



Home Office

Cancelling British passports

Version 8.0

This guidance tells His Majesty's Passport Office operational staff how to physically and electronically cancel a British passport

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About: Cancelling British passports

This guidance tells His Majesty's Passport Office staff how to:

- physically cancel all types of British passports
- how to electronically cancel a passport record on Main Index

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 Guidance & Quality, Operating Standards.

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 & Quality, Operating Standards

Publication

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

- version **8.0**
- published for Home Office staff on **27 September 2022**

Changes from last version of this guidance

This guidance has been updated to reflect the change in our sovereign from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II to His Majesty King Charles III.

Related content

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How to physically cancel a British passport

This section tells His Majesty's Passport Office staff how to physically cancel a British passport.

If a customer reports a faulty British passport, you (the examiner) must not physically cancel it, until the investigation is completed.

When to physically cancel a passport

We must physically cancel a customer's old passport (for example, the passport they are renewing or replacing) when:

- we issue them with a new passport and the:
 - application has been 'exam complete' on the Application Management System (AMS)
 - Digital Application Processing system tells the Document Management Service (DMS) first-line DMS member, when to cancel the old passport
- they collect their new passport from an overseas local service office
- they send us their un-cancelled passport because they no longer need it or the passport holder is deceased
- they return a passport which has been cancelled on the Main Index but has not been physically cancelled (for example, when they no longer need an additional passport)
- a third party sends us a passport, for example the police
- a court order tells us to (as long as Guidance & Quality, Operating Standards agree)
- the passport is proven to be faulty
- they have not paid for their new passport (for example, as the payment failed)
- they have not declared a foreign passport (during the examination process) and there is a discrepancy between the names shown on the passports

You must cancel the customer's old passport when you authorise their new one, unless the customer is applying for an additional passport. If the system selects the application for a quality check, your operational team leader will fail you, if you do not cancel the passport.

Customer queries about visas in cancelled passports

If the customer asks us to return a passport un-cancelled because it contains a valid visa, you must:

1. Contact the customer and refuse their request to return their British passport un-cancelled.

2. Tell the customer to check with the correct foreign authority to see if a visa is valid for travel, if it is in a cancelled passport.
3. Ask the customer if they want to withdraw their application, if they need their passport returned un-cancelled.

How to cancel a machine readable passport

You must cancel a machine readable passport (MRP) by cutting the corners on certain pages in the passport (our desk aid shows the types of British passports and how to physically cancel them).

Cancelling PIMIS passports

To cancel a passport we issued on the Passport Issuing Management Information System (PIMIS) you must:

1. Hold the book in a portrait position with the spine to the left, looking at the front cover.
2. Cut off the top right hand corner of the front and back cover, making sure you cut through the machine readable zone (MRZ) on the corner opposite the photo.

Cancelling digital, ePassport (version 1) and temporary passports

If the customer sends in a digital passport (issued between 1998 and 2006), an ePassport (version 1) (issued between 2006 to 2010) or a temporary passport, you must:

1. Hold the book in a portrait position with the spine to the left, looking at the front cover.
2. Cut off the top right hand corner of the front and back cover.
3. Cut off the top right corner of the personal details page, making sure you cut the MRZ on the corner opposite the photo.

Cancelling ePassport (version 2)

If the customer sends in an ePassport (version 2) issued after October 2010, you must:

1. Hold the book in a portrait position with the spine to the left, looking at the front cover.
2. Cut off the bottom right hand corner of the front cover.
3. Cut off the bottom left hand corner of the personal details page, making sure you cut the MRZ on the corner opposite the photo.

You must not cut the back cover on the ePassport (version 2).

How to cancel an Old Blue passport (hardback style)

To cancel an Old Blue (hardback style) passport, you must:

1. Stamp 'cancelled' on the first 5 pages of the passport.
2. Cut off the top right corner of the front cover.

When cancelling pages, you must be careful not to stamp 'cancelled' across the customer's personal details on the passport.

Cancelling blue passports (ePassport)

If the customer sends in a blue covered passport issued after March 2020, you must:

1. Hold the book in a portrait position with the spine to the left, looking at the front cover.
2. Cut off the bottom right hand corner of the front cover.
3. Cut off the bottom left hand corner of the personal details page, making sure you cut the MRZ on the corner opposite the photo.

You must not cut the back cover on the blue covered passport.

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Securely destroying British passports

This section tells His Majesty's Passport Office staff when and how to securely destroy and dispose of British passports, that we do not return to the customer.

You (the examiner) must make sure the customer's passport is securely destroyed, when:

- the passport has been issued using the Digital Premium Service and we cannot give the passport to the customer
- the passport has not been collected from a public counter
- their passport is so badly damaged that we cannot return it to them
- we refuse an application to issue them with a new passport
- we revoke an old passport
- our policy confirms we must not return the passport to them (for example, when the passport is too badly damaged or it must be destroyed because it has been in archive for over a year)
- a court order tells us to (as long as Guidance & Quality, Operating Standards agree)
- a third party returns a passport to us, for example the police or Border Force
- a single journey emergency passport or emergency travel document has been processed (we must return multi journey emergency travel documents to the customer)

A customer may ask us to securely destroy the passport, when:

- they tell us they no longer need it
- we receive a passport for someone who has died and the estate (or next of kin) does not want the passport returning
- they hold additional passports they no longer need

How to securely destroy a passport

To securely destroy a British passport issued before March 2020, you must:

1. Cut the passport into 4 equal pieces, making sure the picture and passport antenna (a copper wire embedded in the book) are cut through.
2. Use an electronic shredder to destroy the pieces (if one is available).
3. Place the passport pieces into a confidential waste bin.
4. Add a passport note to the passport record on Main Index, to show the reason you destroyed the passport.

