



# Jesse White

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## SECRETARY OF STATE

# NEWS

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**Jesse White Unveils New Driver's Licenses for Those Under 21**  
New Design Aimed at Preventing Underage Drinking and Fraud

In an effort to prevent underage drinking and fraud, Secretary of State Jesse White unveiled a new design driver's license for people under 21 years old that will be more difficult to alter.

The new design will be featured on all drivers' licenses, identification cards, and commercial drivers' licenses (DLs, IDs, and CDLs) issued to those under 21 beginning January 1, 2005. The new cards are significantly changed, featuring a vertical design with a color pattern across much of the front of the card.

"The newly designed under 21 card is more distinctive and far more difficult to alter," Secretary White said. "It is another step we are taking to prevent underage drinking and save lives."

According to the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA), nationwide in 2003:

- Vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for 15 to 20 year olds
- 31 percent of drivers age 15 to 20 killed in vehicle crashes had been drinking
- 25 percent of drivers age 15-20 involved in fatal crashes had a blood-alcohol content (BAC) of .08 or higher

There were 753,588 licensed drivers in Illinois under age 21 in 2003, White said.

The vertical design targets what Secretary of State police have found to be the easiest and most common method used by underage drinkers trying to obtain a fake ID. Because of its dramatically different layout, the new under 21 license will be harder to manipulate to look like the standard license.

Penalties for making and using fake or unlawfully altered DLs or IDs are significant. Depending on the nature of the offense, it can be a Class A misdemeanor, up to one year in jail and up to a \$2,500 fine or a Class 4 felony, up to three years in prison and up to a \$25,000 fine. Those offenders also face a 12-month suspension of driving privileges.

The new card continues to feature built in security measures that cannot be duplicated.

The Secretary of State's office has contacted businesses, law enforcement agencies, and other entities in an effort to educate them on the new features of the cards.

The Illinois Retail Merchants Association, the Illinois Chiefs of Police, the Alliance Against Intoxicated Motorists (AAIM) and MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving) approve the newly designed card.