



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

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1. LODGING, COMPLETING & PRINTING THE APPLICATION FORM

Do I have to lodge in person?

Yes. Everyone has to lodge in person. There are no exceptions, even if you have lodged by mail in the past.

How long does it take to get a new passport?

It normally takes about three weeks to receive a passport. Priority processing is not available in Switzerland (only London and Australia).

If that's too long for you, you can apply for an Emergency Passport using the same form and photos. For an extra fee, your emergency passport will be ready for mailing or collection in just two business days.

Which application form should I use?

When you fill out your application form online, you will automatically be directed to the correct form. If you are unsure whether you qualify for a renewal form, please check the criteria below.

Australian Passport Renewal Application (PC7) for adult renewals

Adults who are renewing their Australian passport can use this form if all of the following are true:

- You are an adult (18 years or older), AND
- Your most recent passport was issued when you were 16 years or older, AND
- You are **not** changing any of your personal details on the passport, AND
- Your most recent passport is/was valid for over 2 years at the time of issue, AND
- Your most recent passport has **not** been reported lost/stolen AND
- Your most recent passport has **not** been expired for more than **three years** (or is still current), AND
- You are successfully able to answer the security questions on the website.

Application for an Australian Passport Overseas (PC8) for both adult and children

If you do not qualify for renewal form, you must use the Application for an Australian Passport Overseas (PC8). This includes the following applicants:

- You are applying for a first ever Australian passport
- You are applying for a child passport (under 18 years of age)
- You are applying for a first adult passport and your child passport was issued to you at 15 years or younger
- You are replacing a lost or stolen passport

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- You are changing your name or personal details on the passport
 - You are applying for your first passport after resumption of citizenship
 - You are applying to replace a limited validity passport, emergency passport, or other temporary travel document
 - Your passport has been expired for more than 3 years
 - You cannot answer the security questions for the renewal form.

Can you help with replacing my foreign visa?

No. We cannot assist you with any enquiries on foreign visas. You must contact the embassy of the country that issued the visa.

Will my Swiss/foreign visa be valid in a cancelled passport?

We do not cancel visas so in most cases the visa will still be valid. However, you should contact the Swiss/foreign countries immigration to discuss your particular situation. You should not assume that a visa in a badly damaged passport is valid.

What happens to my old passport?

Your old passport will be physically cancelled and returned to you at the interview. This is the case even if the passport is still valid at the time of your interview. No visa pages will be damaged in this process. If you have travel scheduled within the next few weeks, please alert your interviewing officer so that your options can be discussed.

Can I renew my passport before it expires?

Yes, you can renew your passport at any time.

Will my new passport have the same number as my old passport?

No, your new passport will be a new booklet and will have a new number.

Can I get more pages added to my existing passport?

No. You must apply for a new passport or a replacement passport (valid up to the same date as your existing passport.)

What if I cannot find my citizenship certificate or may have lost my Australian citizenship?

All citizenship enquiries should be directed to the Department of Home Affairs in Australia on +61 2 6196 0196 or www.homeaffaires.gov.au to apply for a new citizenship certificate. You may be eligible to become an Australian citizen again if you lost your citizenship because of acquiring the citizenship of another country, or renounced or gave up your Australian citizenship.

My husband/wife is not an Australian citizen; can he/she lodge our child's passport application?

Either parent can lodge the passport application for a child. There are no requirement for the lodging parent to be an Australian citizen. The parent submitting the application must provide photo identification and proof of address.

Do I have to provide my child's full length birth certificate?

The child's full length birth certificate, showing the parent's names, must always be provided regardless of whether the child was born in Australia or overseas, or whether the child has been issued with an Australian passport previously. Any foreign language documents submitted must be the international version or accompanied by an official English translation.

Do you accept notarised/certified copies of documents?





No, you must provide the originals of all documents required when using the *Overseas Passport form PC8* (adult & child), even if you are renewing. There are no exception.

If you need to obtain original documents from another country, we can accept faxed/emailed copies from certain authorised sources, e.g. a Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages in Australia, an Australian Passport Office or an overseas Australian diplomatic mission.

My original documents (citizenship, birth, marriage certificate) are in Australia/another country and I am worried about having them mailed to me in Switzerland, as they may get lost in the mail.

