



# Travel Identification Guidelines



By Charles Smith & Cathleen Henniges

As we emerge from the foggy time warp of the COVID-19 pandemic, we begin to resume our lives. Although it's only been 18 chronological months, it seems like a decade. We yearn for that postponed vacation! In preparation for that special trip, you need to know about the current travel identification requirements. It is time to take a look at your driver's license and dust off that passport. Be sure to check the expiration date! If your driver's license has a gold star, you are good to go for domestic travel, whether by plane, train, or automobile. However, if you set foot out of the United States, you will need a Passport (no matter what your age and even if it's only Canada or Mexico).

There have been many changes over the years, and you have certainly heard about the Real ID Act which Congress passed in 2005. Through many postponements of the effective date, October 1, 2021, was announced to be the final deadline. Well, now that has been extended to May 3, 2023. While that might seem like a long time from now, just like death and taxes, there is no escape. And they are not making years as long as they used to.

Commencing May 3, 2023, Federal agencies, and facilities, including DHS, TSA, and courthouses, will only accept state-issued driver's licenses and identification cards if they are Real ID Act compliant. If you do not have a gold star on your license, you will need to be visiting the Arizona Motor Vehicle Division (or an Authorized Third-Party Driver License office) with a handful of documents to prove your identity, social security number and demonstrate Arizona residency. Please refer to the Arizona Department of Transportation guidelines at [www.azdot.gov/motor-vehicles/driver-services/arizona-travel-id](http://www.azdot.gov/motor-vehicles/driver-services/arizona-travel-id). There are online tools to assist you in gathering the right documents and scheduling an appointment.

Many people in our area may have a US Passport Card for travel to Mexico or Canada, but you should be aware that the Passport Card cannot be used for any international air travel. The Passport Card is designed for frequent travelers by land and sea to Mexico, Canada, and the Caribbean. It may also be used for Real ID Act compliant identification for domestic air travel.

If your travel plans involve overseas travel by air, be sure to also check out the benefits of Global Entry. Global Entry is part of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection's Trusted Traveler Program that allows expedited clearance for pre-approved, low-risk travelers upon arrival in the United States using automatic kiosks at select airports.

In the era of Covid, it is recommended to bring your Covid Vaccination Card due to varying requirements to prove vaccination. Consider using a protective pouch to protect and preserve your card.

If you are applying for a passport for the first time or have had your passport lost/stolen or damaged, then you'll need to go to a passport acceptance facility in-person to apply. This is also true if you are under age 16, were under 16 when your previous passport was issued, the previous passport was issued more than 15 years ago, or your previous passport was lost, stolen or damaged. For obtaining a passport for someone who is under 16, both parents or a legal guardian need to be present. It is possible for only one parent to be present if the other parent fills out Form DS-3053 "Statement of Consent," which you would bring into the passport acceptance facility when you apply. If none of the above situations apply to you, you may be eligible to renew your passport through the mail. Many countries require your passport to be valid for at least 6 months after your intended stay, so it is advisable to renew your passport at least 9 months before an international trip. A name change also requires passport renewal. You can renew your passport for free if you apply within a year of your name change. An original or certified name change document, such as a marriage certificate, divorce decree, or court order, is required for renewal. Whether you are applying for new or replacement passport or simply renewing your passport, all forms you will need to fill out to submit your application are available online at the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Consular Affairs website (<https://travel.state.gov>). They are available at some passport acceptance facilities as well.

The Application Fee for Passport books is paid to the U.S. Department of State in the amount of \$110 for adults (16 and older) and for \$80 for children (16 and under). There is also an Execution Fee of \$35 for newly issued passports, replacement passports and passports for children, which is also known as an Acceptance Fee and is payable to the Acceptance Facility. To get your passport quickly, you can expedite the service for \$60 and add 1-2-day shipping for an additional \$17.56 to receive your passport within 4-6 weeks after applying. The normal time interval is 10-12 weeks. These timelines have recently been updated, so it is presumed to include any recent changes due to the pandemic, but there are reports of additional delays due to increased mailing times. If you need your passport sooner than you thought, you can upgrade your service status to expedited through the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Consular Affairs website (<https://travel.state.gov>). If you are in a rush or have an emergency, you may also consider using a passport expeditor service which can be pricey but are able to provide you a passport in 72 hours or less!

There are many Passport Acceptance Facilities in Tucson where passport applications can be filed, such as United States courts, state courts, post offices, public libraries, county offices, and city offices. Please review the locations on the Department of State website before going to apply as most facilities will require an appointment and have limited hours of operation, especially since public buildings are likely to be still observing quarantine procedures. For applying at the County Clerk of Superior Court, an appointment is required. When you go to your appointment, you will need to have confirmation of your citizenship and a valid photo ID. Often this means a naturalization certificate or birth certificate and a current driver's license, government ID, or military ID. You will also need a valid passport photo to submit with the application.

If you have any questions or to download the forms you will use on your application, visit the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Consular Affairs website (<https://travel.state.gov>) today!