

VA Photo ID Cards for All Veterans Coming in November

All honorably discharged veterans of every era will be able to get a photo identification card from the Department of Veterans Affairs starting in November due to a law passed in 2015.

The law, known as the Veterans Identification Card Act 2015, orders the VA to issue a hard-copy photo ID to any honorably discharged veteran who applies. The card must contain the veteran's name, photo and a non-Social Security identification number, the law states.

A VA official on Wednesday confirmed the cards are on track to be available nationwide starting in November. Veterans may apply for the card online, but a timeline for how long it will take to receive a card after application has not been finalized, the official said. No details were released on when that application process will open, what information veterans will need when applying or the web address they will use.

Although the law states that the VA may charge a fee for the card, the official said no fee is planned.

The change comes as the military exchange stores prepare to open online shopping to all honorably discharged veterans starting Nov. 11. Veterans who wish to use that new benefit must be verified through VetVerify.org.

Congress passed the ID law as a way to help veterans prove their service without showing a copy of their DD-214.

"Goods, services and promotional activities are often offered by public and private institutions to veterans who demonstrate proof of service in the military, but it is impractical for a veteran to always carry Department of Defense form DD-214 discharge papers to demonstrate such proof," the law states.

Some veterans already carry such proof of service.

Those who receive health care from the VA or have a disability rating can get a photo ID VA health card, also known as a Veteran Health Identification Card. Military retirees also hold an ID card issued by the Defense Department.

Veterans are also able to get a proof of service letter through the VA's ebenefits website. And some states will include a veteran designation on driver's licenses if requested.