



Home Office

Retention of valuable documents

Version 8.0

Contents

Contents.....	2
About this guidance.....	3
Contacts	4
Clearance and publication	4
Changes from last version of this guidance	4
Valuable document bank.....	5
European Economic Area (EEA) nationals.....	6
Transfer of passports and valuable documents.....	7
Examples of valuable documents.....	8
Updating CID.....	10
Moving documents.....	10
Returning documents.....	11
Returning documents for voluntary departure	12
Documentation	12
Returning documents for voluntary departure.....	13

About this guidance

This guidance explains what to do with valuable documents where a person is liable to removal.

[Section 17 of the Asylum & Immigration \(Treatment of Claimants etc\) Act 2004](#) gives the power to retain documents, such as a passport, where the Secretary of State or an immigration officer suspects a migrant is liable to removal and the retention of the document may facilitate removal.

The 2004 Act does not allow for the indefinite retention of documents. Where a person is later granted leave, in whatever capacity, the document must be returned to the holder unless it is a forgery, in which case it must be sent to the National Document Fraud Unit (NDFU) at Status Park.

Where a valid passport is retained and removal could take place on that passport it is not necessary to retain original copies of other valuable documents, although you must retain photocopies of them. It is necessary to retain original documents however, where they may be needed to effect the removal of a spouse or child of the migrant.

This applies if:

- the migrant is unlawfully present in the UK, for example, an overstayer or illegal entrant
- the migrant has been refused asylum or humanitarian protection and has no other basis of stay in the UK
- the migrant has been refused leave to remain whether or not they have a right of appeal in the UK (unless they have an existing period of leave, other than under 3C or 3D of the Immigration Act 1971)
- a decision under section 47 of the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 has been made
- leave to enter or remain has been curtailed with the result that the migrant has no outstanding leave, if you curtail leave to 60 days you must return the valuable documents because the migrant still has valid leave to remain

Official – sensitive: Start of section

The information on this page has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use.

The information on this page has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use.

Official – sensitive: End of section

You must [update CID](#) to show that documents are held and where they are stored.

Contacts

If you have any questions about the guidance and your line manager or senior caseworker cannot help you or you think that the guidance has factual errors then email:

- the Enforcement Policy team, for general enquiries
- Free Movement Policy Enquiries, for queries relating to European cases

If you notice any formatting errors in this guidance (broken links, spelling mistakes and so on) or have any comments about the layout or navigability of the guidance then you can email the Guidance Rules and Forms team.

Clearance and publication

Below is information on when this version of the guidance was cleared:

- version **8.0**
- published for Home Office staff on **24 August 2017**

Changes from last version of this guidance

- Updating CID: updated guidance on returning documents
- Returning documents for voluntary departure: updated guidance on the Voluntary Returns Service
- Guidance placed on new template
- Minor housekeeping changes

Related content

[Contents](#)

[Examples of valuable documents](#)

National valuable document bank – process maps

Managing border and immigration case files

Valuable document envelopes - managing on the RMS

Valuable document bank

This page tells you how to retain documents in the valuable document bank.

To improve the management of retained documents the Home Office has set up a national valuable document bank (VDB).

The VDB has been operational since June 2013. Its aim is to improve coordination and consistency of document handling in the removal process, as well as reduce the loss of valuable documents and compensation payments. This in turn will free up resources and ease local storage pressures to manage and store documents.

When you retain documents, or when an active record is sent to off-site storage (because a decision can not be made), you must put the documents in a valuable document envelope (VDE) before you track it using the record management system (RMS).

Where an adverse decision is made, passports and other valuable documents will normally now be retained in the VDB until such time as any appeal rights are exhausted or until the migrant is leaving the UK either voluntarily or under removal directions.

If passports are retained on file or locally (for example where removal is likely to take place in the next week or so) they must either be securely attached to the Home Office (HO) file or stored in a passport bank or other secure location.

For more information on storage of documents, see [Manage information](#).

Related content

[Contents](#)

European Economic Area (EEA) nationals

This page tells you when you must retain the documents of European Economic Area nationals.

Guidance on retaining documents received with an application from a European Economic Area (EEA) national is currently under review.

You must contact the Free Movement Policy team if you have any queries about applications from EEA nationals.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Transfer of passports and valuable documents

This page tells you how to transfer passports and valuable documents.

You must not transfer a passport or valuable document from one part of the business to another without a full explanation for the move and attaching relevant information so it is clear who the document relates to. This must include full name, file number and date of birth.

