

# How Long Does It Take To Renew A Passport?

*It all depends on how much you are willing to spend.*

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International travel is reopening in a major way, with vaccinated Americans [now able to visit a host of different countries](#) around the world. But as travelers dust off their [passports](#), they might notice something panic-inducing: the expiration date.

Earlier in the pandemic, renewing passports was a [near impossible task](#). Many convenient passport couriers—which help with express renewals—paused their services, and standard renewal by mail was taking as long as sixteen weeks.

Fortunately, processing times have shrunk back to pre-pandemic timelines (or close), and many passport renewal operations are up and running once again. Travelers can now get a passport renewed in as little as a week, although those express options come with hefty price tags. To be on the safe side, travelers should follow the State Department's [latest guidance](#) and submit their [passport](#) for renewal at least four to six months before planned international travel.

If you're attempting to renew by mail, be sure your passport meets the [State Department's requirements](#). Only passports that were issued in the last 15 years, when the traveler was age 16 or older, and are undamaged aside from wear-and-tear are eligible for mail renewal. The passport must also be in your possession to mail in along with your application and be issued in your current name (or you should be able to document any name change).

Additionally, if you're traveling for a life-or-death emergency or other urgent matter, there are official shortcuts that can put your renewal ahead of the rest.

One day soon, these onerous renewal processes will be a thing of the past. Last December, the Biden administration [told the State Department](#) that it would need to create a way for Americans to renew passports online, without mailing any documentation. But for now, travelers are stuck doing things the old fashioned way.

Here's how to renew a passport right now.

## Routine government renewal

The cheapest option to renew a passport is to submit a routine application [through the mail](#) to the National Passport Processing Center in your region. With this option, you only need to pay the standard \$130 renewal application fee along with shipping costs.

It's probably not surprising that as the cheapest option, routine service also has the longest turnaround time. The State Department estimates current routine processing to take eight to

11 weeks. Plus, that estimate doesn't include shipping times—it could take an additional two weeks from the day you mail your documents until your application is “in process” with officials, and then they have to mail it back. So if you're going with the routine renewal option, you should calculate a minimum total door-to-door time frame of about 13 weeks to be on the safe side.

## Expedited government renewal

For an additional \$60, on top of the \$130 renewal application fee, you can pay for the government's [expedited processing option](#). Travelers still submit their documents through the mail to a National Passport Processing Center, but once it arrives there, your application goes to the top of the pile, thanks to that extra \$60 you paid

The turnaround time for expedited passport renewals is significantly shorter, with State Department estimates ranging from five to seven weeks for processing. Once again, this doesn't include shipping time, which could take up to an additional two weeks. To err on the side of caution, assume the government's expedited service could take as long as nine weeks, door-to-door.

## Courier services

If you need your passport renewed extra fast, you might want to try a courier service. These private, third-party companies aren't affiliated with the government, but they expedite renewals for you by hand delivering your documents to the nearest government passport agency and taking care of the process. Then, they express-deliver your new passport directly to you. Popular couriers like [GenVisa](#) and [FastPort](#) are currently offering emergency renewal service in as little as one week. But a turnaround that quick will cost you: the service is \$400 for GenVisa and \$799 for FastPort, and that's not including any government fees.

There are a number of other courier services out there. Just keep in mind that experiences with them can vary widely, so make sure you do your homework before putting down your credit card.

## Regional passport agencies

If you're traveling internationally for a life-or-death reason or another urgent matter within three business days, you can try to get an appointment for in-person renewal at one of 27 regional passport agencies. As appointment capacity was slashed during COVID and is still

recovering, these in-person options are still difficult to come by and should truly be reserved for an emergency situation.

Online bookings have been suspended indefinitely after bots were found to be booking and selling the appointments to the highest bidder earlier in the pandemic. If you think you [meet the requirements](#), you can call for an appointment at the nearest passport agency. (Contact information can be found on the State Department's [emergency passport page](#).)

While anyone can find themselves in a sudden emergency situation, it's best to always plan ahead and renew your passport with plenty of time before a trip.