

# US Passport Checklist

Checklist · 90 items · 11 sections

A complete checklist for getting a US passport in 2026, covering first-time applications, mail-in renewals, child passports, expedited service, and replacing lost or stolen books. Includes the right form (DS-11, DS-82, DS-5504, DS-64), current fees, photo rules, and citizenship evidence. Built from travel.state.gov guidance so you walk into your appointment with everything sorted.

Open the editable, AI-powered version online:

<https://genechecklist.com/checklist/passport-checklist>

## DECIDE YOUR FORM

- Choose DS-11 for first-time, under 16, lost/stolen, issued >15 years ago, or issued before age 16  
**HIGH**
- Choose DS-82 for mail-in renewal: undamaged, issued within 15 years, after age 16, in current legal name  
**HIGH**
- Choose DS-5504 to correct a printing error, name change within 1 year of issuance, or update limited-validity (no cost)
- Choose DS-64 to report a lost or stolen passport; submit with DS-11 in person  
**HIGH**
- Pick your product: passport book (\$130), passport card (\$30 adult), or both
- Consider a passport card for land/sea travel to Canada, Mexico, Bermuda, Caribbean

## FIRST-TIME APPLICATION (DS-11)

- Complete Form DS-11 online at travel.state.gov; print single-sided on white paper  
**HIGH**
- Do NOT sign DS-11 until the acceptance agent instructs you to sign in their presence  
**HIGH**
- Locate an authorized acceptance facility (USPS, public libraries, county clerks) on travel.state.gov finder  
**HIGH**
- Book an appointment if required; most USPS locations require online booking at usps.com  
**HIGH**
- Bring originals AND one photocopy (front and back) of citizenship evidence and photo ID  
**HIGH**

- Bring one 2x2 inch passport photo meeting State Department specs  
**HIGH**
- Bring two separate payments: check/money order to 'U.S. Department of State' for passport fee; separate \$35 execution fee to the acceptance facility  
**HIGH**
- Be prepared to surrender your driver's license temporarily if it's your primary photo ID  
*The agent will copy and return it.*
- Expect to take an oath and sign DS-11 in the agent's presence

### RENEWAL BY MAIL (DS-82)

- Confirm all 5 DS-82 eligibility rules before mailing  
**HIGH**  
*Passport in your possession, undamaged, issued at 16+, within 15 years, in current legal name.*
- Complete DS-82 using the online Form Filler and print single-sided  
**HIGH**
- Mail your most recent passport book inside the envelope (it will be returned separately)  
**HIGH**
- Include certified name change documents (marriage certificate, divorce decree, court order) if name changed  
**HIGH**
- Use online passport renewal via MyTravelGov if you qualify (credit card payment instead of check)
- Pay \$130 application fee by check or money order to 'U.S. Department of State'  
**HIGH**
- Add \$60 for expedited processing; write 'EXPEDITE' clearly on the outside of the envelope
- Pay \$19.53 for USPS Priority Mail Express 1-2 day return delivery if you want faster return
- Mail to the correct National Passport Processing Center address (listed on travel.state.gov per state)  
**HIGH**
- Use trackable mail (USPS Priority Mail or FedEx) for the outbound shipment

### CHILD PASSPORT (UNDER 16)

- Apply in person using DS-11 for every child under 16, even for renewals  
**HIGH**
- Bring the child to the acceptance facility (child must be physically present)  
**HIGH**
- Bring evidence of parent-child relationship (certified birth certificate listing both parents)  
**HIGH**

- Have both parents/legal guardians appear in person with the child if possible  
**HIGH**
- Submit notarized Form DS-3053 (Statement of Consent) if only one parent appears, plus photocopy of absent parent's photo ID front and back  
**HIGH**
- Submit Form DS-5525 (Statement of Special Family Circumstances) if absent parent cannot be located
- Bring sole custody documentation (court order, death certificate, adoption decree) if sole legal parent
- Pay \$100 application fee for child passport book + \$35 execution fee  
**HIGH**
- Pay \$15 for child passport card if you also want one
- Remember child passports are valid for 5 years, not 10

## PHOTO REQUIREMENTS

- Submit one color photo exactly 2 x 2 inches (51 x 51 mm)  
**HIGH**
- Use a plain white or off-white background; no patterns, shadows, or objects  
**HIGH**
- Take the photo within the last 6 months  
**HIGH**
- Face the camera directly; neutral expression or natural smile; both eyes open  
**HIGH**
- Remove eyeglasses (prohibited in passport photos since November 2016)  
**HIGH**
- Remove hats and head coverings unless worn daily for religious purposes (include a signed statement)
- Wear normal street clothes; no uniforms, camouflage, or uniform-like clothing
- Head measures 1 to 1 3/8 inches (25-35 mm) from chin to top of head
- Do not use digitally altered or filtered photos (State Department uses facial recognition checks)
- Use CVS, Walgreens, USPS, or AAA passport photo service for a compliant print (~\$15)