You must:

- use a valuable document envelope (VDE) to transport the documents
- record the transfer on the record management system (RMS)
- fully update CID notes with the details of where you are sending the documents

For more information see:

- Managing border and immigration case files
- Collection of Home Office records and valuable documents from Iron Mountain
- Valuable document envelopes
- [Updating CID](#)

Related content

[Contents](#)

Examples of valuable documents

This page lists examples of valuable documents.

This list is not exhaustive and other identity documents can be retained under the same powers. The document code in the second column is for use on the record management system (RMS) to track documents going to valuable document bank.

Document type	Document code
Affidavits	AFF
Adoption papers	AP
Biometrics residence permits (BRP)	BRP
Birth Certificate	CERT-BC
Certificate of citizenship	CERT-CIT
Civil partnership certificates	CERT-CP
Death certificates	CERT-DTH
Entry Clearance Certificate	CERT-EC
Educational Certificate	CERT-ED
Marriage Certificate	CERT-MAR
Military discharge certificates	CERT-MD
Maritime discharge certificates/books	CERT-MDC/B
Medical certificate	CERT-MED
Police Registration Certificate	CERT-PR
Seaman's Discharge Certificate	CERT-SD
Chicago Convention Letter	CL-C
London Convention Letter	CL-L
Curriculum Vitae (CV)	CV
1951 Stateless Document	DOC-1951-SD
Court or legal document	DOC-C/L
Divorce documents	DOC-DIV
Immigration status documents (ISD)	DOC-ISD
Non-UK Asylum Decision Document	DOC-N-UK-ASY
GV3	GV3
ID card	ID-CAR
Employment ID	ID-EMP
Military ID documents	ID-MIL
National ID card	ID-NAT
Non-UK Asylum ID Document	ID-N-UK-ASY
Student ID	ID-STU
Driving licence	L-DRIV
Pilots licence	L-PILOT
Laissez Passer	LZP
National Insurance Card	NI
Property deeds	PD
Police reports	POL-REP

Document type	Document code
Passport	PPT
Personal Child Health Record ('Red Book')	RED-BOOK
Seaman's Book	SB
1951 Convention Travel Document	TD-1951
1954 Convention Travel Document	TD-1954
Carrier's Copy Of Travel Document	TD-CC
Emergency Travel Document	TD-ETD
Non 1951 Convention Travel Document	TD-N-1951
Stateless Travel Document	TD-STATE
Vignette	VIN
Visa	VISA
Work Permit	WPER
Wage Slip	WSLP

Related content

[Contents](#)

Valuable document envelopes

Local VDE uplift pro forma

Updating CID

This page tells you how to update CID when you retain valuable documents.

If you retain documents you must complete the 'Documents Submitted/Travel Documents' screen on CID. For a screenshot of the screen, see: Screenshot of Documents Submitted/Travel Documents screen.

Enter the details of the document as fully as possible making sure 'Documents/visas submitted' and 'Document Location' fields are completed for all cases and 'Forgery Details' and 'Document Alias' fields whenever appropriate. Where a passport or travel document contains an entry clearance, visa or vignette, you must record the details of this on a separate line in the 'Documents/visas submitted' field. This is so management information (MI) on the quality of issue of such documents can be collected.

When a valuable document is stored in a passport or document bank you must make sure documents are logged in and out correctly. When any new storage facility is created you must update CID with its details location code. Passport banks are the areas where passports (either current or expired) and other valuable documents must be held. They must not be stored anywhere other than in the relevant passport bank. There are specific processes which must be followed regarding the banks and recording details of the passports and their location on CID.

When a new person is created in CID, you must add any documentation and its location onto CID immediately. Where no documents are held this must be recorded in the 'Document Type' field (under 'Documents/Visas Submitted') using the static data item 'No Document Held'. If a document is found or provided later it must be added on a separate line so it is clear the person did not submit a document when they were first created as a person in CID.

Moving documents

When a document is moved you must record this on CID and, where appropriate, in any local logs.

If you receive a Home Office (HO) or Port file that contains one or more valuable documents, you must consider whether to place the documents in a local passport or document bank.

For HO or Port files, the document location on CID must be recorded as 'In Transit (See Notes)'. A note must be placed in 'Notes' stating which business unit the document has been sent to along with a contact name and telephone number if available. The document must be placed securely in a sealed envelope with a covering note including the details of the case to which it relates. The method of despatch will depend how urgently the document is required.

When they receive the document, the receiving business unit must update the 'Document Location' field in CID to reflect where it will be stored.

