



Ministry of  
National Security

# The NEW Trinidad & Tobago PASSPORT

What you  
need to know

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## QUESTIONS and ANSWERS

### Q What is a machine-readable passport?

A A machine-readable passport has certain biographical data entered on the data page in accordance with standards set by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), Doc 9303, Part 1 Machine-Readable Passports. In its current form, machine-readable passports generally have two lines of text that can be read using Optical Character Recognition (OCR). The strips of text contain the holder's basic personal details, e.g. name, date of birth, nationality and the passport number.

### Q How can I tell if my passport is machine readable?

A If you look at the page on your passport that contains your photograph and data there should be two lines of numbers, letters and chevrons(<<). These are the machine-readable characters.

### Q Who sets the standards for machine-readable travel documents?

A The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) is the international authority charged with developing global standards for machine-readable travel documentation. More information can be found at [www.icao.int](http://www.icao.int)

### Q Why are machine-readable passports being issued?

A The International Civil Aviation Authority (ICAO) has mandated its member states, which include Trinidad

and Tobago, to begin issuing machine-readable passports before April 01, 2010. Member states can no longer use the traditional eye-readable passport for travel after April 01, 2010.

**Q Does everyone have to apply for a machine-readable passport?**

- A** We recommend that the following persons apply for a machine-readable passport. Those persons
- with family living or travelling abroad
  - thinking about a vacation abroad
  - with a job that could require international travel.

In the event of an emergency involving a family member abroad, or an unexpected business trip, already having a valid Trinidad and Tobago passport will save time, money and stress.

**Q How do I apply for my new machine-readable passport?**

- A** Citizens must visit one of the six passport offices in Trinidad and Tobago to apply for the machine-readable passport. These offices are located in Port of Spain, San Fernando, Scarborough, Pt. Fortin, Sangre Grande and Chaguanas.

The machine-readable passport will be available, in the first instance, at Port of Spain, San Fernando, Sangre Grande and Scarborough. During 2007, passport services will be available at Pt. Fortin and Chaguanas.

Citizens of Trinidad and Tobago who are abroad may visit the Trinidad and Tobago embassies or consulates in

London, Toronto, New York, Washington and Miami.

**Q What documents do I need to provide when applying for a machine-readable passport?**

**A** It is recommended that all applicants should submit the new electronic birth certificate available from the Registrar General's office.

**Citizens by:**

**1) BIRTH**

- Birth Certificate (electronic or issued by Registrar General or District Registrar; certified by Registrar General for children up to one year old)
- Consent of parent or legal guardian for minors
- Identification of applicant/parent/legal guardian
- Marriage certificate where applicable
- Deed poll for change of name
- Affidavit/statutory declaration for name (if not stated on birth certificate)
- Affidavit/statutory declaration - marriage (under bamboo)
- Decree absolute where applicable
- Statutory declaration - reversion to maiden name (if not stated on decree absolute)

**2) ADOPTION**

- Adoption order issued by a Trinidad and Tobago court only
- Letter from adoption board indicating place of birth
- If adopted prior to October 12, 2000 and is a joint adoption, father's Trinidad and Tobago citizenship at date of adoption; after October 12, 2000 either parent's citizenship

- Evidence of parents' Trinidad and Tobago citizenship especially after October 12, 2000

N.B.: Name change of child – adoption order sufficient

### **3) REGISTRATION/NATURALIZATION**

- Registration/naturalization certificate
- Birth certificate if registered under the former constitution
- Marriage certificate
- Decree absolute where necessary
- Deed poll or statutory declaration (reversion to maiden name)

### **4) REGISTRATION AS MINORS**

- Registration certificate
- Birth certificate
- If over age 19, letter from Ministry of National Security that the individual has complied with Section 8(3) of the Citizenship Act, Chapter 1:50 and taken the oath of allegiance
- If under age 19, passport restricted to day before 19th birthday
- Letter of consent where necessary

### **5) DESCENT**

- Birth certificate of applicant
- Paternity order issued by any competent court, in case of a child born out of wedlock and after August 01, 1976
- Parent's birth certificate
- Parent's passport or identification card

- Evidence of parent being a citizen of Trinidad and Tobago at the date of birth
- Marriage certificate of parents
- August 31, 1962 - July 31, 1976 through male parent
- Translation of birth certificate into English, where applicable, and certified
- Certification: Foreign Service Officer/Consul, Apostle Official Translator e.g. Niherst
- Consent of parent or legal guardian or court order granting custody

Any other documents that may be required in support of above-listed primary documents.

