



U.S. Department of
Homeland Security

Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative

WHTI is the joint Department of State (DOS) and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) plan to implement a key 9/11 Commission recommendation and the statutory mandates of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (IRTPA). IRTPA, in part, required the DHS and DOS to develop and implement a plan to require all travelers, U.S. citizens and foreign nationals alike, to present a passport or other acceptable document that denotes identity and citizenship when entering the United States.

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 efficient and convenient.

What types of documents are accepted for entry into the United States via air? (#)

- U.S. citizens can present a valid: U.S. Passport; Trusted Traveler Program ([/trusted-traveler-programs](#)) card (NEXUS, SENTRI or FAST); U.S. Military identification card when traveling on official orders; U.S. Merchant Mariner document when traveling in conjunction with official maritime business. Note that children are also required to present their own passport when traveling by air. *(note: The Indian/tribal card can NOT be used for air travel).*
- Requirements for lawful permanent residents of the United States are not changed by the implementation of WHTI. Lawful permanent residents must continue to present a valid Permanent Resident Card. A passport is not required.

What types of documents are accepted for entry into the United States via land and sea?

(#)

- U.S. citizens can present a valid: U.S. Passport; Passport Card; Enhanced Driver's License; [Trusted Traveler Program \(/trusted-traveler-programs\)](#) card (NEXUS, SENTRI or FAST); U.S. Military identification card when traveling on official orders; U.S. Merchant Mariner document when traveling in conjunction with official maritime business; or Form I-872 American Indian Card, or (when available) Enhanced Tribal Card.
- U.S. and Canadian citizen children under the age of 16 (or under 19, if traveling with a school, religious group, or other youth group) need only present a birth certificate or other proof of citizenship. The birth certificate can be original, photocopy, or certified copy.
- WHTI does not affect U.S. Lawful Permanent Residents, who are still required to present 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, SENTRI or FAST).
- Bermudian citizens are required to present a valid passport.
- Mexican citizens, including children, are required to present a passport with visa, or a Border Crossing Card.
- U.S. citizens on closed-loop cruises (cruises that begin and end at the same U.S. port) are able to enter the United States 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.

What is an enhanced driver's license? (#)

State-issued [enhanced drivers licenses \(EDLs\) \(/enhanced-drivers-licenses-what-are-they\)](#) provide proof of identity and U.S. citizenship, are issued in a secure process, and include technology that makes travel easier. They provide travelers with a low-cost, convenient alternative for entering the United States from Canada, Mexico or the Caribbean through a land or sea port of entry, in addition to serving as a permit to drive.

The Department has been working with states to enhance their driver's licenses and identification documents to comply with travel rules under the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI), effective June 1, 2009.

How do I get a passport? (#)

United States citizens can visit the State Department's travel website or call the U.S. National Passport Information Center at (877) 4USA-PPT; TDD/TTY: (888) 874-7793.

What if I don't have the required documents when I travel to or return to the United States? (#)

Travelers without WHTI-compliant documents are likely to be delayed at the border as CBP officers work to verify identity and citizenship.

More About Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (#)

- WHTI Air Frequently Asked Questions (CBP.gov) (<https://www.cbp.gov/travel/us-citizens/whiti-air-faq>)
- WHTI Land and Sea Frequently Asked Questions (CBP.gov) (https://www.cbp.gov/sites/default/files/documents/whiti_landsea_faq.pdf)
- Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (CBP.gov) (<https://www.cbp.gov/travel/us-citizens/western-hemisphere-travel-initiative>)

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