

Get Going Now to Renew a Passport

Travelers should expect longer waits to get their passports renewed—but there are options to speed up the process.

By Allison Pohle, Wall Street Journal

If you haven't yet renewed your passport ahead of international summer travel, prepare to pay plenty to fix the problem.

Wait times for passports have increased across the board in recent months. Standard processing times are [10 to 13 weeks](#), the State Department says. Expedited processing times are seven to nine weeks. Neither estimate includes mailing times, which officials say can tack on two weeks each way.

These times are up from five to seven weeks for expedited passport renewals and eight to 11 weeks for routine renewals [a few months ago](#).

Given current processing times and international rules, travelers should renew passports nine months to one year before their expiration dates. Many destinations won't admit travelers if their passports expire within six months.

Nearly one-third of American travelers expect to [travel internationally](#) this year, according to market-research firm Destination Analysts. Even for those behind schedule, addressing renewals immediately could make a big difference at departure time.

Why are passport processing times so long?

The State Department says it receives an average of 500,000 applications a week. At a congressional hearing in March, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said this is 30% to 40% more than last year.

During the pandemic, demand plummeted; the department laid off contractors and reassigned other personnel, Mr. Blinken said at the hearing. He said the government has been hiring more employees, authorizing overtime and opening satellite offices.

What does getting a passport cost?

If you are 16 or older and [applying for the first time](#), you pay \$130 for the passport book application and \$35 for an acceptance fee. If you renew your passport, you don't need to pay the acceptance fee.

Expedited applications cost \$60 more. Travelers can also pay an additional \$19.53 for expedited delivery after the passport is processed.

How can I speed up the process?

Submitting your passport for expedited approval is a good first step. If you haven't, and you applied in-person or by mail, you can call the National Passport Information Center at 1-877-487-2778 to expedite the application.

You can try to have your passport processed through the [urgent-travel designation](#). This applies to people traveling internationally within nine weeks. It doesn't apply to life-or-death emergency travel, which has a separate process.

If you haven't applied for your passport, you can call to schedule an appointment within 14 calendar days of your international travel date. If you have already applied for a passport and are hoping to schedule an appointment, your appointment must be scheduled within five calendar days of your international travel date, the State Department says. Appointments are limited and not guaranteed.

You can also try contacting your congressional representative for assistance with your passport. The office can submit an inquiry into the status, which might help expedite the process.

Should I use a passport courier service?

The State Department urges caution when using a courier service and says it isn't responsible for issues related to courier companies, including lost documents. Passports can only be renewed through the State Department, so any service claiming it can renew a passport online without State Department involvement is a scam.

AAA works with RushMyPassport, a passport courier service registered with the State Department's national hand-carry program for passport applications and



completed passports. That means the service can submit passport applications to approved passport offices on customers' behalf.

In April, about 1,200 AAA members submitted applications through RushMyPassport, up from about 260 in February, a AAA spokeswoman says.

The service offers one-week and two-week expedited processing options. The two-week process costs \$599 before government fees; the one-week process costs \$799 before government fees. Discounts are available for AAA members.

How long are Global Entry applications taking?

Travelers approved for Global Entry can skip long lines at passport control. The program is open to U.S. citizens and citizens of several [other countries](#). The Global Entry program has more than 11.7 million members, a U.S. Customs and Border Protection spokeswoman says. CBP expects an additional two million people to enroll before the end of this fiscal year on Sept. 30.

Processing times vary widely. Travelers pay \$100 and submit applications online. The average enrollment time for Global Entry applicants was 93 days in 2022, the CBP spokeswoman says.

Successful applications ultimately get conditional approval, and travelers can schedule an interview at a Global Entry Enrollment Center. The government quotes a processing time of four to six months on its website. Global entry members also get TSA PreCheck.

Can I get a Global Entry appointment faster?

If you have been conditionally approved, you can schedule what is called [an enrollment on arrival appointment](#) after landing at an international terminal. There you can enter the Global Entry line and request an interview with a Customs and Border Protection officer. If you aren't returning from an international trip soon, the agency releases interview appointment slots for enrollment centers on the first Monday of every month by 9 a.m. local time.

Some social-media accounts, such as Global Entry Appointment Alerts, tweet out automated appointment openings. The site isn't affiliated with the U.S. government.

Vlad Verba, a 26-year-old product manager from Jersey City, N.J., created the alerts to secure an appointment last year and has since made the service available to all.



He charges \$30 for 30 days of personalized text alerts, which notify travelers of open appointments at three locations of their choosing.

Can I leave the airport faster without Global Entry?

If you aren't flying directly to your domestic destination and don't have Global Entry, build in buffer time. You can check recent and historical passport control wait times for your specific terminal at the Customs and Border Protection [Airport Wait Times site](#).

Travelers who arrive at certain airports can use [Mobile Passport Control](#). The app lets you submit your passport and customs declaration information digitally. You still must be processed by a CBP officer, but can use a specific processing lane separate from the regular line.

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