Original documents, except for identification card, will be kept during the entire process and will be returned to the applicant upon delivery of passport.

**Q Can I bring in my own passport-sized photograph for the processing of the new machine-readable passport?**

**A** No. The Immigration Division is charged with the responsibility for capturing the applicant's image in keeping with ICAO's specifications. Subsequent renewals of the machine-readable passport will facilitate the applicant supplying good quality photographs.

**Q If I do not have the new birth certificate, can I apply for my passport with the old birth certificate?**

**A** It is preferred that the applicant is in possession of the computer-generated birth certificate. Using the old birth certificate will entail the applicant waiting 21 working days for the passport.

**Q** **What documents are required to apply for my child's passport if it is a first time application?**

**A** A birth certificate, with affidavit if any. Also, some form of identification from parent applying for passport.

**Q** **How do I add my married name to my machine-readable passport?**

**A** If you already hold a machine-readable passport, your married name CANNOT be added to that passport. In order for your married name to be included, you will have to apply for another machine-readable passport, supplying your marriage certificate along with the other required documentation. This will be treated as regular processing and will take a minimum of 10 business days.

**Q** **For how long will the machine-readable passport be valid?**

**A** All Trinidad and Tobago machine-readable passports will be valid for five (5) years.

**Q** **What is the cost of the machine-readable passport?**

*See following table*

<b>A DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>FEE</b>
Adult (16 years and over) – 32 page	\$250
Child under 16	\$250
Special – 48 page passport	\$350
Valid lost or misplaced passport (Adult)	\$1000
Valid lost or misplaced passport (Child)	\$1000
Expired lost or misplaced passport (Adult)	\$250
Expired lost or misplaced passport (Child)	\$250
Stolen passport (Adult)	\$250
Stolen passport (Child)	\$250
Mutilated/damaged passport (Adult)	\$1000
Mutilated/damaged passport (Child)	\$1000
Expedited passport (additional cost per passport)	\$300
Emergency passport	\$300

**Q How can I pay for my new machine-readable passport?**

**A** In Trinidad and Tobago, applicants may pay with cash or their debit cards at Immigration Offices. Applicants may also pay at the District Revenue Office (DRO) prior to their interview. If the latter is chosen, the applicant must produce the payment receipt issued to him/her at the DRO.

**Q How long will it take from the time I apply for the machine-readable passport to the time I receive it?**

**A** First-time application with computer-generated birth certificate – 10 business days  
 First-time application with old format birth certificate – 21 business days



Lost/stolen/mutilated application – six weeks

Applications supported by deed poll – three weeks

In special circumstances, a person can request to have a passport prepared before the standard 10 business days. In such a circumstance, the applicant will pay an additional cost to expedite the preparation of the passport.

**Q Can I travel anywhere in the world with the old format passport although the new machine-readable passports are being issued?**

**A** The old format passport will continue to be legal tender until December 31, 2009. After this date, the traveller must be in possession of the machine readable passport.

**Q What if my passport expires while I am outside of Trinidad and Tobago? Can I renew my passport overseas?**

**A** You should not begin your trip with a passport that will expire during your trip or shortly after your planned return. Some countries require that your passport be valid at least six months beyond the dates of your trip. Some airlines will not allow you to board if this requirement is not met.

We recommend that in order to avoid experiencing difficulties while travelling, that you obtain a new passport before leaving if there is any possibility of your passport expiring while on your trip.

