, everything's in one place.

PART 2

Signing In: OHID and the Quick Login

The State of Ohio's login, the shorter “license number” sign-in many BMV services use, your myBMV profile, and what to do when signing in goes wrong.

CHAPTER 5

What OHID Is

OHID (say it “Oh-I-D”) is the State of Ohio's single login. One username and password work across many state websites, including the BMV, so you don't need a separate account for every agency. You may see it written with a bar in the middle in older material, but the BMV site today simply calls it **OHID**.

When BMV Online Services wants you to sign in with OHID, it shows a small notice saying **Trusted applications are secured by OHID**. That's normal and expected.

Do you need one?

Not always. Several BMV services, such as the Ohio Mobile ID page, let you sign in with details from your license instead (see *The Quick Sign-In with Your License, and myBMV* (Chapter 7)). But an OHID makes life simpler if you use state services often, and some services may ask for it. It costs nothing.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

One login for Ohio

Once you have an OHID, the same sign-in can open other State of Ohio services too. One password to remember, written down safely, instead of a pile of them.

HEADS UP

Only on ohio.gov pages

Type your OHID password only on a page whose address ends in **ohio.gov**. If a text or email asks you to “verify your OHID,” don't tap the link. Go to the site yourself.

CHAPTER 6

Setting Up an OHID Account

If a BMV service asks you to sign in with OHID and you don't have an account, there's a link right on the sign-in page to create one. The screens change from time to time, so here is the general shape of it rather than every button.

1. On the BMV sign-in page, choose the option to **create an account** (or sign up).
2. Enter your name and an **email address you can check**. The state sends a code or a link there.
3. Open your email in another window or on another device, find the message, and enter the code or tap the link.
4. Choose a **username** and a **password**. Make the password long; a short phrase works well.
5. If you're asked to set up an extra sign-in step, such as a code sent to your phone, follow the prompts. This protects your account if someone ever learns your password.
6. Write your username and password down and keep them somewhere safe at home.

TIP

Use an email you'll keep

Use an email address you plan to keep for years. If you sign up with an old address you rarely check, resetting your password later becomes much harder.

FROM BILL

Let someone sit with you the first time

Creating an account means juggling two windows: the sign-up page and your email. If that sounds like a lot, ask a family member to sit beside you, or call me. Once it's done, it's done.

CHAPTER 7

The Quick Sign-In with Your License, and myBMV

Many BMV services offer a sign-in that uses the details printed on your license or ID card instead of a username. When I checked in November 2026, the Ohio Mobile ID page asked for these four things:

1. Your **license or state ID number** (or the key number).
2. Your **date of birth**.
3. The **first letter of your last name**.
4. The **last four digits of your Social Security number**. If you don't have one, the page says to enter 0000.

That's the BMV checking that you're you before it shows your record. It's normal on the real site. It is **not** normal for anyone to text, email or call you asking for these same details.

myBMV, your BMV profile

myBMV is your personal BMV profile, found in the menu at the top of BMV Online Services. It shows your own information and any important notices about your license or vehicles. It's a good first stop when you aren't sure what's due.

SCAM ALERT

The real site asks; strangers don't

The BMV's website asks for the last four of your Social Security number *after you typed the address yourself*. A stranger who messages you first and asks for it is a scammer, every time.

CHAPTER 8

When Signing In Goes Wrong

Sign-in trouble is the most common reason people give up on government websites. Most of the time it's something small.

If you see…	Try this
“Record not found”	Check the license number digit by digit, and that your date of birth is in the order the form asks for.
Forgot your OHID password	Use the forgot-password link on the sign-in page. A reset code goes to your email.
No reset email	Look in your spam or junk folder. Wait a few minutes before asking again.
Page won't load or freezes	Close the browser completely, open it again, and type the address fresh.
Site says JavaScript is required	Use a regular, up-to-date browser. Special “reader” or privacy modes can block the site.

TIP

Try a different time of day

Government sites can be slow around the end of the month, when many renewals come due. If it's crawling, come back in the morning.

Getting a real person

BMV Online Services has a **Chat** option in its top menu, and bmv.ohio.gov has a **Contact Us** page. Use those, rather than a phone number from a search result, which might not be the BMV at all.

PART 3

Your Plates: Renewing Registration with OPLATES

Renewing your vehicle registration from home, the snags that can hold it up, replacing a lost sticker or plate, and a few other vehicle services worth knowing.

CHAPTER 9

Renewing Your Registration Online

OPLATES is the part of BMV Online Services for vehicle registration. You'll find it in the top menu of bmvonline.dps.ohio.gov. It lets you renew your registration, replace or exchange a plate, and replace a lost registration card or sticker.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Your sticker comes to you

Renewing online means no drive, no line, and no taking a number. Your new registration and sticker arrive in the mail, and you can do it at 10 o'clock at night if that suits you.

