



Home Office

Restricted (non-standard) validity passports

Version 19.0

This guidance tells His Majesty's Passport Office examiners about passport validity, when we will issue a passport with restricted validity, and how to process an application when the customer sends us a restricted validity passport.

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About: Restricted (non-standard) validity passports

This guidance tells HM Passport Office examiners:

- about the validity we give on British passports
- when we will issue a passport with less validity than normal (known as a restricted validity passport)
- how to issue a passport with restricted validity
- how to process an application when the old passport has restricted validity

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 team.

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 this guidance then you can email the Guidance team.

Publication

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

- version **19.0**
- published for Home Office staff on **20 February 2025**

Changes from last version of this guidance

This guidance has been updated to tell DAP (Digital Application Processing) examiners issuing a restricted validity (RV) passport to:

- add an OBTU observation to the passport
- to send the customer a letter 101 using Comms Builder

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Passport validity

This section tells HM Passport Office staff how long a British passport is normally valid for and when we will issue a passport with less validity (restricted validity).

We issue passports to customers when we are sure:

- they have a claim to British nationality
- we have confirmed their identity
- we have no grounds for refusal (for example, there are no court orders preventing them from holding a passport).

We will issue a standard passport, valid for ten years, to adults. Child passports are valid for 5 years.

Diplomatic or Official passports

We may issue a Diplomatic or Official passport with a shorter validity period, depending on the government department that authorises it. We do not consider Diplomatic or Official passports with reduced validity to be restricted validity passports.

Restricted validity passports

We will consider issuing a restricted validity (RV) passport in certain circumstances, if the customer meets the criteria and can provide the evidence shown in guidance.

We will only issue a passport (including a RV passport), when we have:

- confirmed a customer's British nationality
- no concerns about the customer's identity

You must only consider issuing a RV passport if the customer:

- has an old passport that contained an error so we may issue a passport with the remaining validity
- has been granted temporary administrative recognition (when we made the error and the customer has no other claim to British nationality but they had their passport for a long time and used it to build a life for themselves)
- is unable to travel to change their name because of Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) advice (see Names: aligning names on foreign documents)
- needs a passport without a names observation because it may cause travel problems (see Names: aligning names on foreign documents)
- has urgent travel (as in WRS (Workers Registration Scheme) completing checks guidance) and we failed to check if parents met the WRS conditions

- has an urgent need to travel, in line with our urgent government business or compassionate travel guidance

A RV passport is usually valid for 1 year but can be shorter or longer depending on the customer's specific circumstances.

Examiners may also issue an RV passport if the Counter Fraud team (CFT) tell them to when an application is returned to examination.

Fees for RV passports

Customers must pay the correct fee when they apply for a passport.

When we decide a restricted validity passport will be issued

If you, the examiner, need to issue a RV passport, you must contact the customer to check:

- where and how long they intend to travel (include any additional time required for entry into a country (if needed, see: [foreign travel advice](#))
 - for example, a customer travelling to Turkey must have a passport valid for at least 6 months from the date they entered the country
- the customer's specific situation, for example:
 - why they require a passport urgently
 - why they are unable to meet our requirements to issue a full validity passport

If you need to issue a RV passport on:

- AMS (Application Management System), you must ask an operational team leader (OTL) to approve (authorise) the request
- DAP, when you have completed all of the tasks on the application and clicked **Submit**, the application will automatically be sent to the quality assurance queue for an OTL to complete a quality assurance check

RV passport: temporary administrative recognition

You must always refer requests for a RV for temporary administrative recognition to your local Quality and Examination Support team (QuEST) using a guidance referral form. QuEST will obtain authorisation from policy. When you receive a reply from QuEST, you must case note on the application whether you can issue a RV passport.

Restricted validity passports for overseas customers

If we are unable to issue a fully valid passport to a customer who lives overseas and they tell us they are travelling urgently, you must tell them to contact the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) for advice.

The FCDO may issue the customer an Emergency Travel Document (ETD) to let them travel urgently. The FCDO will discuss the customer's options, which will depend on:

- where they are
- when they need to travel
- where they are travelling to

The FCDO will make the decision to issue an ETD. You must never tell a customer that they will be issued an ETD (see emergency travel document instructions).

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Restricted validity passport: confirming a customer's identity

This section tells HM Passport Office staff how to confirm a customer's identity before we issue a restricted validity passport. For example, if they cannot attend an interview, for compassionate travel and urgent government business travel.