Trinidad and Tobago citizens residing outside of Trinidad and Tobago should apply to passport

facilities at the Trinidad and Tobago missions in London, Toronto, New York, Washington and Miami. Emergency passports may be obtained from those mentioned above as well as Caracas, Venezuela; Kingston, Jamaica; Geneva, Switzerland; Brasilia, Brazil; New Delhi, India; Ontario, Canada; Brussels, Belgium; and Abuja, Nigeria.

**Q Can I obtain a passport quickly in an emergency?**

**A** Urgent or express services are available for emergency or compassionate reasons on a case-by-case basis. These services are available only for those applicants who can apply for a passport in person at a Trinidad and Tobago passport application site. A valid reason for travel along with proof of travel may be required. The expedited passport fee of \$300 per application is applicable.

**Q What happens if the passport is lost or stolen?**

**A** Any passport that is lost or stolen should be reported immediately to the Police. Trinidad and Tobago machine-readable passports which have been reported lost or stolen can no longer be used for travel and will be invalidated.

**Q What will happen with the visas I now have in my existing passport, for example my US visa?**

**A** Individuals are required to contact the relevant embassies. Every country has different requirements with regard to this subject.

**Q What is the difference between a passport and a visa?**

**A** A passport is an official government document that certifies one's identity and citizenship. The passport serves two purposes: to regain entry to the country of citizenship (i.e. Trinidad and Tobago) and is a requirement by many countries to gain entry to the country you plan to visit.

A visa is an official government document that temporarily authorizes you to be in the country you are visiting. Many countries require a visa to grant entry. The visa usually is in the form of a stamp or sticker in the passport and is obtained from the embassy/consulate of the country you plan to visit.

**Q Right now, my child is on my passport. I was advised that this was valid for travel until my child reaches 16, or the passport expires but with the new machine-readable passports, do I need a new passport for my child?**

**A** Yes. You should obtain a new passport for your child. As machine-readable passports typically have bio data for only one traveller in the machine-readable zone, children will therefore require their own individual passports.

**Q What should I do if I cannot, or choose not to apply for a machine-readable passport?**

**A** A passport enables people to travel legally across national borders. The role of a passport is to identify citizens of a state for the benefit of foreign countries, and to guarantee their right of return. The Trinidad and

Tobago passport is a machine-readable passport. It remains your choice to apply or not apply for a passport. However, it is advisable that each citizen of Trinidad and Tobago be identifiable via a passport.

**Q Can a previously issued passport still be used for travel as long as it is still valid?**

**A** Yes, previously issued passports that are still valid can be used for travel. It is important to note that the existing Trinidad and Tobago passport is increasingly being subject to international scrutiny and you may experience delays at international ports of entry. All valid non-machine-readable passports can be used for travel until December 31, 2009.

**Q I have a machine-readable passport. Will I need to obtain a visa to visit the United States or other countries?**

**A** Yes, you will need to have a visa in order to enter those countries that require visas.

**Q Will this passport allow me entry to any country in the Caribbean?**

**A** Yes, subject to that country's other entry requirements.

**Q Is the machine-readable passport and the Caricom passport the same thing?**

**A** Trinidad and Tobago is a member of CARICOM. The inclusion of the CARICOM logo on the front cover identifies Trinidad and Tobago as a member state.

**Q Can the new machine-readable passport be amended, for example, if I change my name?**

**A** No. The new passport will not be amended. If an individual changes his/her name after he/she has been issued a new passport, the person will have to bear the cost of replacement. If an error is made by the applicant in completing his/her application form and that error is reflected in the passport, the person will bear the cost of replacement.

However, if the error is due to Immigration processing then that passport will be invalidated and a new passport issued to the person free of charge.

**Q Can a request be made for a new passport to be issued that is not machine readable?**

**A** No. However, the Trinidad and Tobago Consular Representatives abroad are authorized to issue Emergency Passports. These passports are the only passports that would be non machine-readable.

**Q Can I have pages added to my current passport?**

**A** No. An applicant who has a valid passport in which the visa pages have become filled with visas or entry-exit stamps must apply for a new passport.

**Q Are there any special considerations for the issuance of these machine-readable passports to the elderly or disabled community?**

**A** The Immigration Division will have special arrangements in place for individuals who are bedridden or otherwise incapacitated.



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