



Entry into the US from 26 October 2004

New US rules from 26 October

From 26 October 2004, all British citizens and citizens of other countries covered by the US Visa Waiver Program will be refused entry to the US without either:

- a machine-readable passport; or
- a US visa.

This is a requirement of US law and applies to everyone, regardless of age. It is your responsibility to make sure that you have the correct travel documents.

How to tell whether your passport is machine-readable

All British passports currently issued in the UK or at British Missions overseas are machine-readable. However, a small number of older passports may not be machine-readable.

If your passport has two lines of letters, numbers and chevrons (">>>>>") printed across the long edge of the photo page, then it is machine-readable. The letters, numbers and chevrons will be printed on a white strip on older machine-readable passports and directly on the pink page of newer passports.

If there are no such lines of text then the passport is not machine-readable.

- Children included on their parents' passports

Children included on their parent's passport will not be permitted visa-free entry to the US on or after 26 October 2004.

Children have not been included on parents' UK passports since 1998. But certain current UK passports issued to parents between 1994 and 1998 might have included their children.

Frequently asked questions

I plan to travel to the US but do not have a machine-readable passport or a visa. What do I do?

UK passport holders

- Call the UK Identity & Passport Service 24 hour advice line on 0300 222 0000.
- If you wish to apply for a US visa, contact the US Embassy visa service on 09055 444546 (premium rate line).
- Visa applicants have to attend an interview and the current wait for an interview is about four weeks. This is in addition to processing and mailing time. It will almost certainly be quicker to apply for a new UK passport.

Non-UK passport holders

- Contact the relevant authority from the country that issued your passport.

I've just been turned away from a flight because I / my child didn't have a machine-readable passport. What can I do?

- It might still be possible for you to travel if you can get your documentation up to date, and if your airline can carry you on a later flight.
- Contact the Identity & Passport Service 24 hour advice line on 0300 222 0000.
- Ask the airline if your ticket would enable you to travel on a later flight. Some tickets hold conditions that restrict the flexibility for a change in flight reservation. If so, you may have to pay a fee to change the flight or buy a new ticket where flight alterations are not permitted.

What documents do I need to get a new passport?

- For fuller advice, including requirements for passport photographs, please contact the UK Passport Service.

New passport for a child born in the UK

- Completed application form correctly signed by a parent/guardian, and child if aged 15-17.
- Full birth certificate.
- Two identical recent passport photographs.
- Payment.
- You must allow at least seven days for first time passport applications. This is because more checks need to be made for new passports, to confirm the applicant's identity and their eligibility for a British passport. Consequently the UK Passport Service's premium facility is not available for first time applications.

Renewal of existing non machine-readable passport

- Completed application form.
- Current passport.
- Two identical recent passport photographs.
- Payment.
- You can renew your passport on the same day at a cost of Â£89 if you apply in person at a passport office. You must first book an appointment through the UK Passport Service advice line on 0870 521 0410 and have all the completed documentation described above.

Identity & Passport telephone numbers

Adviceline 0300 222 0000

For all other queries, please use the following telephone numbers:

- 0300 222 111 - for customer correspondence queries
- 0300 222 0222 - for Text Phone
- 0300 222 1000 - for passport interview appointments
- 08001 0300 222 0000 - for Typetalk

Useful web sites

Identity & Passport Service www.ips.gov.uk

Foreign and Commonwealth Office www.fco.gov.uk

US Embassy, London www.usembassy.org.uk