

## **New Deadline for Some Military Retirees, Dependents**

Retirees and military family members who have identification cards with no expiration date can choose to upgrade to the new Next Generation Uniform Services Identification, or USID, cards whenever it's convenient -- as long as it's done within the next four years, according to the Defense Department. There is no looming deadline for use of those old non-active duty cards without expiration dates, but the department expects to completely phase out and replace them with the next-generation IDs, which are more durable and have enhanced security features, by 2026, Maj. Charlie Dietz, a spokesman, told Military.com.

In the meantime, cards with expiration dates are required to be replaced within 90 days of elapsing. The Defense Department began the effort to update all those IDs to the new format in July 2020, but the changeover hit delays caused by the pandemic. "DoD plans to phase out and cancel the existing card forms in 2026 when all existing cards with an actual expiration date will have expired," Dietz wrote in an email. "After then, only the USID card will be accepted for installation and benefits access." The USID format for military retirees and dependents represents the first change to those identification cards in nearly 30 years; the last update was in 1993. The new design closely resembles the Common Access Card, or CAC, format issued to active-duty troops and department civilians.

But there was uncertainty among those with cards that list the expiration as indefinite. The IDs are needed to access military facilities and to confirm eligibility for various military benefits, so missing a deadline or losing the identification could disrupt cardholders' lives. Expired cards can be confiscated at base gates. Those with cards with no expiration dates "may have the card replaced at their convenience," according to Dietz. The department recommends they go to the ID Card Office Online and use the office locator to find a site that issues the new cards and book an appointment. Retirees and their dependents, dependents of active-duty troops, reserve members and Medal of Honor recipients are among those who will receive the USID cards. A description of the new cards and a complete list of who is eligible can be found at <https://www.cac.mil/Next-Generation-Uniformed-Services-ID-Card>.

At the onset of the pandemic in April 2020, the Defense Department extended the deadlines for replacing expiring cards in an attempt to keep the military community from gathering in issuance offices and spreading COVID-19. By February 2021, more than 200,000 of the new IDs had been issued. "Social distancing and other pandemic safety precautions at DoD ID card sites worldwide has delayed the progress of existing card replacement, but generally most of those cardholders who needed to replace an expired card have done so," Dietz said July 13.