Have someone (friend or family member) take the original documents to a Passport Office in Australia or an overseas Passport Office. The staff there will sight the original documents and forward via email to the Geneva Passport Office. The documents need to be presented before you lodge your application in Geneva. Passport offices are located in all State and Territory capital cities. Locations and opening hours can be obtained by phoning 131 232 toll free in Australia or at www.passports.gov.au

Can I get priority processing overseas?

Priority processing is only available in Australia and London. If there is an urgent need to travel you may need to apply for an Emergency Passport and full validity passport at the same time. The same application form and photos will be used to process both passport.

You can't get an Emergency Passport if you're applying for a child without full parental consent or if you've had two or more passports lost or stolen in the past five years.

Will my previous passport be returned to me after applying for a new passport?

Your previous passport will be cut/cancelled and returned to you at the time you lodge.

What if I need to travel (work/holiday) while the new passport is being processed?

You can **keep your current passport** while your new one is being processed. Please advise the passports officer at the beginning of your appointment that you would like to retain your passport for travel. Otherwise, the passport will be cut/cancelled and returned to you at the time you lodge.

I have recently been married. How do I change my name on my passport?

You will need to apply for a new passport by completing the *Application for an Australian Passport Overseas form PC8*. Please note that you do not qualify for a simplified renewal form in these circumstances. Please read our name change section for further information.

My passport is nearly full but it is still valid for another 'x' years, is it possible to add extra pages?

It is not possible to add pages to Australian passports. You will have to apply for a new passport by completing a passport renewal form. If you have two or more years validity remaining you can apply for a replacement passport (lesser fee but the expiry date remains the same as the old passport) or a new 10-year passport.

Can I get my children added to my Australian passport?

A child who is an Australian citizen must have their own Australian passport. It is not possible to include a child on a parent's passport.

I made a mistake when I was completing the passport application form; should I use white out/correction fluid/correction tape.





Never use correction fluid or similar products on a passport application form as it will invalidate that section of the form. You will have to complete another form.

I put the wrong date on the declaration on the passport application form; how can I correct it?

If you completed the application form online, you should re-print the relevant page. If you completed a hard copy form which was sent to you by this office, you can request that a replacement page be sent to you or if you are under a time constraint to submit the passport application, you may cross out the incorrect date, complete the correct date and initial next to the change.

I have just completed my passport application online. Did you receive it?

No, we do not have access and cannot assist with completing or printing applications. All passport applications must be completed online and printed prior to lodging at a Passport Office. There is currently no way to lodge an Australian passport application electronically.

Why can't I use the renewal form?

If you cannot access the *Overseas Passport Renewal form* online then you may not be eligible to use that form. Alternatively, you may be answering one of the security questions incorrectly. The answer to this question must exactly match what is on your passport records in order for you to proceed. If you have exhausted all of these possibilities and still believe you are eligible for a renewal form please email our office with the following details (Australian.consulate-geneva@dfat.gov.au): Your full name, date of birth, passport number, mother's maiden name, phone number and address. Please explain in your email that you were unable to print your renewal form and need a form sent to you.

I am completing the form online and whenever I enter my current address (which is an overseas address), I get a message advising that my address cannot be verified. What do I do?

The Passports Australia website cannot verify overseas addresses. This message is just a warning. As long as you are satisfied that the address you have entered is correct, you can proceed by pressing the next button.

I am trying to complete the application form online but I keep going around in circles/getting error messages. What do I do?

If you are going around in circles, it is likely that you have made an incorrect choice at some stage. The most common problem is that you are selecting the wrong answers to "Are you residing in Australia?" (the answer should always be "No" for someone applying in Switzerland) or "Do you wish to renew an Australian passport" ("Yes" if you qualify for a *Renewal form (PC7)* and "No" if you have to use an *Application for an Australian Passport Overseas form (PC8)*).

Do I have to complete Section 16 of the application for an Australian Passport Overseas form?

If you do NOT have a valid Australian Drivers Licence then leave this section blank. This section must be left blank for all child applications.

Section 3b - Are you presenting a Citizenship Certificate.

If your citizenship certificate has a client number, you must use this number for section 3B in the PC8 application form. If your citizenship does not list a client number then the certificate number should be used in section 3B. eg. ACC12345678 or ROC0123456.

Can I lodge my application in Switzerland if I do not live in Switzerland?