Step by step

1. Type **bmv.ohio.gov** into your browser, then follow the link to **Online Services**. (Or type **bmvonline.dps.ohio.gov** directly.)
2. Choose **OPLATES**.
3. Pick the option to **renew your registration**.
4. Enter the details it asks for, such as your **plate number** and information from your renewal notice or license.
5. Check that the vehicle shown is yours and the address is right. If the address is wrong, stop and fix it first (see *Changing Your Address* (Chapter 18)), or your sticker will go to the old address.
6. Choose how long to renew for, if the site gives you a choice.
7. Review the total. The site shows the full amount, including any mailing charge, before you pay.
8. Pay with a card or your checking account details.
9. Write down or screenshot the confirmation page.

When your sticker arrives

- Put the new sticker on your rear plate where the old one was, as the instructions with it describe.
- Keep the new registration card in your car with your insurance card.

HEADS UP

Renew before the date, not on it

Mail takes time. Renewing a couple of weeks early gives your sticker time to arrive before the old one expires. The BMV fees page notes that late renewals can carry a late fee.

CHAPTER 10

When a Renewal Gets Stuck

Sometimes OPLATES won't let you finish. That's usually because something else has to be taken care of first. The site generally tells you what it is.

If it's this…	What to know
E-Check needed	Some Northeast Ohio counties require an emissions test called E-Check. If your renewal notice says you need one, get the test first. The BMV site links to the Ohio EPA's E-Check information.
A "block" on the record	Unpaid fines, a returned payment, or an insurance issue can block a renewal until it's cleared.
Returned payment	If an earlier BMV payment bounced, BMV Online Services has a Returned Item Payment page. It says to allow 1–2 business days for plate blocks to clear.
Address problems	If your address on file is out of date, fix it first (*Changing Your Address* (Chapter 18)).

TIP

Read the message, then decide

When a government site says no, it nearly always says why. Read the message slowly, and copy it down. If it doesn't make sense, that message is exactly what I'd need to see to help you.

If you'd rather go in person

You can always renew at a deputy registrar instead. Bring your renewal notice or plate number, your license, and payment. See *Renewing in Person at a Deputy Registrar* (Chapter 16) for finding one.

CHAPTER 11

Replacing a Lost Sticker, Card or Plate

Stickers get scraped off. Registration cards go through the wash. Plates get bent. OPLATES handles all of these without a trip.

Replace a registration card or sticker

1. Go to BMV Online Services and choose **OPLATES**.
2. Pick the option to **replace your registration card and/or sticker**.
3. Enter your plate number and the details it asks for.
4. Pay the replacement fee shown on the screen.
5. Watch your mail for the replacement.

Replace or exchange a plate

The same OPLATES area lets you **replace or exchange a license plate**, for example if yours is damaged or hard to read. Follow the on-screen choices. The BMV's **Plate Options** help explains the choices.

STAY SAFE

If a plate was stolen

If you think your plate was stolen rather than lost, report it to your local police first. A stolen plate can be used on someone else's car. Then replace it.

GOOD TO KNOW

Fees come from the official fee page

BMV fees are set by law and listed on **bmv.ohio.gov** under Documents & Fees. I haven't printed them here because they change. The online screen always shows the amount before you pay.

CHAPTER 12

Other Vehicle Services Worth Knowing

BMV Online Services has a page called **Other Services** that lists everything the site can do. A few vehicle items are worth knowing about.

Service	What it's for
Specialized Plates Availability	Check whether a personalized plate you'd like is available.
Purchase Temporary Tag	Temporary tags can be printed on demand, for example after a private sale or when you're new to Ohio.
Registration Cancellation	Apply to cancel a vehicle's registration, such as after you sell it or it's off the road.
Vehicle/Watercraft Title Search	Look up information on a title.
Ohio Title Portal	Online electronic title transfer.
Vehicle Recalls	Search recalls reported by NHTSA, the federal safety agency.

TIP

Check recalls once a year

When you renew your plates, take one extra minute to run the **Vehicle Recalls** search. A recall repair at a dealer is normally done at no charge to you, and it might be a safety fix you didn't know about.

HEADS UP

Titles are more involved

Buying or selling a car involves the title, which is handled at a title office rather than the plate counter. The site has a **Title Office Search** to find one. If you're selling a car to a stranger, take your time and don't hand over a signed title before you're paid.

PART 4

Your License or State ID

Who can renew online and who can't, renewing step by step, ordering a reprint, checking on a card in the mail, renewing at a deputy registrar, and what changes at 65.