To securely destroy a passport issued after March 2020 (blue cover), you must:

1. Cut out the personal details page.
2. Cut the passport into 4 equal pieces, making sure the picture is cut through.

3. Use an electronic shredder to destroy the personal details page separately from the passport pieces (if one is available).
4. If an electronic shredder is not available, place the personal details page and the passport pieces into a confidential waste bin.
5. Add a passport note to the passport record on Main Index to show the reason you destroyed the passport.

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Cancelling a British passport on Main Index

This section tells His Majesty's Passport Office operational staff, when the system automatically cancels a British passport on Main Index, and when we must manually cancel a British passport on Main Index.

When we authorise a renewal or replacement of an old passport, the passport issuing system automatically updates the old passport record on Main Index (MI). The system will cancel an old passport record, when the:

- old passport number has been correctly captured in the previous passport field on the Application Management System (AMS) which only happens, if:
 - one passport number is in the previous passport number section
 - the passport application is not for an additional passport
 - the **cancel passport box** is ticked on AMS
- details can be traced on MI, the customer's details match and the Document Management Service (DMS) have processed the renewal or replacement application

We do not always want a passport to be cancelled on MI, (for example, if we get an application for an additional passport or a Diplomatic or Official passport).

If you, the examiner, do not want to cancel the customer's other passport, you must:

1. Open the customer's application to the Photo and Signature tab.
2. Check only 1 passport number is recorded.
3. Remove the tick from the Customer Passport box on the Previous Passport Details section, if the customer is not renewing this passport (and it must remain valid).
4. Save the record immediately without switching screen) otherwise the system may cancel the customer's other valid passport in error).

When to manually cancel a British passport on Main Index

The '**status**' field on the MI passport record shows if a passport is '**issued**' or has been '**cancelled**'.

You may need to manually update MI records to show you cancelled a passport, when:

- the system is unable to automatically cancel an old passport, because the customer holds an additional passport
- we refuse an application to issue a new passport
- we revoke an old passport
- we receive a passport for someone who has died

- we issue a specimen passport
- the customer does not collect their new passport from a public counter
- we issue a passport using the Digital Premium Service but do not give it to the customer (for example because their old passport was damaged)
- there is an old uncanceled passport on MI

When you find an old uncanceled passport on Main Index

You may identify other old, expired passports, showing a status on MI as 'issued', when you process a customer's application. For example, if other guidance tells you to complete an MI search.

These passports may not have been manually cancelled on MI by an examiner when they processed a previous application.

You do not need to manually cancel these passports on MI just to update our MI records. This is because our passport records will include any passports issued since then to the customer. You only need to manually cancel the passport if leaving the status as 'issued' affects the application you are processing (for example, you have identified that the customer does not have a claim to a British passport).

If you decide you need to manually cancel an old passport, you must only do so if all the following points apply, the:

- old passport is expired
- old passport was issued to the customer, by checking the customer's:
 - details (name, date of birth, place of birth, and gender)
 - identity (by comparing the photo on the old passport with the application you are processing)
- customer does not hold a multiple passport, for example:
 - an additional passport
 - a Diplomatic or Official passport
 - a passport showing a different nationality status

How to manually cancel a passport

When manually cancelling a passport, you must add a passport note on Main Index, to show why you are cancelling it and any other actions you are taking (for example, 'holder deceased passport cancelled and returned').

To make a manual update and change the status field on AMS or DAP, you must:

1. Find the correct passport record on MI.
2. Add a passport note explaining why you are cancelling the passport.
3. Select the '**update status**' link from the links menu.
4. Select '**cancelled**' from the drop down menu.
5. Select a '**Reason for the change**' from the drop down menu.
6. Select '**submit**'.

7. Select **'OK'** to confirm the change from **'issued'** to **'cancelled'** or click on **'Cancel'** to return to the **'Update Passport Status'** field.

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Lost and Stolen Passports Policy - Guidance for LSR Team

Cancelling a British passport in error

This section tells His Majesty's Passport Office operational staff what to do if they physically or electronically cancel a British passport in error.

You, the HM Passport Office staff member, may physically cancel a passport in error, for example when:

- you are not authorising a new passport (but cancel the old passport in error)
- a passport is sent as a supporting document (and does not belong to the intended passport holder)

You may electronically cancel a passport in error on Main Index (MI), for example, if you:

- incorrectly associate (and pass) an LS record to a passport
- process an additional passport as a renewal
- manually cancel the incorrect passport on MI

If you electronically cancel a passport in error and have not physically cancelled it, you must arrange for the passport to be reinstated, if possible. If the passport is reinstated on MI, you do not need to take any further action.

If you physically cancel a British passport in error, or electronically cancel a British passport in error and the passport cannot be reinstated, you must:

1. Tell the customer about the error.
2. Arrange for a replacement passport to be issued, free of charge, valid until the expiry date of the existing passport. Follow the guidance about replacing a passport with an error (because the process is the same) and use letter 129.
3. Inform your operational team leader, so they can record and authorise the error and replacement issue.
4. Consider any requests from the customer for out of pocket expenses following Compensation: reimbursing out of pocket expenses.

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