

Media Note  
**Office of the Spokesman**  
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## **Passports Required for Air Travel to United States as of January 23, 2007**

The Departments of State and Homeland Security announced today that the requirement for citizens of the United States, Canada, Mexico, and Bermuda to present a passport to enter the United States when arriving by air from any part of the Western Hemisphere will begin on January 23, 2007.

This change in travel document requirements is the result of recommendations made by the 9/11 Commission, which Congress subsequently passed into law in the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004. These new travel document requirements make up the Departments' Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI). In order to obtain national security benefits as quickly as possible, and to expedite the processing of arriving passengers, the plan will be implemented in two phases.

The first phase involves travel by air and requires all citizens of the United States, Canada, Mexico, and Bermuda to have a passport or other accepted document that establishes the bearer's identity and nationality to enter or re-enter the United States from within the Western Hemisphere. The final rule for the air phase of the WHTI rule will be published in the Federal Register on November 24, where it can be viewed at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov). That rule is also available on the Department's consular web site, [travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov) and on the Department of Homeland Security's web site, [www.dhs.gov](http://www.dhs.gov).

A separate proposed rule addressing land and sea travel will be published at a later date proposing specific requirements for travelers entering the United States through land and sea border crossings. As early as January 1, 2008, U.S. citizens traveling between the United States and Canada, Mexico, Central and South America, the Caribbean, and Bermuda by land or sea could be required to present a valid U.S. passport or other documents as determined by the Department of Homeland Security. While recent legislative changes permit a later deadline, the Departments of State and Homeland Security are working to meet all requirements as soon as possible.

The Department has dedicated additional resources and personnel to meet the increased demand for passports generated by these requirements. In Fiscal Year 2006, the Department issued a record 12.1 million passports to American citizens, and anticipates issuing 16 million passports in Fiscal Year 2007. U.S. citizens can find information about how to apply for a passport at [travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov) or by calling 1-877-487-2778.

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