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**Answers to actual problems and questions from Georgia consumers.  
Brought to you by the Georgia Department of Law's Consumer Protection Unit**

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**Dear Consumer Ed:**

I purchased a bottle of wine at my grocery store last week. I showed them my driver's license, as requested, and they proceeded to scan the barcode on the back of my license into some piece of equipment. In the past, they simply looked at my ID and typed in my birthdate. What personal information is stored in these barcodes? What kind of devices can read the information? Are businesses storing this data? Who has access to it?

**Consumer Ed says:**

Beginning in November 2012, Georgia began issuing driver's licenses with a barcode security feature. These new licenses and IDs are more secure and harder to counterfeit. The barcode also enables businesses to quickly verify your identity. All of the information printed on the front of a Driver's License or ID is contained in the barcode. Businesses must have a barcode scanner capable of reading a PDF-417, as well as software to display the information to the user. However, the law states that no one may scan your license without your knowledge or consent. Also, the business can only use the information for legitimate purposes. In the case of checking identification in purchasing age-restricted items, the relevant, legitimate information is limited to name and birthdate. If a business uses the information for any other purpose, they will be in violation of this law.

The Department of Driver Services explains the new license bar codes in detail at [dds.georgia.gov/sites/dds.georgia.gov/files/related\\_files/document/Brochure-Barcode%20explanation%2010172013.pdf](https://dds.georgia.gov/sites/dds.georgia.gov/files/related_files/document/Brochure-Barcode%20explanation%2010172013.pdf).

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