

# FACT SHEET

## Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative Land and Sea Travel Document Requirements



U.S. Customs and  
Border Protection

### What is the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative?

This initiative establishes document requirements for travel into the United States from Canada, Mexico and the Caribbean. Travel between the U.S., Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands is not affected.

### When will WHTI Land and Sea go into effect?

WHTI Land and Sea will be implemented on **June 1, 2009**. At that time, only passports or WHTI-compliant documents will be acceptable for entering the United States.

### Why is the U.S. government implementing this travel initiative?

Standardized, secure travel documents, recommended by the 9/11 Commission and required by law in 2004, will enable U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers to more quickly, reliably and accurately identify and process travelers. It will also help eliminate the challenge of CBP officers trying to determine the authenticity of the dozens of documents currently presented.

### What is the goal of requiring secure documents?

The goal is to strengthen border security while facilitating entry into the United States for U.S. citizens and legitimate international travelers, making the process more convenient and efficient. As an example of the vulnerability that has existed, since 2005 CBP has intercepted more than 129,000 fraudulent documents and caught more than 118,000 people making false verbal claims of United States citizenship or presenting fraudulent documents.

### Who will the travel initiative affect?

All United States citizens, as well as Canadian and Bermudian citizens, entering or re-entering the United States by land or sea.

### What types of documents will be accepted under this initiative for land and sea travel on June 1, 2009?

- U.S. Citizens can present a valid: passport; passport card; Enhanced Driver's License; trusted traveler program card (NEXUS, FAST or SENTRI); U.S. Merchant Mariner Document when traveling in conjunction with official maritime business, if eligible; or U.S. Military identification card when traveling on official orders.
- U.S. lawful permanent residents can continue to use their permanent resident card (Form I-551) or other valid evidence of permanent residence status.
- Canadian citizens can present a valid passport, Enhanced Driver's License, or trusted traveler program card (NEXUS or FAST).
- Bermudian citizens will be required to present a valid passport.
- Mexican citizens, including children, are currently required to present a passport with visa or a border crossing card, and therefore there is little to no expectation of change from WHTI.
- U.S. citizens on closed-loop cruises (cruises that begin and end at the same U.S. port) will be able to enter or depart the country with a birth certificate and government-issued photo ID. Please be aware that you may still be required to present a passport to enter the countries your cruise ship is visiting. Check with your cruise line to ensure you have the appropriate documents.
- Children under the age of 16 (or anyone under 19, if traveling with a school, religious group, or other youth group) need only present a birth certificate or naturalization certificate. Birth certificates can be an original, photocopy, or certified copy.

## What is an Enhanced Driver's License?

Washington State and New York State have produced an Enhanced Driver's License that fulfills WHTI requirements. DHS is working with Vermont, Arizona, and Michigan, which have agreed to pursue this option, and will continue discussions with several other states. DHS will provide public notice as these documents become available. EDLs will be acceptable for entry to the U.S. at any land or sea port of entry – not just the state in which it was issued. DHS is working closely with the government of Canada to develop similar documents for Canadian citizens.



## Why are you announcing these requirements now?

Our intent is to raise awareness of the need to present secure documents that denote citizenship and identity, as recommended by the 9/11 Commission and passed into law in 2004. This also allows ample time for travelers to obtain the necessary documents.

## Do these requirements affect travel document requirements for entry into other countries?

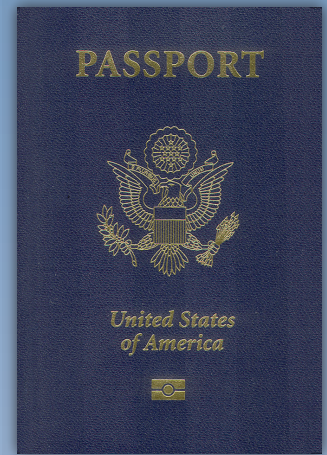
No. You may still need your passport or other travel document, which may include a visa, depending on length and purpose of stay. Visit [travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov) for more information.

## How do these requirements affect Native Americans?

Native Americans will be able to continue presenting tribal documents until June 1, 2009, provided they are affixed with a photo. We are working closely with Native American communities toward an appropriate solution while enhancing travel security.

## How do I get a passport?

United States citizens can visit the State Department's travel Web site, [travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov), or call the U.S. National Passport Information Center: (877) 4USA-PPT; TDD/TTY: (888) 874-7793. Additionally, instructions for obtaining a passport are available through the U.S. Postal Service at more than 9,000 locations nationwide.



Foreign nationals should contact their respective governments to obtain passports.

## What is a passport card and how do I get one?

This limited-use international travel document is a card-format passport. It will be acceptable for U.S. entry by U.S. citizens through land and sea ports of entry from Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean and Bermuda. Visit [travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov) to apply for a passport card.



## How do I apply for SENTRI/NEXUS/FAST?

Visit [www.cbp.gov](http://www.cbp.gov), click on "Travel," then click on "Frequent Traveler Programs." Note that not everyone is eligible to participate.

## What if I don't have the required documents when I travel to or come back to the United States?

You will likely experience a delay as U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers attempt to verify your identity and citizenship.

