

# COPYING OF A MILITARY ID CARD



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## INTRODUCTION

Have you ever thought about why off-post “commercial establishments” will ask for a copy of your military identification card when making a major purchase? You could assume it is to ascertain whether you are in the military and have a steady income. However, there could be other reasons they want a copy. Some military personnel and their family members produce their military ID card and hand it over to the sales representative to make a photographic copy.

Many military members, family member and DoD employees are unaware this is prohibited by law under Title 18 U.S.C. § 701: U.S. Code – Section 701: Official badges, identification cards, other insignia.

Military personnel and their family members may express concern about having their military ID cards photocopied, perhaps because they have always been instructed never to lose or allow someone to copy their card. These instructions are designed to prevent identity theft and safeguard against security being compromised by someone impersonating U.S. military personnel.

If a hotel, car dealer, or similar commercial establishment wants to offer a military discount and request a photocopy, the military member should permit review of the card only. There are no safeguards in place to ensure a government ID card won't be counterfeited based on a photocopy

provided to a commercial establishment. Consequently, absent express legal authorization, the member should decline to permit photocopying in such instances. Instead, have the vendor document that the ID card was shown, or simply provide alternative proof of identification.

## AUTHORIZED

- Photocopying of ID cards for verification of Tricare eligibility.
- Photocopying of ID to facilitate medical care processing, check cashing, or administrating other military-related benefits to eligible beneficiaries.
- Photocopying to other DoD entities and other official purposes when alternate forms of verification do not exist.

## SUMMARY

Federal law prohibits the unauthorized copying of a military ID. If a member is unsure what is authorized or what constitutes a DoD benefit, they should seek guidance and advice from their local legal office. Not only can you protect yourself from identity theft you can also ensure security is not compromised.

*\*This handout is general in nature. It is not a substitute for legal advice from an attorney regarding individual situations.  
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For additional information on this and other legal topics, see the Air Force Legal Assistance Website:  
<https://afleglassistance.law.af.mil>