Applicants who reside outside of Switzerland should normally lodge their application at the High Commission/Embassy/Consulate where they reside.

We do exceptionally accept applicants of bordering countries who live close to the Swiss border. Please note that you will need to either collect the new passport in person or provide a Swiss address (family/friend/colleague/work) as we can only mail passport to a Swiss address.

Who can be the emergency contact person?

You need to nominate an emergency contact when completing a passport application. Your emergency contact person can be anyone you choose either in Australia or overseas. We recommend you nominate someone who is not likely to be travelling with you.

If you are completing your child's passport application, you might like to nominate a grandparent, other relative or close family friend rather than yourself or the child's other parent.

Your nominated emergency contact will help us contact you or your family in the event of an emergency, such as an accident or natural disaster.

I have a senior's card, can I have a concessional passport?

Australians aged 75 and over can opt to have either a 5-year passport for half the cost of an ordinary 10-year passport.

I don't speak English well. Can I use an interpreter at my passport interview?

If you are not fluent in English you can bring someone with you to your passport interview to interpret for you. This could be a family member or a friend.

The passport interviewer, will ask for your permission for an interpreter, family member or friend to talk on your behalf. Once you have given permission, that person can continue to ask you questions and explain the process.

2. PHOTOS AND GUARANTOR (REFEREE)

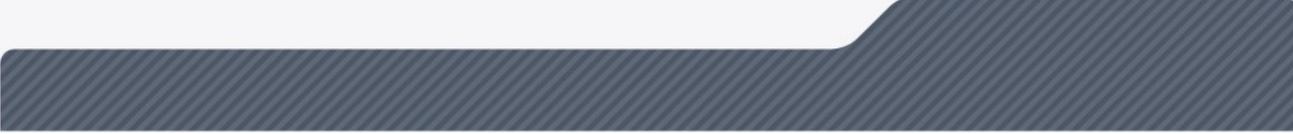
What are the photograph requirements?

The size and quality of your passport photograph is of critical importance. When your passport photo meets the technical requirements, processing at borders becomes much more efficient, especially if you use an automated system such as SmartGate in Australia. If we were to accept a photo that does not meet our requirements, you may have difficulty at international borders. A good quality passport photo also reduces the potential for identity fraud, which protects you as you travel. Please do not attach the photos to your application form as this can damage them if not attached correctly.

See our photo guidelines page for more information, include examples of acceptable and unacceptable photos, size and quality requirements.

Can you recommend any places that do Australian-style photos in Switzerland?

We are unable to endorse individual businesses, however we do recommend that you find a local photographer and provide them with the Australian passport photo guidelines. You may wish to go to a shop that specialises in photos as its core business as our clients generally report that these shops are able to make the necessary adjustments to meet the Australian specifications. However, there are many places capable of producing acceptable photos for Australian passports. Each store is different so you will need to talk to your photographer to make sure he/she can take the type of photo you need. Just because one particular store is able to produce a compliant photo does not mean that all photos produced by that chain will be





acceptable. Check that the photographer uses **studio lighting** so that there are no shadows under your chin or behind your ears, and no flash reflection on your face.

Some Swiss Photo Booths are acceptable depending on the lighting and print quality. Please choose the Swiss ID setting which is similar to Australian Standards.

We do not guarantee the work of any individual photographer or store, so it is important that you check the photographs yourself to make sure they meet all requirements.

Why are my professionally printed photos grainy or low resolution?

This is a common problem. You should ask your photographer to print the photos on the highest possible setting – e.g. superfine or ultrafine.

The best way for you to check whether your photo is high resolution is to use a magnifying glass. If you see stripes, grains, pixels or distortions, then the photo is not high resolution and will be rejected.

Please refer to the Australian Passport Office photo and camera operator guidelines.

Should I keep my glasses on for the photo?

No. You must remove them for your passport photo, even if you wear them all of the time.

What is the 'crown of head'?

The 'crown of head' is where the top of your skull would be if it were visible. It is not the top of your hair or the start of your hairline. Picture yourself bald and measure your skull from the top of your skull to the tip of your chin.

Should I trim the photos to the correct size?

No. We will do that for you.

Do I need a guarantor if I am just renewing?

If you are using the one page renewal form, called the Australian Passport Renewal Application (PC7), you do **not** need a guarantor. If you are using the Application for an Australian Passport Overseas (PC8) form, then you must provide a guarantor.