CHAPTER 13

Who Can Renew a License or ID Online

Ohio allows online renewal of a driver license or state ID card, but not for everyone. The rules come from Ohio law (section 4507.061 of the Ohio Revised Code) and the BMV's own renewal page. In plain English, these are the main ones:

- **Your current card was made in person** at a deputy registrar. You can't renew online twice in a row forever; at some point you visit, and the BMV takes a fresh photo.
- **Your card is current, or expired no more than six months ago.**
- **For a driver license, you're under 65.** The law limits online driver license renewal to people younger than 65. More on this in *For Drivers 65 and Over* (Chapter 17).
- **Nothing is holding up your record**, such as a suspension, unpaid reinstatement fees, or another block.
- **You aren't getting your first REAL ID.** A first Compliant card needs documents checked in person (see *Getting Your First Compliant Card: What to Bring* (Chapter 24)).

TIP

The site decides, and it tells you

You don't have to work all this out yourself. Start the renewal on BMV Online Services. If you're not eligible, the site says so, and then you know to visit a deputy registrar.

GOOD TO KNOW

Commercial licenses have extra rules

Commercial driver licenses (CDLs) appear on the same renewal page, but they come with federal medical and self-certification rules of their own. This guide covers regular licenses and ID cards.

CHAPTER 14

Renewing Your License or ID Online, Step by Step

If you're eligible, renewing online takes about as long as a cup of coffee. Your new card is made and mailed to you.

1. Type **bmvonline.dps.ohio.gov** into your browser (or start at bmv.ohio.gov and follow the link to Online Services).
2. Choose **DL/ID/CDL Renewal**.
3. Sign in the way the page asks: with OHID, or with details from your license (see *The Quick Sign-In with Your License, and myBMV* (Chapter 7)).
4. Answer the questions on each screen. Read each one slowly; some are legal statements you're signing.
5. Check your name and **mailing address** carefully. The new card goes to that address.
6. If you're offered a choice of how long the license lasts, pick the one you want.
7. Review the fee on the screen, then pay.
8. Save or screenshot the confirmation page.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

No counter, no line, no photo session

For anyone under 65 with a straightforward record, online renewal skips the trip entirely. If you also carry Ohio Mobile ID, check the Ohio Mobile ID page on BMV Online Services afterward (see *Privacy, a Lost Phone, and a New Phone* (Chapter 29)).

HEADS UP

Your old card is still your card until the new one comes

Keep carrying your current card until the new one arrives. If your old one expires while you wait, the **Where's My DL/ID/CDL?** tool in *Reprints, and "Where's My License?"* (Chapter 15) shows where the new one is.

GOOD TO KNOW

Online costs the same as the counter

The BMV's fee information says it doesn't add an extra fee for renewing online. You may see a small postage charge for mailing. The screen shows the total before you pay.

CHAPTER 15

Reprints, and “Where's My License?”

Ordering a reprint (a duplicate)

If your license or ID is lost, damaged, or you need one showing a new address, you can ask for a **reprint**. The BMV uses the word “reprint” online; you'll also hear “duplicate.”

1. Go to BMV Online Services.
2. Choose **DL/ID/CDL Reprint**.
3. Sign in and follow the prompts.
4. Confirm your mailing address.
5. Pay the fee shown and save the confirmation.

STAY SAFE

Lost wallet? Think beyond the license

If your wallet was stolen, your license number is now in a stranger's hands. BMV Online Services has a **DL/ID Number Change Request** for people whose number was used in fraud. Also call your bank, and consider a credit freeze.

Where's My DL/ID/CDL?

After you renew, either online or at a deputy registrar, the card is made centrally and mailed. The **Where's My DL/ID/CDL?** service on BMV Online Services checks its processing status.

1. Go to BMV Online Services and choose **Other Services**.
2. Under Driver License & ID Card, choose **Where's My DL/ID/CDL?**
3. Enter the details it asks for and read the status.

CHAPTER 16

Renewing in Person at a Deputy Registrar

Deputy registrar agencies are the BMV's local offices. There are several in and around Portage County. Rather than list them here, where they could change, I'll show you the official way to find the closest one.

Finding an office near you

1. Go to **publicsafety.ohio.gov** and look for the office locator, or use the **Find A Deputy Registrar** link under **BMV Links** on BMV Online Services.
2. Type your town or ZIP code.
3. Look at the hours. Many offices have shorter Saturday hours, and some close on certain days.
4. Note the address and phone number of the one you'll use.

What to bring

- Your current license or ID card.
- Your Social Security number (you'll be asked for it).
- For a first REAL ID, the full document set in *Getting Your First Compliant Card: What to Bring* (Chapter 24).
- Your glasses or contacts, if you wear them to drive. The visit can include an eye check.
- Payment. Ask the office which kinds of payment it takes.

