

# Data Breach at the DMV – Social Security Information of Thousands Leaked

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Over 3,200 California License holders had their Social Security information improperly exposed to federal agencies.



California driver license holders are already aware the many frustrations that are associated with the DMV. Extended lines and wait times, understaffing, and now a “Data Breach”, According to an article posted on the LA Times on November 5<sup>th</sup>. The California Department of Motor Vehicles announced it suffered a data breach in which a number of federal agencies, including Homeland Security, IRS, Small Business Association, and district attorneys in San Diego & Santa Clara, had improper access to the Social Security information of 3,200 people. Notices were sent to those whose Social Security information was accessed during the last four years, including whether or not a license holder had a Social Security number.

“The controversy comes as the DMV has been struggling in the last year to overcome a series of problems, including hours-long wait times at some field offices, computer crashes and mistakes in automatically registering people to vote.” – *Patrick McGreevy, Los Angeles Times*

In a statement by DMV spokeswoman Anita Gore, “Protection of personal information is important to DMV, and we have taken additional steps to correct this error, protect this information and reaffirm our serious commitment to protect the privacy rights of all license holders,” Gore told the Times. “That’s why DMV immediately began correcting the access error following a legal compliance review, ensured that no additional confidential information was disclosed to these entities, and has implemented several additional layers of review.”

The California DMV has 9,711 employees, 172 field offices and a \$1.3-billion budget, and is tasked with licensing 27 million drivers and registering 35.7 million motor vehicles.

This data breach is particularly sensitive issue because California lawmakers decided in 2013 to issue driver's licenses to immigrants in the country illegally who can provide proof of identity and California residency. California State officials have promised that information on those license holders would not be shared with federal immigration officials. In addition, the breach comes just months after a state audit found “significant deficiencies” in DMV operations, including technology and staffing problems and poor management practices.