Can someone at the Passport Office be my guarantor?

No.

What if I cannot find an Australian citizen to be my guarantor?

You do NOT need an Australian citizen as a guarantor. You have **two options**:

- a non-Australian who is currently employed in one of the recognized occupation groups; **OR**
- a current Australian passport holder.

What if I've recently moved and don't know anyone in Switzerland who has known me for more than a year?

If you do not know anyone in Switzerland who can be your guarantor, then you will need to obtain a guarantor from your previous country of residence. You will need to send them the guarantor page from your application form plus one of your photos. Once they have filled in the documents as outlined on the application form, they must return the documents to you so that you can submit them with your application. Once they have signed the documents, they must send the originals back to you so that you can submit them when you lodge your application. We cannot accept faxes or emails from your guarantor. They must send the originals back to you for lodgement. If you need





to travel in the next few weeks, please make sure you have the documents sent to/from your guarantor by courier so that you receive them in time to lodge your application.

Does my Australian guarantor need more than 2 years remaining on their passport?

No. The passport needs to have at least two years validity from when it was issued - i.e. it cannot be a temporary passport that was issued for under two years. It does not matter if there is less than two years validity remaining on the passport now, so long as there was at least two years when it was issued. Please note that an Australian guarantor's passport must still be valid when they sign the declaration - an expired passport is not acceptable.

Does my guarantor need to be the same person that witnesses the parent's signatures in Section 15 for child applications?

No, you can use a different person.

Do I need someone to endorse my application form and photo, who can do this?

If you are applying using the Overseas Passport Application form PC8 (5-pages form) you must provide a guarantor/referee. A guarantor/referee is not required when using the Simplified renewal PC7 form (1-page form). See the guarantor/referee page for more information.

3. CONSENT FOR A CHILD APPLICATION

Should I sign my form in front of a Passport Officer?

No. Please make sure all sections of the form are signed before you attend your interview. **We cannot witness your consent or act as your guarantor.**

Can the Passport Office witness the parents' consent in Section 15?

No. Please make sure your form is fully completed and witnessed before coming to the Passport Office for your interview. **We cannot witness your signature.**

My child's mother/father is overseas - how do I get consent?

A number of legal requirements must be met before a passport may be issued to a child. Specifically, each person listed on the full birth certificate or each person who has legal caring responsibility for the child must supply his/her consent.

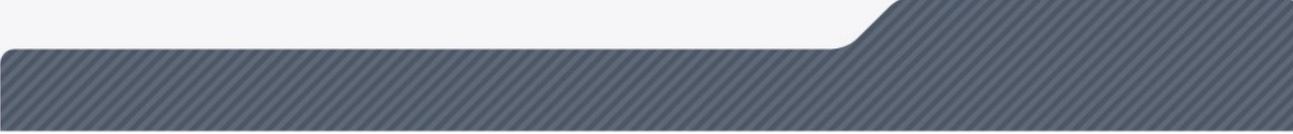
If the non-lodging parent is overseas, he/she can provide their consent at an Australian Passport Office in Australia or at any Australian High Commission, Embassy or Consulate in the country in which they reside/are visiting.

I am unable to obtain the consent of my child's father/mother, as I am no longer in contact with him/her; what can I do?

If you are unable to obtain the consent of all persons with parental responsibility for your child, you can request that the child's passport application be considered under the special circumstances provisions in passports legislation.

Child passport applications that do not include full consent take longer to process. Normal turnaround times do not apply. Priority service cannot be provided until the application has been assessed and approved for passport issue. As there is no guarantee the application will be successful, it is advisable not to make firm overseas travel plans until you know whether a passport will be issued.

4. TRAVEL, VISA AND CITIZENSHIP FOR AUSTRALIA





Will the visas in my previous passport still be valid after it has been cancelled?

You should check with the authority which issued them as we are unable to provide any information about the status of the visas.

Can you provide advice and assistance in replacing or renewing my Swiss visa?

The Passport Office is unable to provide any assistance with obtaining visas for Switzerland or any other country.

I have an Australian passport and a Swiss/foreign passport; which passport do I use when entering Australia?

