

## Passport Operations in Response to COVID-19

COVID-19 Information for U.S.  
Update Passport Customers

May 1, 2020

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### Know Before You Apply For A U.S. Passport

If you are thinking about applying for or renewing a U.S. passport now for international travel, please read the Department of State's current international travel advisory. Because of public health measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19, we have extremely limited U.S. passport operations. If you apply or renew now, you will experience **significant delays of several months** to receive your U.S. passport and the return of your citizenship evidence documents (such as birth certificates or naturalization certificates). Unless you have a life-or-death emergency, please wait until we resume normal operations to apply for or renew your passport.

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### **1. What if I have an emergency and need to get a passport quickly?**

We are only able to offer in-person service at our agencies or centers for customers who need to travel internationally within 72 hours due to a qualified life-or-death emergency. Learn more below to see if you qualify for a life-or-death emergency appointment.

#### **2. Can I still apply?**

Unless you have a life-or-death emergency, please **wait to apply for or renew your passport** or you will experience **significant delays of several**

**months** to receive your U.S. passport and your citizenship evidence documents.

### **3. Can I expedite my passport?**

No. We **suspended expedited service** on March 19 and are not offering this service to any applicants.

### **4. What if I applied before passport operations were limited on March 19?**

Because we have limited staff due to COVID-19, if you applied on or before March 19, you will experience **significant delays of several months** to receive your passport and the return of your citizenship evidence documents. If you received a letter from us requesting additional information to process your passport application, you may mail your response to the address in the letter. Expect significant processing delays.

### **5. Can I get a status update on my passport?**

We will not be able to provide a specific update on when you will receive your passport and when we will return your citizenship evidence documents until we resume normal operations. If you call our National Passport Information Center or check our Online Passport Status System after you apply or renew, your application status may be "Not Found" or "In Process." While we continue to accept applications, process your payments, and safeguard your forms and supporting documents, we will not be able to update these status messages until we resume operations and our staff return to our facilities across the country.

### **6. What qualifies as a life-or-death emergency?**

Life-or-death emergencies are serious illnesses, injuries, or deaths in your immediate family (e.g., parent, child, spouse, sibling, aunt, uncle, etc.) that require you to travel outside the United

States **within 72 hours (3 days)**. You must provide:

- A passport application with supporting documents
- Proof of the life-or-death emergency such as a death certificate, a statement from a mortuary, or a signed letter from a hospital or medical professional. Documents must be in English or translated in English.
- Proof of international travel (e.g. reservation, ticket, itinerary) specific to the emergency

To make an appointment at a passport agency or center for a life-or-death emergency, you must call our National Passport Information Center at 1-877-487-2778 (1-888-874-7793 TDD/TTY) on Monday-Friday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm Eastern Time, except federal holidays. Call 202-647-4000 outside of these hours to make an appointment.

Our passport agencies in Connecticut and New York are closed to the public until further notice.

### **7. Can I apply in person now?**

Yes. However, unless you have a life-or-death emergency, **please wait until we resume normal operations to apply for your passport.**

If you need to apply in person (all children under age 16 and first-time applicants), you can apply at acceptance facilities which include post offices, clerk of courts, and libraries. Please contact your local acceptance facility to confirm if it is open or closed. If you want to apply at a post office, you will need to make an appointment directly on the USPS.com website.

### **8. Can I renew by mail now?**

Yes. However, unless you have a life-or-death emergency, **please wait until we resume normal operations to renew your passport.**

Please note if you have a passport that is valid for 10 years, you **do not** need to renew your passport before it expires unless you are planning to travel internationally. Most countries require 6 months validity for entry. Though an expired passport cannot be used for international travel, customers eligible to renew their passport have up to 5 years to renew their document using Form DS-82 after it expires. After 5 years from the expiration date, you must apply using Form DS-11.

**9. Will Real ID still be enforced at airports later this year?**

No. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) extended the deadline by one year until October 1, 2021. Beginning in October 2021, DHS will require customers to use a REAL ID to fly domestically. The most common REAL ID is a state-issued driver's license. A U.S. passport book and passport card are two of many alternative documents that customers can use to fly domestically if they do not have a state-issued REAL ID. For more information on REAL ID, go to [DHS' website](#)<sup>2</sup>.