Returning documents

If a document needs to be returned to the holder or their representative because they have been granted leave, you must do so in line with local instructions. The CID 'Document Location' field must be updated with 'Returned to owner' or 'Returned to Rep' as appropriate. For more information, see Drafting, implementing and serving asylum decisions.

Where an individual requires their [documentation to return voluntarily](#) and they do not hold extant leave, you must refer the applicant to the Voluntary Returns Service (if a non EEA national) or their local Immigration Compliance and Enforcement (ICE) office (if an EEA national).

Where there are no reasons to doubt the individual genuinely intends to travel and the individual has produced proof that travel tickets have been purchased for a specific date of travel, you must send the passport to the port of departure and notify the migrant of the contact details and arrangements for collecting their passport at the point of departure.

Documents will not normally be returned to the individual or their representative in other circumstances unless the individual clearly demonstrates:

- they require the documentation to return voluntarily and:
 - there are no reasons to doubt that the individual genuinely intends to travel
 - the individual has produced proof that travel tickets have been purchased for a specific date of travel
 - there is not enough time to arrange to send the passport to the relevant port to oversee the departure
- there are other exceptional reasons why the documentation should be returned

Where documents are returned, either to port or directly to the migrant or their representative, you must take a copy of the passport and place this on the migrant's file.

If you receive a request for a document to be returned for any other reason, you must tell the holder this is not possible, but the Home Office can provide them with a certified copy. There is no agreed standard wording for this certification, but it is advised it should include the fact the Home Office is holding the document and contact details in case a third party such as a bank wishes to confirm this fact.

Related content

[Contents](#)

National valuable document bank - CID guidance

Returning documents for voluntary departure

This page tells you about the process to follow when a migrant liable to removal advises the Home Office that they wish to leave the UK.

It is important to carefully manage and monitor the departure of people who indicate they wish to leave the UK voluntarily to make sure the:

- migrant is liable to removal
- migrant is not making the request to gain possession of documents held by the Home Office (possibly to destroy them) that could eventually facilitate their removal, should it be decided to enforce their departure from the UK
- departure is properly recorded and counts towards returns targets
- resources are not wasted on support costs, considering applications and appeals and progressing removal action for people who are no longer in the UK

The Voluntary Returns Service supports the return of non EEA migrants who hold no extant leave in the UK and are subject to immigration control. They are a passive service and migrants contact them by using either:

- external telephone number 0300 0040 202
- GOV.UK webpage: [Return home if you're in the UK illegally or have claimed asylum: Who can get help](#)

If an EEA migrant is not exercising treaty rights and wishes to leave the UK voluntarily they should contact their local Immigration Compliance and Enforcement (ICE) office who will assist them.

If a migrant does not choose to leave the UK voluntarily, their case will be managed by the relevant caseworking unit, who will consider tasking for enforcement action.

Where the migrant has an outstanding application or appeal lodged you must get a disclaimer signed by the migrant withdrawing all outstanding applications and appeals. If the applicant has an outstanding appeal or judicial review you must tell them to contact the relevant department this is lodged with and withdraw the claim before leaving the UK.

Retained original documents must not be returned to a person who says they wish to leave the UK unless the circumstances in the [updating CID returning documents](#) section apply. The person or their representative can, however, be provided with a certified copy of any valuable documents.

Required documentation

A voluntary return cannot take place without a valid travel document. If the person's passport is held by the Home Office or by the applicant you must make every effort to effect return on this document. Checks must be made on CID and any Home

Office file for a travel document or evidence to support an application for a document or that is required as supporting evidence with an EU Letter (EUL).

The Voluntary Returns Service will process all voluntary returns, if you are contacted by a migrant refer them to this team who will action the return.

If there is a valid travel document, or the nationality of the person is such that they can be removed on a EUL, arrangements can be made for their return. If not, the applicant must be advised to apply for a travel document at their high commission or embassy and to get in contact again once they have obtained one. Certified copies of supporting documents can be provided to help the application but originals must be kept.

If the subject has no valid travel document, cannot be removed on an EUL and says they cannot make an application themselves to their embassy or high commission, the Voluntary Returns Service will try to support them, or look at other options which may include enforced return if they are not engaging with the process.

Returning documents

The Voluntary Returns Service will make arrangements for the migrant to collect their travel documents and any other valuable documents to be returned to them at the port of embarkation (usually through the local other ports removal (OPR) desk or returns logistics).

You must follow the processes for self check-in removals. Travel documents must not be handed back to the migrant or their representative before they arrive at the port, as this is the main and easiest method available to find out whether or not the subject actually leaves the UK and prevents them destroying documents to frustrate removal.

Related content

[Contents](#)