What happens there

You'll have your photo taken and get a paper **interim** document to use until your new card arrives in the mail. Keep that paper with your old card.

HEADS UP

Paper interim documents and airports

TSA says temporary paper licenses are not an acceptable ID at airport security. If you're flying before your new card arrives, bring a passport or another TSA-accepted ID.

TIP

Save your place in line before you leave

BMV Online Services has a **Get in line online** feature. The walkthrough is in the “Ways” topic near the front of this guide.

CHAPTER 17

For Drivers 65 and Over

This is the one place where age changes the rules. I want to be straight with you, because there's a lot of confusion about it.

What the rules actually say

- **Online driver license renewal is for people under 65.** That's written into Ohio law. If you're 65 or older, plan to renew your driver license in person at a deputy registrar.
- **Your license lasts four years.** According to the BMV, a license issued to someone 65 or over expires in four years, and drivers 65 and over can't choose the eight-year option.
- **The other online services don't have an age limit that I found.** Plate renewals, address changes, your driving record and Ohio Mobile ID are open to you at any age.

FROM BILL

This isn't about anyone doubting you

I hear people take this personally. The in-person visit simply gives the BMV a fresh photo and a chance to check that everything is current. Go on a quiet weekday morning, save your place in line online, and bring your glasses. It's usually painless.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Everything else, from home

Even if your license renewal is a trip, your plates, address changes and driving record can all stay online. That's still most of your BMV business done without a drive.

TIP

State ID cards

If you've stopped driving and carry a state ID card instead, start the renewal on BMV Online Services. The site tells you whether you can finish it online.

PART 5

Keeping Your Record Up to Date

Changing your address after a move, looking at your own driving record, understanding reinstatement if a license is suspended, and the organ donor registry.

CHAPTER 18

Changing Your Address

When you move, the BMV needs to know. Your renewal notices, new stickers and new cards all go to the address on file. If it's out of date, they go to your old house.

BMV Online Services has a **Change of Address** service. It lets you update your **residential** address (where you live) and add or update a separate **mailing** address, such as a P.O. box.

1. Go to BMV Online Services and choose **Change of Address**.
2. Sign in the way the page asks.
3. Enter your new home address exactly as it appears on your mail.
4. If your mail goes somewhere different, add the mailing address too.
5. Review and submit. Save the confirmation.

GOOD TO KNOW

Updating the record isn't the same as a new card

Changing your address online updates the BMV's records. Your card will still show the old address until you get a new one. If you'd like the card to match, order a reprint (*Reprints, and "Where's My License?"* (Chapter 15)).

TIP

One move, several updates

The BMV is only one place. When you move, also tell the post office, Social Security, Medicare, your bank, your insurance company and your voter registration. A simple list on paper helps you tick them off.

CHAPTER 19

Checking Your Driving Record

Your driving record lists things like your license status, any points, and suspensions. It's worth a look if you've had a ticket, if your insurance company mentions something you don't recognize, or simply for peace of mind.

Two kinds of record

Service	When to use it
BMV Driving Record (unofficial)	View your own record on screen. Good for checking on yourself.
BMV Record Request (certified)	Order an official, certified copy of a driving, title or registration record. Used when an employer, court or agency asks for one. A fee applies.

1. Go to BMV Online Services and choose **Other Services**.
2. Under Driver License & ID Card, choose **BMV Driving Record** to view your unofficial record.
3. Sign in and look it over.
4. If you need an official copy, go back and choose **BMV Record Request** instead.

SCAM ALERT

Nobody needs to “clean up” your record for a fee

Ads and calls offering to “remove points” or “fix your BMV record” for a fee are at best overpriced and at worst a scam. Look at your record yourself, for nothing, on the real site.

CHAPTER 20

If a License Is Suspended: Reinstatement

If a license is suspended, for example over an insurance lapse, unpaid fines or a court order, there are steps to get it back. That's called **reinstatement**.

BMV Online Services has a **Reinstatement Requirements & Fees** page. If your license is suspended, you can see what's required and pay the reinstatement fees there.

1. Go to BMV Online Services and choose **Other Services**.
2. Choose **Reinstatement Requirements & Fees**.
3. Sign in. The page lists each requirement and whether it's been met.
4. Pay any fees there, on the real site.
5. Keep a copy of every receipt and letter.

HEADS UP

A suspension also blocks renewals

While a license has a suspension, unpaid reinstatement fees or other blocks, it can't be renewed online. Clear the reinstatement first.

SCAM ALERT

“Your license will be suspended” texts

Scammers love this threat. Recent fake texts claim your driving privileges will be suspended unless you pay a fine through a link. Don't tap it. Sign in to BMV Online Services yourself and look at the Reinstatement page. If nothing is listed, there's nothing to pay.