Customers must give us evidence they have urgent government business and compassionate travel and are unable to attend an identity interview, before we will consider issuing them a restricted validity (RV) passport.

You, the examiner, must:

- complete identity checks on the referee
- ask the customer for extra documents to confirm their identity

The customer must send you 2 of the following documents:

- home addresses for the past 5 years
- employer details
- bank details or mortgage agreement
- national insurance number, wage slips, P45, P60
- driver's licence
- details from benefit books or benefits paid

You must add a case note to the application, noting:

- the information the customer has given you
- the extra checks you completed
- your decision

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Setting the validity of a passport

This section tells His Majesty's Passport Office staff how to set the issue 'from' and 'to' dates on a passport application and how to issue a restricted validity passport.

The passport issuing system will automatically set the validity period to the standard validity, according to the age of the customer (for example, 5 years for a child passport).

If you, the examiner, need to change the expiry date, you must set it manually.

DAP: how to issue a restricted validity passport

If you need to issue a restricted validity (RV) passport, you must:

1. Review the evidence provided by the customer supporting the application for travel (for example, letters).
2. [Check and correct the application \(service\) type](#), if needed.
3. Select the **Application details** tab.
4. Select **New passport details**.
5. Select **change** under validity period.
6. Select an option from those listed under **Change passport validity period**.
7. Enter the date of issue of the new passport (if this applies to the option you selected).
8. Add a case note to explain:
 - who authorised the RV (higher executive officer (HEO) or Counter Fraud team (CFT))
 - why it was authorised (for example, by interview)
 - which guidance was used to authorise the RV
9. Select **Continue**.
10. Check the changes you made and select **Save changes**.
11. Select **Observations**.
12. Add the OBTU observation: "Valid for [add validity period], may not be extended without reference to HM Passport Office".
13. Issue the customer with a letter 101, using Comms Builder, explaining:
 - why we issued them a RV passport
 - what the customer needs to do before we will issue a fully valid passport
 - how they can replace their RV passport
 - they cannot use the Fast Track or Premium service to renew their RV passport

DAP: approving (authorising) a RV passport

If you, the DAP (Digital Application Processing) examiner, need to issue a RV passport, when you have completed all the tasks on an application and click **Submit**, the application will be sent to the quality assurance queue for an OTL (Operational Team Leader) to complete a quality assurance check.

If you, the OTL, review the request as part of the quality assurance check and decide to refuse it, you must correct the application and feed back to the examiner.

If you are issuing a RV passport for temporary administrative recognition, you must have approval from QuEst.

AMS: how to issue a restricted validity passport

When issuing a restricted validity (RV) passport on AMS (Application Management System), you must:

1. Scan on the system all evidence (for example, letters) supporting the application for travel.
2. Check and correct the application (service) type.
3. Add the OBTU observation: "Valid for (insert free text), may not be replaced without reference to the Passport Office".
4. Change the expiry date to show the new date.
5. Add a case note to explain:
 - who authorised the RV (higher executive officer (HEO) or Counter Fraud team (CFT))
 - why it was authorised (for example, by interview)
 - which guidance was used to authorise the RV
6. Pass the application to your operational team leader (OTL) to complete a second authorisation.

If the OTL authorises the RV, you must send the customer system letter 101, explaining:

- why we issued them a RV passport
- what the customer needs to do before we will issue a fully valid passport
- how they can replace their RV passport
- they cannot use the Fast Track or Premium service to renew their RV passport

AMS: approving (authorising) a RV passport

You, the OTL, must check the application and approve (or reject) the examiner's request to issue a RV passport on AMS. You must:

1. Check the examiner's case notes.
2. Add your own case note.
3. Accept or reject the authorisation on the screen.

If you refuse the request, you must return the application to the examiner who will deal with the application following your instructions.

If you, the OTL, are authorising a RV for [temporary administrative recognition](#), you must have approval from QuEst.

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Renewing or replacing a restricted validity passport

This section tells HM Passport Office staff working on the Application Management System and Digital Application Processing how to process an application when the customer sends us a restricted validity passport.

As a general rule, you must issue a fully valid 5 or 10 year passport if the customer applies to renew or replace a restricted validity (RV) passport. You must first complete all necessary identity checks before you authorise a new passport.