## IDENTITY AND CITIZENSHIP EVIDENCE

- Certified US birth certificate: raised seal, both parents' full names, registrar signature, filed within 1 year of birth (DS-11)  
**HIGH**

- Consular Report of Birth Abroad (FS-240) or Certification of Birth (DS-1350) if born to US citizens outside the US  
**HIGH**
- Certificate of Naturalization (N-550/N-570) or Certificate of Citizenship (N-560/N-561) if applicable  
**HIGH**
- Fully valid undamaged US passport book qualifies as both citizenship and ID evidence  
**HIGH**
- Primary photo ID: valid driver's license, government employee ID, military ID, or trusted traveler card (Global Entry, NEXUS, SENTRI)  
**HIGH**
- If no primary ID: secondary ID (SSN card, expired DL, employer/school ID) plus a witness in some cases
- Photocopy front AND back of your photo ID on standard 8.5 x 11 inch white paper before your appointment

### **FEES (2026 REFERENCE)**

- \$130 first-time or renewal adult passport book  
**HIGH**
- \$30 adult passport card  
**HIGH**
- \$100 child (under 16) passport book  
**HIGH**
- \$15 child (under 16) passport card  
**HIGH**
- \$35 execution fee for any DS-11 application (in person only)  
**HIGH**
- \$60 extra for expedited processing on top of regular fees  
**HIGH**
- \$19.53 for USPS Priority Mail Express 1-2 day return delivery
- \$60 file search fee if you can't provide proof of a previous passport
- \$82 for a Consular Report of Birth Abroad replacement (if needed before applying)

### **PROCESSING TIMES AND EXPEDITE**

- Routine processing: 4-6 weeks (verify current estimate at [travel.state.gov](https://travel.state.gov))  
**HIGH**
- Expedited processing: 2-3 weeks with the extra \$60  
**HIGH**

HIGH

- Add up to 2 weeks of mailing time when calculating total turnaround
- Track status at [travel.state.gov/status](https://travel.state.gov/status) starting 5-7 business days after applying
- Pay for USPS Priority Mail Express return delivery to shave days off return shipping
- Apply at least 6 months before international travel (many countries require 6 months of validity beyond travel dates)

## EMERGENCY AND LIFE-OR-DEATH

- Call National Passport Information Center at 1-877-487-2778 to request a regional agency appointment  
**HIGH**
- Regional passport agencies: international travel within 14 days, or visa needed within 28 days  
**HIGH**
- Life-or-death service: immediate family member abroad died, dying, or grave medical emergency  
**HIGH**
- Bring documentation of the emergency: death certificate, hospital statement, mortician letter  
**HIGH**
- Bring proof of imminent international travel (booked itinerary, ticket) to agency appointment
- Allow 8 business days minimum for an agency appointment to be honored before travel
- Check operating hours at one of the 26 regional passport agencies and centers across the US

## LOST OR STOLEN PASSPORT

- Report loss or theft immediately by submitting Form DS-64 online, by mail, or in person  
**HIGH**
- Submit DS-64 together with new DS-11 in person for a replacement  
**HIGH**
- Submitting DS-64 permanently cancels the lost passport (cannot be used if found later)  
**HIGH**
- File a police report if stolen; keep a copy for your records
- If lost abroad: contact the nearest US embassy or consulate immediately
- Apply for an emergency limited-validity passport at the embassy if you must travel home quickly
- Notify your travel insurance provider (some policies reimburse passport replacement fees)

## AFTER YOU RECEIVE THE PASSPORT

- Sign the passport in blue or black ink on the signature line on the inside cover  
**HIGH**

- Verify name, date of birth, sex marker, and passport number match your records exactly  
**HIGH**
- Contact NPIC within 1 year of issuance for free corrections via DS-5504 if you find errors  
**HIGH**
- Store passport in a fireproof safe or locked drawer, not in your wallet or car
- Photocopy or scan the photo page and store the copy separately for emergencies
- Enroll in STEP (Smart Traveler Enrollment Program) at [step.state.gov](http://step.state.gov) before international trips
- Check destination country entry rules: 6-month validity requirements and visa needs
- Set a calendar reminder 9-12 months before expiration to start renewal early
- Update passport via DS-82 after any legal name change with certified court or marriage documents