CHAPTER 21

The Organ Donor Registry

When you get or renew a license, you're asked whether you'd like to be an organ donor. If you'd like to change your answer between renewals, you don't have to wait.

BMV Online Services has an **Organ Donor Registry** service where you can view or change your donor registration.

1. Go to BMV Online Services and choose **Other Services**.
2. Under Other BMV Services, choose **Organ Donor Registry**.
3. Sign in, then view or change your choice.

> **FROM BILL**
>
> **Talk it over with your family too**
>
> Whatever you decide, tell your family. It spares them a hard guess at a hard time. The same goes for the BMV's emergency contact program in the “Ways” topic near the front of this guide.

PART 6

REAL ID: The Star on Your Card

What REAL ID is, where things stand at airports in late 2026, whether you actually need one, and the documents to bring for your first Ohio Compliant card.

CHAPTER 22

What REAL ID Is, and Where It Stands Now

REAL ID comes from a federal law Congress passed in 2005. It set minimum security standards for state driver licenses and ID cards. Cards that meet the standard are marked with a **star** at the top. In Ohio, the BMV calls a REAL ID a **Compliant** card, and a card without the star a **Standard** card.

Where things stand in November 2026

- **Enforcement began May 7, 2025.** Since then, anyone 18 or older needs a REAL ID-compliant license or ID, or another acceptable ID such as a valid **U.S. passport** or military ID, to get through airport security for a flight within the United States.
- **TSA PreCheck and CLEAR don't replace it.** TSA says the requirement applies to those travelers too.
- **Children under 18** traveling with an adult within the U.S. don't need ID at the checkpoint, according to TSA.
- **No acceptable ID?** TSA now offers an alternative identity check for a fee, called TSA ConfirmID. It takes extra time and isn't guaranteed to work. Check **tsa.gov** for the current details before you rely on it.

GOOD TO KNOW

REAL ID is about federal purposes, not driving

A Standard Ohio card is still a perfectly good driver license. You can drive, cash a check, vote and see the doctor with it. REAL ID matters for boarding domestic flights and entering certain federal buildings.

CHAPTER 23

Do You Actually Need One?

Not everyone does. Here's a simple way to decide.

If this is you…	Then…
You fly within the U.S. and don't want to carry a passport	Get a Compliant (star) card at your next renewal.
You have a valid U.S. passport and don't mind carrying it	You can fly with the passport instead. A star card is optional.
You don't fly, and don't visit military bases or federal buildings	A Standard card is fine.
You visit someone on a military base or need to enter a federal facility	A star card or passport will make that easier.

TIP

Check your card now

Look near the top of your Ohio license. A star there means it's already Compliant. No star means it's a Standard card.

FROM BILL

Decide before the counter, not at it

If you're 65 or over you'll be renewing in person anyway (see *For Drivers 65 and Over* (Chapter 17)). That's the perfect chance to switch to a star card, so long as you bring the documents. Decide at home, gather the papers, and do it in one trip.

SCAM ALERT

There's no REAL ID “upgrade” by text

No text, email or caller can upgrade you to a REAL ID. It requires an in-person visit with documents. Messages offering a REAL ID “fast track” for a fee are scams.

CHAPTER 24

Getting Your First Compliant Card: What to Bring

A first Compliant card is the one BMV job you **can't** do online. TSA and the BMV both say you need to go in person and show documents that prove who you are. The BMV's checklist for a Compliant card asks you to prove these things:

1. **Your full legal name.**
2. **Your date of birth.**
3. **That you're a U.S. citizen or lawfully present** (for most people, a certified birth certificate or a valid U.S. passport).
4. **Your Social Security number.**
5. **Your Ohio street address: TWO documents** from different sources, such as a utility bill and a bank statement.
6. **Any legal name change**, if your name now differs from your birth certificate (for example, a marriage certificate or divorce decree).

Use the official list

Exactly which papers count is spelled out on the BMV's **Acceptable Documents List**, linked from bmv.ohio.gov and BMV Online Services. Look it over before you go, and bring originals or certified copies, not photocopies.

HEADS UP

The name trail trips up many married women

If your birth certificate shows a maiden name, you need the paper trail that connects it to the name you use now. If you married more than once, that can mean more than one certificate. Gather them early; ordering a certified copy from another state can take weeks.

TIP

A folder by the door

Put every document in one folder, in the order of the list above, the night before. Check each one off. At the counter, hand them over in order. It goes faster for everyone.

GOOD TO KNOW

Can you switch to a star card online?

Because a first Compliant card needs documents checked in person, online renewal isn't the way to switch from a Standard card to a Compliant one. If you try, the site will steer you to a deputy registrar.