We will not usually allow customers to hold more than one RV passport at the same time or issue another RV passport to a customer that already has one. We expect the customer to have done whatever we told them is needed, to let us issue a full validity passport. For example, give us the necessary documents or attend an identity interview.

The restricted validity observation (OBTU) shown in the RV passport will say 'may not be replaced without reference to the Passport Office. You must only refer the application to another office or department if a passport note or case note specifically tells you to.

Before you agree to give the customer another RV, you must first discuss the application with a higher executive officer (HEO), who must approve the request.

How to process an application to renew or replace a RV

When replacing or renewing a RV passport, you (the examiner) must:

1. Check the case notes and passport notes on the old (non-standard validity) passport to find out why it was issued without full validity.
2. Examine the application and decide whether you can issue a fully valid passport.
3. Make sure the application (service) type is correct, whether you are processing on AMS (Application Management System) or DAP (Digital Application Processing).
4. Add a case note on the application to explain why you are going to issue:
 - a fully valid passport
 - another RV passport (for example if they have [lost their RV passport](#))

AMS: service type if renewing or replacing a RV passport

You must change the service type to first time application on AMS, if we issued the RV because a customer:

- was selected for an interview but could not attend due to urgent government business and compassionate travel reasons

- needed to register or naturalise as a British national
- has lost their RV passport but they still need to attend an interview

You must change the service type to replacement on AMS if a customer's RV passport is:

- damaged
- lost
- stolen

You must change the service type to renewal on AMS, if:

- we do not need to complete any more nationality or identity checks (for example, an interview)
- the customer now meets WRS (Worker Registration Scheme) conditions
- the customer was His Majesty's Forces personnel deployed before they could attend an identity interview
- the customer lost multiple passports over a short period of time and does not need to attend an interview

DAP: application type if renewing or replacing a RV passport

If you are processing on DAP (Digital Application Processing), you must use the application type renewal if:

- the customer's passport is damaged
- we do not need to complete any more nationality or identity checks (for example, an interview)
- the customer now meets WRS (Worker Registration Scheme) conditions
- the customer was His Majesty's Forces personnel, deployed before they could attend an identity interview
- the customer lost multiple passports over a short period of time and does not need to attend an interview

If you are processing on DAP, you must use the replacement (lost or stolen) application type, if we issued the RV because the customer lost multiple passports over a short period of time and has now lost their RV passport. This application type allows you to send the customer for another interview, if required.

If you are processing on DAP, you must use the first time application type if we issued the RV because a customer

- was selected for an interview but could not attend due to urgent government business and compassionate travel reasons
- needed to register or naturalise as a British national

You, the DAP examiner, are able to change the application type in DAP (if it is incorrect), see DAP: application types, unless you need to change to first time. If you

need to change to first time, you must select **I cannot do this application**, and **Cannot change application type to First time**.

If a customer loses their RV passport

If a customer has lost a RV within, or outside of the validity period and we issued the RV due to multiple losses, we must issue them another RV.

You must only refer the application to CFT (Counter Fraud team) for further investigation, if you have concerns about the:

- customer's identity
- use of the passport

If you are working on AMS, an EAC (Enhanced Application Checking) examiner will make this decision after discussion with CFT.

Fees for renewing and replacing a RV passport

Customers must pay the correct fee when they apply for a passport.

Renewing a restricted validity passport free of charge

In exceptional circumstances we may have issued the customer a RV passport, and at the time agreed to issue another RV to replace it (up to the date of the full validity, free of charge). For example, because of an internal delay or problem.

You will know we have agreed to this when:

- case notes or passport notes on the old passport show this
- the customer provides a letter that we gave to them at the time

You must:

1. Write a case note explaining the reason you are issuing another RV (up to the date of full validity).
2. Scan any supporting evidence (for example, a letter saying we will issue it free of charge).
3. Change the expiry date so the passport will expire 5 or 10 years from the original issue date.
4. Add observation OBTP and type in the free text field, 'Replaces passport number [insert number] dated [insert date] which has been [add action taken]'.
5. Add a case note in the authorisation screen, to explain why you are issuing a RV passport free of charge.
6. Pass the application to your operational team leader (OTL) to complete the second authorisation (if you are processing on AMS). If you are processing on DAP, DAP will automatically send the application to the quality assurance queue for an OTL to complete a quality assurance check.

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