With Your U.S. Passport, The World is Yours!

United States Department of State

About Your Passport

Congratulations! Your new U.S. Passport Book is your ticket for international travel by air, sea, and land. If you are 16 or older, the passport book can be used for 10 years. Passports for children under 16 are only valid for 5 years.

Some countries may deny you entry if your passport book will expire in less than six months. For complete information on foreign entry requirements, refer to the country-specific information pages on our website, travel.state.gov.

Safeguarding Your Passport

• Sign your full name in blue or black ink inside your passport. Parents may sign on behalf of their children under 16 and should note their relation to the child.

• Keep your passport in a safe location while at home and abroad. If your passport is lost or stolen, report it immediately. You can report your lost or stolen passport in one of three ways:
  • Call toll-free 877-487-2778
  • Complete, sign, and mail form DS-64 to the address on the form (also found on travel.state.gov)
  • Report it online at travel.state.gov

• Passports reported lost or stolen are invalidated and can no longer be used for travel.

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Additional Tips for Travel

• While overseas, carry photocopies of your passport biographical page and foreign visa with you at all times.

• Once you receive your new passport, your old passport is not valid for travel. If your old passport is linked to a valid visa, you can still use the valid visa. You must travel with both your new and old passport in this case.

• Make sure your health insurance covers you while overseas, and consider travel insurance that includes medical evacuation.

• Keep U.S. Embassy contact information with you while you travel. If there is ever an emergency, the U.S. Department of State may be able to provide assistance.

Help Us Help You

Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)

Enroll in STEP to receive travel and safety update while abroad. By entering your travel itinerary and contact information in STEP, we will also be able to better assist you during an emergency. US embassies and consulates around the world can contact you directly during an emergency - including situations where family or friends in the United States are having problems trying to contact you. The itinerary and contact information is safeguarded and not released to third parties without your written authorization. Enroll today for free at step.state.gov.

Know Before You Go

We believe a well-informed traveler is a safe traveler. We provide travel information on every country in the world on travel.state.gov, plus general tips and resources on traveling, working, or living abroad.
We also post Travel Alerts and Travel Warnings about possible risks and security threats so you can make informed decisions about your travel plans.

**Inter-Country Adoption**

Every year, thousands of families in the United States experience the joy of adopting a child from another country. If you are considering inter-country adoption, make sure you learn the other country’s laws and requirements first. They can often be different from U.S. laws. Find more information at adoption.state.gov.

When bringing your adopted child home, note that the process for how your child acquires U.S. citizenship can vary depending on the type of visa the child has when entering the United States and whether the adoption was finalized in the United States. Find out which process applies to your situation at uscis.gov and adoption.state.gov.

**International Parental Child Abduction**

Under federal and state laws, it is a crime for a parent to take a child outside of the United States without the other parent's consent. If your child is a victim of international parental child abduction, or you fear the possibility of abduction, call the Office of Children's Issues (from the U.S. and Canada at 888-407-4747 and from overseas at +1-202-501-4444) as well as your local police for resources and assistance.

One of the most important tools for preventing international parental child abduction is the Children's Passport Issuance Alert Program (CPIAP). If a
passport application is submitted for a child under age 18 who is enrolled in CPIAP, the Department attempts to alert the parent or parents to verify whether they approve passport issuance. Visit travel.state.gov for more information.