

WASHINGTON, D.C. - On January 31, U.S. Customs and Border Protection began implementing new document requirements for returning land and sea travelers to verify identity and citizenship.

Although the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative requiring a passport for re-entry has been delayed until June 2009, CBP's new rule means most Americans will need either a passport or a drivers license and birth certificate to re-enter the country from Western Hemisphere countries. Previously, travelers 19 and older could prove identity and citizenship with an oral declaration. Travelers 18 and younger will need a birth certificate issued by a federal, state, provincial, county or municipal authority.

"Keeping America safe is always our top priority, but new rules must be practical and they must be publicized," said Congressman Sam Farr (D-Carmel). "Setting aside the fact that these new rules seem to circumvent Congressional authority, they haven't been well-publicized and they place a large burden on travelers. If this rule causes travelers to again swarm the State Department for passports, we'll have a repeat of the mess we had last year."

One document option:

The new ruling requires one of the following documents to prove both identity and citizenship:

- U.S. or Canadian Passport
- U.S. Passport Card (Available spring 2008)*
- Trusted Traveler Cards (NEXUS, SENTRI, or FAST)*
- State or Provincial Issued Enhanced Driver's License (when available - this secure driver's license will denote identity and citizenship.)*
- Enhanced Tribal Cards (when available)*
- U.S. Military Identification with Military Travel Orders
- U.S. Merchant Mariner Document
- Native American Tribal Photo Identification Card
- Form I-872 American Indian Card
- Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) Card

* To expedite processing, CBP recommends one of the asterisked documents for frequent land border crossers.

All U.S. and Canadian citizens who do not have one of the documents from the list above must present one identification document and one citizenship document from the lists below.

Two-document option:

Identification Documents

- Driver's license or identification card issued by a federal, state, provincial, county, territory, or municipal authority
- U.S. or Canadian military identification card

Citizenship Documents

- U.S. or Canadian birth certificate issued by a federal, state, provincial, county, territory or municipal authority
- U.S. Consular report of birth abroad
- U.S. Certificate of Naturalization
- U.S. Certificate of Citizenship
- U.S. Citizen Identification Card
- Canadian Citizenship Card
- Canadian certificate of citizenship without photo

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