If you hold another country's passport, seek advice about how it should be used. Take your Australian passport and use it to depart from and return to Australia. **An Australian citizen cannot be granted a visa for Australia on a foreign passport.** When entering Australia, all Australians, including those who hold dual nationality, must be able to prove that they are an Australian citizen. An Australian passport is conclusive evidence of a person's identity and citizenship and provides the holder with right of entry to Australia. An Australian citizen who arrives without an Australian passport may be delayed until their identity and claims to enter Australia have been checked. If a foreign passport holder claims to be an Australian citizen, immigration officers must confirm and verify this through official databases, which will cause delays. International airlines have an obligation to ensure that they only carry appropriately documented passengers to Australia. **In the absence of an Australian passport, airlines are unable to verify a claim of Australian citizenship at the time of check-in and may refuse boarding.** The airline may have to make inquiries with the Department of Immigration and Citizenship in Australia seeking approval to carry the passenger, which takes time and may cause delays.

I am an Australian citizen but as I did not obtain an Australian passport before departing Australia, I am using my Swiss/foreign passport whilst I am overseas. Do I have to apply for an Australian passport in order to return to Australia?

An Australian passport is conclusive evidence of a person's identity and citizenship, and provides the holder with unfettered right of entry to Australia. International airlines have an obligation to ensure that they only carry appropriately documented passengers to Australia. In the absence of an Australian passport, airlines are unable to assess a person's claim to Australian citizenship at the time of check-in and may decline to carry the traveller. It would therefore be in your best interests to apply for an Australian passport (either a full validity or emergency passport) to enable you to return to Australia.

Can I travel on my passport if the name differs to the name on my airline ticket?

Any specific questions regarding what an airline will accept as proof of identity should be directed to the airline.

Do I need six months validity remaining on my passport for travel?

Your passport is valid from the date it is issued until the date it expires. You can use it throughout this period, subject to meeting the visa and immigration requirements of the countries you wish to visit or transit.

Some foreign governments require visitors to carry passports with at least six months validity beyond their planned stay. You may be refused entry if you do not comply.

Well before you travel, you should check the entry requirements of the countries you plan to visit or transit. Contact the foreign diplomatic and consular representative of the country you wish to visit or seek advice from your travel agent and airline.

How do I find information on whether I need a visa and how to get one?



You should seek advice from the governments of the countries you plan to visit or ask your travel agent.

I am an Australian citizen and I have just had a baby. What do I have to do to get Australian citizenship and an Australian passport for him/her?

Before you can apply for an Australian passport for your child, he/she must first obtain Australian Citizenship by Descent. Citizenship must be applied for through the Department of Home Affairs – www.homeaffairs.gov.au

When the child has obtained Australian citizenship, you can apply for a passport in the normal way using the *Application for an Australian Passport Overseas form PC8*.

I have recently married a foreign national; how can I obtain an Australian passport for my spouse?

We can only issue an Australian passport to an Australian citizen. When you marry a citizen of another country, it does not entitle your spouse to hold an Australian passport (unless they also hold Australian citizenship). If you and your spouse would like to live in Australia, you should contact the Department of Home Affairs – www.homeaffairs.gov.au

5. LOST, STOLEN OR DAMAGED PASSPORT

My passport has been lost or stolen. What should I do?

If your passport has been lost or stolen, you must report this to us without delay. We will cancel your passport so it cannot be misused by anyone else.

I misplaced my passport and it was handed in to the Passport Office and cancelled. Why can't it be reinstated?

When a passport has been reported to us as lost or stolen, or if it has been found by someone else and handed in, we immediately cancel it and inform Australian and international border authorities. This is to protect you against misuse by others of your passport and identity. Cancellation is permanent and the passport cannot be reinstated if you find it again.

My passport is damaged (washed, torn, chip not working); do I have to apply for a replacement passport?

Normal wear and tear should not be a problem. More serious damage can stop you from travelling. It is important that:

- There are no tears in the pages, especially the photo page.
- Everything on the photo page is legible and clear.
- No pages have been removed.
- There is no alteration or tampering.

6. OTHER

A member of my family died recently and their passport is not due to expire for some time. What should I do?

If you report the details to us, we will cancel the passport to ensure another person cannot misuse it. Take (or send) the passport and the original death certificate to an Australian Embassy or Consulate overseas. If you wish to retain the passport as a memento, we will return it to you after it has been cancelled.

