

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

The Passport Office issues about 1.3 million travel documents annually. To meet the varied travel requirements of its clients, the Office is authorized to issue seven different types of travel documents.

The one familiar to most Canadians is the blue **24-page passport**. It is issued to Canadian citizens and is used for occasional travel, such as vacations and business trips. It accounts for 98 per cent of all travel documents issued. The passport is valid for five years and is non-renewable. Children under 16 may be added to a parent's passport or they may have their own.

The **48-page passport** is the same as the 24-page passport, but has extra pages to make it more convenient for frequent travellers, such as business people.

In addition to these documents, the Passport Office issues maroon-coloured **Diplomatic Passports** to Canadian diplomats, top-ranking government officials, diplomatic couriers and private citizens nominated as official delegates to diplomatic international conferences.

The Office also issues green-coloured **Special Passports** to people representing the Canadian government on official business. These include members of the Privy Council who are not members of the Cabinet, Members of Parliament, provincial Cabinet members, public servants and private citizens nominated to conferences that are not diplomatic in nature.

Diplomatic or Special Passports may be provided to the families of officials if they are also travelling at public expense. The Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade determines eligibility. Diplomatic and Special passports are valid for five years, but entitlement to them ends on the date of the termination of the official status of the bearer or on the date of the termination of the official duty. When the entitlement ceases, the passport document must be returned to the Passport Office.

Canadians stranded abroad may be issued **emergency passports** by Canadian diplomatic and consular missions on behalf of the Passport Office.

Refugee Travel Documents are issued to persons who have been determined by Citizenship and Immigration Canada to be refugees under the 1951 United Nations Convention on the Status of Refugees and are legally landed (or on a Minister's permit pending landing) in Canada. Refugee Travel Documents are endorsed for travel to all countries, except the holder's country of origin. They are valid for two years but may be extended for an additional period of one or two years to a maximum of five years.

Certificates of Identity are issued to non-Canadians legally landed who are stateless or unable to obtain a travel document from their country of origin and have resided in Canada for less than three years. The Certificate of Identity is endorsed for travel to countries specified in the document and valid for not less than one year or more than two years, with one-year extension periods up to a maximum of three years.

FUTURE PRODUCTS

The Passport Office is a leader in producing machine-readable documents which can be used by Immigration Officers to quickly process travellers. Interest in this technology began in the early 1970s. A surge in international travel meant that air terminals were flooded with travellers trying to pass through immigration and customs. In the future, processing of travellers will be further simplified by emerging technologies.

The Passport Office is constantly looking for new technologies to improve its service to clients. It has made significant progress in implementing the Technology Enhancement Plan which is designed to use modern technologies in issuing Canadian travel documents. Key staff members are involved with private contractors in developing the new technological system.

The Office is also studying the feasibility of introducing a wallet-sized passport card. Its purpose is to facilitate movement across international borders. The primary beneficiaries of the card will be frequent travellers to and from the United States.