PART 7

Ohio Mobile ID: Your License on Your Phone

What Ohio Mobile ID is, adding it to Apple Wallet on an iPhone or Google Wallet on an Android phone, where it's accepted and where it isn't, and how your privacy is protected.

CHAPTER 25

What Ohio Mobile ID Is

Ohio Mobile ID is a secure digital copy of your Ohio driver license or state ID card, kept in the wallet app on your phone (and, on an iPhone, your Apple Watch if you like). The BMV describes it as a "digital companion to the physical card."

Which phones, as of November 2026

Wallet	Ohio Mobile ID
iPhone (Apple Wallet)	Available since summer 2024.
Android (Google Wallet)	Available since August 31, 2026, when the Ohio BMV announced it.
Samsung Wallet	I couldn't find an Ohio BMV announcement for Samsung Wallet. Samsung owners can use Google Wallet.

The key facts

- **It's free and voluntary.** The BMV says participation is entirely optional and costs nothing.
- **Keep carrying your plastic card.** The BMV, Apple and TSA all say so. Mobile ID is an extra, not a replacement.
- **It can't be faked by a screenshot.** It's checked by special readers that decrypt it, a bit like tap-to-pay. Nobody accepts a picture of your license on your screen.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

One less thing to dig for

At an airport checkpoint you already have your phone out for your boarding pass. With Ohio Mobile ID, the same phone can show your ID, and your wallet can stay zipped in your bag.

CHAPTER 26

Adding Your Ohio License to an iPhone

What you need

- An **iPhone 8 or later** (or an Apple Watch Series 4 or later) with the latest software.
- **Face ID or Touch ID** turned on.
- An **Apple Account** with two-factor authentication turned on.
- Your phone's region set to **United States**.
- Your Ohio license or ID card in hand, and a well-lit spot with a plain background.

Step by step

1. Open the **Wallet** app.
2. Tap the **Add Card** button (the plus sign).
3. Tap **Driver's License or ID Cards**, then choose **Ohio**.
4. Choose whether to add it to your iPhone only, or to your iPhone and Apple Watch.
5. Follow the prompts to scan the **front and back** of your card. Lay it on a dark, plain surface in good light.
6. Take the selfie it asks for. It may ask you to smile or turn your head. Hold each move until the phone vibrates.
7. Confirm with **Face ID or Touch ID** to send your request.
8. Wait for the Ohio BMV to approve it. You'll get a notification. The state, not Apple, makes that decision.

TIP

For the selfie

Take off glasses, hats and masks, stand in front of a plain wall, and use even indoor light. Hold the phone as steady as you can; prop your elbows on a table if that helps.

GOOD TO KNOW

If you use accessibility features

Apple says that if you use Voice Control, Switch Control or AssistiveTouch instead of Face ID or Touch ID, you can set up and use your ID with your passcode.

CHAPTER 27

Adding Your Ohio License to an Android Phone

On Android, Ohio Mobile ID goes in **Google Wallet**. It's on most Android phones already; if not, it's a free download from Google Play.

1. Open the **Google Wallet** app. If you don't have it, install it from **Google Play**.
2. Tap **Add to Wallet**.
3. Choose **ID Card**.
4. Choose **Ohio**.
5. Follow the verification prompts. Expect to scan your card and take a short selfie or video, much like the iPhone.
6. If it asks you to set a screen lock (a PIN, pattern or fingerprint), do so. That lock is what protects your ID.
7. Wait for the BMV's approval notice.

HEADS UP

The screens may look a little different

Google updates Wallet often, and phone makers arrange things their own way. If a button is worded differently, look for the closest match. The overall order (Add, ID, Ohio, verify) stays the same.

GOOD TO KNOW

Samsung Galaxy owners

Samsung phones run Android, so Google Wallet works on them. I couldn't confirm Ohio Mobile ID in Samsung's own Samsung Wallet app as of November 2026.

CHAPTER 28

Where You Can Use It, and Where You Can't

Where the BMV says it's accepted

- **TSA airport checkpoints.** The BMV's August 2026 release says all TSA checkpoints nationwide. Apple still advises checking signs at your airport, so look for the ID reader and the sign.
- **Select businesses and venues** in Ohio, to verify age or identity.
- **Many state buildings.**
- **Ohio's casinos.**
- **Other states** where mobile IDs are supported, because Ohio's follows national standards.

Where to keep using your plastic card

- **Traffic stops.** Apple notes a physical ID may still be needed, for example when law enforcement asks. Keep your card in the car.
- **Most stores, banks, pharmacies, doctors' offices and hotels.** Unless they have a mobile ID reader, they can't accept it.
- **Anything outside the U.S.** Use your passport.
- **If TSA asks for it.** TSA says the officer may ask for your physical ID too.

