



## U.S.PASSPORT CARD

APPLICATIONS ACCEPTED  
BEGINNING FEBRUARY 1



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U.S. citizens may begin applying in advance for the new U.S. Passport Card beginning February 1, 2008, in anticipation of land border travel document requirements. We expect cards will be available and mailed to applicants in spring 2008.

The passport card will facilitate entry and expedite document processing at U.S. land and sea ports-of-entry when arriving from Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean and Bermuda. The card may not be used to travel by air. It will otherwise carry the rights and privileges of the U.S. passport book and will be adjudicated to the exact same standards.

The Department of State is issuing this passport card in response to the needs of border resident communities for a less expensive and more portable alternative to the traditional passport book. The card will have the same validity period as a passport book: 10 years for an adult, five for children 15 and younger. For adults who already have a passport book, they may apply for the card as a passport renewal and pay only \$20. First-time applicants will pay \$45 for adult cards and \$35 for children.

To facilitate the frequent travel of U.S. citizens living in border communities and to meet DHS's operational needs at land borders, the passport card will contain a vicinity-read radio frequency identification (RFID) chip. This chip will link the card to a stored record in secure government databases. There will be no personal information written to the RFID chip itself.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT APPLYING FOR A U.S.  
PASSPORT CARD OR PASSPORT, PLEASE VISIT:

**TRAVEL.STATE.GOV**

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

### *Why a Passport Card?*

The Department of State has developed a Passport Card as a more portable and less expensive alternative to the traditional passport book. The passport card is a basic component of the PASS (People Access Security Service) system announced by Secretaries Rice and Chertoff in January 2006, and will meet the specific requirements of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) to secure and expedite travel. WHTI is the Administration's plan to implement a provision of the Intelligence Reform Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004, which requires citizens of the United States, Canada, and Bermuda to have a passport or other designated document that establishes the bearer's identity and nationality to enter or re-enter the United States from Mexico, Canada, and the Caribbean. According to the Department of Homeland Security, other documents such as registered traveler cards (NEXUS, SENTRI and FAST cards) will be acceptable under WHTI.

### *How did the Department decide on the cost of the Passport Card?*

Consular Fees reflect the cost of providing passport services to the American public. Per regulation, the Department of State employs an independent consultant to conduct periodic and regular cost of service studies to determine the cost of providing consular services. The cost of service study indicated that the Department could issue a card for \$20 for an adult and \$10 for a child. With the execution fee of \$25, the total cost for an adult is \$45, or 37.5 cents per month over a ten year period.

### *Why is there an execution fee?*

First time applicants, minors and those seeking to replace a lost or stolen passport must appear in person before a person authorized by the Secretary of State to give oaths to verify their passport applications. In order to offer American citizens convenient locations to apply for a passport, the Department of State authorizes Passport Acceptance Agents to accept passport applications on its behalf. American citizens can apply at more than 9,000 passport acceptance facilities, most of them with the U.S. Postal Service. Other government facilities include many state, county, township, and municipal offices as well public libraries and public universities. The execution fee is to reimburse the acceptance facility for the cost of the service, which provides an incentive for them to act on behalf of the Department of State. The current cost of the execution fee per application will be reduced to \$25 beginning February 1, 2008. The execution fee applies to first-time applicants, children and replacements for lost or stolen passports. Since the execution fee does not apply to

applications for renewals, adult passport holders will pay only \$20 for the card. You can locate the acceptance facility nearest you at: [travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov).

### ***Why can't I use the passport card to fly to Canada and Mexico?***

The passport card is designed for the specific needs of border resident communities and is not a globally interoperable travel document as is the traditional passport book. The passport book is the appropriate travel document for most international travel.

### ***How secure is the card?***

Because the wallet-sized Passport Card does not offer as many opportunities to embed security features as a passport book, the Department has decided to use laser engraving and will include state-of-the-art security features to mitigate against the possibility of counterfeiting and forgery. We are taking every care to ensure that this Passport Card is as secure as current technology permits. There will be no personal information written to the RFID chip.

### ***What is RFID Technology?***

Radio Frequency Identification technology (RFID) has been used successfully along our land borders with Canada and Mexico since 1995 in the Department of Homeland Security's trusted traveler programs, such as NEXUS, SENTRI and FAST. U.S. border officials are able to expedite legitimate cross-border travel and trade of those trusted travelers who carry membership cards with vicinity read RFID chips that link to government databases. Membership in these programs currently exceeds 400,000.

RFID technology has been commercially available in one form or another since the 1970s. It can be found in car keys, highway toll tags, bank cards and security access cards. The Department of Homeland Security's Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers, who staff the ports of entry, anticipate that the speed of vicinity RFID will allow CBP officers, in advance of the traveler's arrival at the inspection booth, to quickly access information on the traveler from secure government databases, and allow for automated terrorist watch list checks without impeding traffic flow. In addition, they foresee that multiple cards can be read at a distance and simultaneously, allowing an entire car of people to be processed at once.

The RFID technology embedded in documents will not include any personally identifying information; only a unique number that can be associated with a record stored in a secure government database will be transmitted.

***Has the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) certified the Card Architecture as required by law?***

As required by legislation (Homeland Security Appropriations Act of 2007, Sect. 546), NIST has reviewed the card architecture of the proposed passport card to be developed by the Department of State in response to the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI). On May 1, 2007, NIST informed the Departments of State and Homeland Security (DHS) that the proposed card architecture meets or exceeds the relevant international security standards and best practices for the technology that will be included in the card. To accommodate the Department of Homeland Security's operational needs at the ports of entry, the Department of State passport card will include Generation 2 RFID vicinity read technology. NIST notified Congress on May 3, 2007, that it had certified the security of the card architecture.

***Is there a threat from skimming personal information or tracking American citizens?***

The RFID technology used in the passport card will enable the card to be read at a distance by an authorized CBP reader mounted alongside the traffic lane. The chip contains no biographic data as is the case with the e-passport. The chip will have a unique number linking the card to a secure database maintained by DHS and State. However, to address concerns that passport card bearers can be tracked by this technology, we are requiring that the vendor provide a sleeve that will prevent the card from being read while inside it.

## Passport Card Layout

The Passport Card is formatted according to specifications for TD-1 size travel documents, as described in ICAO Document 9303, Part 3, Volume 1. The card contains both eye readable and machine readable information. For machine reading, information corresponding to personal data is printed in the *Machine Readable Zone* (MRZ).



Figure 1: Front of Card blank artwork



Figure 2: Card back artwork, showing “PASSsystem” (in color shifting ink) location and which will include a unique preprinted card number and 3 of 9 1D bar code, and room for the MRZ.