At the airport checkpoint

1. When the officer asks for ID, ask whether they take mobile ID, or look for the reader.
2. Hold your phone near the reader. Don't hand it over.
3. Your phone shows what the reader is asking for. Look it over.
4. Approve with Face ID, Touch ID, or your phone's PIN.

HEADS UP

Always have the plastic card with you

Readers break, batteries die, and not every officer or clerk is set up for mobile ID. Treat it as a convenience, never your only ID.

CHAPTER 29

Privacy, a Lost Phone, and a New Phone

You never hand over your phone

With Ohio Mobile ID, you hold your phone near a reader. The person checking your ID doesn't need to touch your phone, scroll it, or see your photos. If anyone asks you to unlock your phone and hand it over to check your ID, you can politely say no and show your plastic card instead.

You see what's shared

- Before anything is sent, your phone shows what's being requested. A place checking your age may ask only for that, not for your address.
- You approve it with your face, fingerprint or PIN. Nothing goes without that.
- Apple says the ID data is encrypted, and neither the state nor Apple can see when or where you use it. Your iPhone keeps a short list of where you've presented it, on the phone only.

If your phone is lost or stolen

The BMV says a lost or stolen phone's digital ID can be deleted with remote erase. On an iPhone that's **Find My**; on Android it's **Find Hub**, Google's service for finding a lost phone. Because the ID needs your face, fingerprint or PIN, a thief can't simply open and use it. Your plastic card is unaffected.

Getting a new phone

- **iPhone to iPhone:** during setup of the new iPhone, tap **Wallet**, select your ID, and follow the prompts to move it. An ID can be on one iPhone (and Apple Watch) per Apple Account at a time.
- **Android:** plan to add Ohio Mobile ID again in Google Wallet on the new phone.
- **Either way:** the **Ohio Mobile ID** page on BMV Online Services lets you manage the IDs in your wallet apps.

SCAM ALERT

The BMV won't ask for your phone or codes

No one from the BMV will text or call to “reactivate” your Mobile ID, or ask for a code sent to your phone. Everything happens inside your Wallet app or on the real BMV site.

PART 8

BMV Scams and How to Spot Them

The fake “unpaid toll” and “BMV fine” texts going around Ohio, look-alike websites that charge extra, and exactly what to do if you clicked or paid.

CHAPTER 30

Fake “Unpaid Toll” and “BMV Fine” Texts

If you've had a text saying you owe an unpaid toll, a parking fine, or a BMV fee, and that your license will be suspended unless you pay through a link today, you're far from alone. These texts have been sent to huge numbers of Ohioans, and the Ohio BMV and the Ohio Attorney General's office have both warned about them.

What they look like

- A text from a number or email address you don't know, claiming to be the “Ohio BMV,” “Ohio DMV” or a toll agency.
- An amount owed, often small, so paying seems easier than arguing.
- A threat: a late fee, suspension of your driving privileges, a court date, or damage to your credit.
- A deadline, often “today.”
- A link, or sometimes a **QR code** on a fake “court notice,” to pay.

In March 2026 the Ohio Attorney General's office warned about texts claiming unpaid parking or toll fines, some with an official-looking court document and a QR code leading to a payment site traced overseas.

SCAM ALERT

The texting rule

Treat any text that demands payment for a toll, ticket or BMV fee through a link as fake. Don't tap the link, don't scan the code, and don't reply, not even “STOP.” If you're worried it might be real, sign in to BMV Online Services yourself, or call the agency on a number you look up.

What to do with the text

1. Don't tap anything in the message.
2. Forward it to **7726** (it spells SPAM). That reports it to your phone company.
3. Use your phone's **Report Junk** or **Report spam** option, then delete it.
4. If you'd like, report it to the Ohio Attorney General at **OhioProtects.org** or **800-282-0515**.

CHAPTER 31

Look-Alike “DMV” Websites and Extra Fees

Not every BMV trap arrives by text. Some are websites that show up when you search. They come in two kinds.

Kind	What it does
Middleman sites	Private companies that “help” you renew, then charge you a fee on top of the BMV's fee for something you could do yourself.
Outright fakes	Sites built to look like the BMV that take your card number and personal details and give you nothing.

How to tell the real site

- The address ends in **ohio.gov**: bmv.ohio.gov, bmvonline.dps.ohio.gov, publicsafety.ohio.gov.
- The page has the **An official State of Ohio site** banner at the top.
- Ohio says “BMV,” not “DMV.” A site calling itself the “Ohio DMV” is a warning sign.
- You got there by typing the address or using your own bookmark, not by tapping a link someone sent.

HEADS UP

Check the bill, too

If the total looks higher than you expect, stop. Compare it with the official fee list on **bmv.ohio.gov**. A middleman's fee is legal but unnecessary.

TIP

Bookmark it once

The single best defense is a bookmark. Save bmv.ohio.gov once, on each device you use, and start from there every time.

CHAPTER 32

If You Clicked, Paid, or Gave Information

It happens to careful, intelligent people. These messages are built to catch you on a busy day. What matters now is acting quickly and calmly.

If you entered a card number

1. Call the number on the back of your card right away. Tell them you paid a scam site and ask them to cancel the card and dispute the charge.
2. Watch your statements for the next few months.

If you gave your license number, birth date or Social Security number

1. Consider a free **credit freeze** with all three credit bureaus: Equifax, Experian and TransUnion.
2. Visit **IdentityTheft.gov**, the FTC's site, for a step-by-step plan.
3. If your license number is being used by someone else, BMV Online Services has a **DL/ID Number Change Request** for fraud.

If you typed a password into a fake site

1. Change that password on the real site, and anywhere else you've used it.
2. Turn on two-step sign-in where it's offered.

Report it

- **Ohio Attorney General:** OhioProtects.org or 800-282-0515.
- **FTC:** ReportFraud.ftc.gov.
- **Your local police**, if money was lost. Ask for a report number.

FROM BILL

Call me, without any embarrassment

If you've clicked something and you're not sure what happened, call me at **(330) 200-8042**. I'll help you work out what was shared and what to lock down, in order.

PART 9

When to Call Bill & Your Cheat-Sheet

An honest word about when a helping hand is worth it, and a one-page cheat-sheet of the BMV addresses, rules and red flags to keep by your computer.

CHAPTER 33

When to Call Bill

Most of what's in this guide you can do yourself, and I hope you will. But some BMV jobs go faster with someone beside you. Here's when I'd suggest picking up the phone.

Call me when

- **You'd like help setting up OHID** or getting through a sign-in that keeps failing.
- **A renewal keeps getting refused** and the message doesn't make sense.
- **You'd like Ohio Mobile ID on your phone** and want someone to walk through the scan and selfie with you.
- **You're gathering REAL ID documents** and aren't sure which ones count.
- **You got a BMV or toll text** and want a second pair of eyes before you do anything.
- **You clicked a link or paid** and need to work out what to lock down.
- **You'd like your bookmarks set up** on each device so you always land on the real BMV site.

FROM BILL

How I like to help

I'm Bill, and I've spent more than 30 years working with technology. These days I help folks right here in Portage County, Ohio. I don't rush, and I don't talk down to anyone. My help is **$49 remote · $99 in your home**. Call **(330) 200-8042** or book a time at **billshometech.com/book**. If I'm with someone, Sophie, my AI receptionist, will answer and make sure I get your message.

GOOD TO KNOW

What I can't do

I can't do BMV business for you, and you should never give me, or anyone, your OHID password to do it for you. I sit beside you while *you* do it. That keeps your account yours.

Thank you for reading this far. You know where the real BMV lives online, what you can do from home, what needs a visit, and how to spot the fakes. That's most of the battle.

— Bill

CHAPTER 34

Your Ohio BMV Cheat-Sheet

Keep a copy of this page by your computer.

The real addresses

Address	Use it for
bmv.ohio.gov	Ohio BMV information, fees and forms.
bmvonline.dps.ohio.gov	BMV Online Services: renew, reprint, update.
publicsafety.ohio.gov	Office locator for deputy registrars.
tsa.gov	Airport ID rules, REAL ID and mobile ID.

Online, or in person?

Job	Where
Renew plates (OPLATES)	Online
Change of address, driving record, organ donor	Online
Renew license, under 65, record clear	Online, if the site says you're eligible
Renew license, 65 or over	In person at a deputy registrar
First REAL ID (Compliant card)	In person, with documents
Ohio Mobile ID	In Apple Wallet or Google Wallet on your phone

REAL ID documents

- Full legal name, date of birth, and U.S. citizenship or lawful presence.
- Social Security number.
- **Two** proofs of your Ohio street address.
- Any name-change papers.

Red flags: STOP if you see

- A text about an unpaid toll, ticket or BMV fee with a link or QR code.
- A threat to suspend your license unless you pay today.

- A site calling itself the “Ohio DMV,” or any address not ending in ohio.gov.
- Anyone asking you to hand over your unlocked phone to check your Mobile ID.

Report scams

- Forward scam texts to **7726**.
- **Ohio Attorney General:** OhioProtects.org · 800-282-0515.
- **FTC:** ReportFraud.ftc.gov.
- **Bill's Home Tech:** (330) 200-8042 · billshometech.com/book.

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