



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

Bureau of Consular Affairs
Passport Services
Office of Field Operations
Customer Service Division

October 10, 2007

Dear Passport Application Acceptance Program Manager and Agents:

Thank you again for helping us meet the record demand for U.S. passports. We are currently processing routine applications within four to six weeks, and expedited applications within three weeks.

I know that at this time of year some of you are planning passport acceptance events and we appreciate this additional support. If you would like to plan a passport acceptance event or other passport outreach activity, please contact your Regional Passport Agency's Customer Service Manager for information and assistance.

I encourage you to convey two important messages to customers and prospective customers:

- **APPLY NOW** for a passport. Fall is traditionally our "low season," making it the best time to apply. It is always best to apply well in advance of planned travel.
- **KEEP CHECKING <http://TRAVEL.STATE.GOV>** for the most up-to-date and accurate information on how to apply for a passport, how long it takes to process an application, current passport requirements for travel to Canada, Mexico or the Caribbean, as well as other important tips on safe travel.

We have attached a fact sheet for you to share with customers to help emphasize this message. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gretchen Schuster".

Gretchen Schuster

National Customer Service Manager



FACT SHEET – October 1, 2007

PASSPORT SNAPSHOT

In January 2007, the air phase of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative came into effect. Americans complied in record-breaking unanticipated numbers, and our delivery system was unable to guarantee the same level of service we previously had maintained. In order to process the extraordinary demand, the State Department temporarily detailed close to 500 additional employees to the effort and simultaneously began a robust hiring program. Four hundred new employees have come on board since last May, and we are committed to continue to hire staff as needed.

Passport applications are currently taking between four and six weeks for routine service, and three weeks for expedited service. Fall is traditionally our low demand season, so we urge prospective applicants to apply now. January historically marks the beginning of our busy season, and demand may cause us to amend our website to reflect a possibly longer processing time. Readers are urged to check <http://travel.state.gov> (TSG) regularly, or apply now if contemplating international travel.

Should you have additional questions after visiting TSG, please contact the National Passport Information Center at 1-877-4USA-PPT (1-877-487-2778).

PASSPORT FACTS: WHAT YOU NEED TO TRAVEL

All persons traveling by air between the United States and Canada, Mexico, Bermuda and the Caribbean region are now required to present one of the following documents to enter or re-enter the United States:

- A valid passport;
- DHS-issued (SENTRI, NEXUS, FAST); **OR**
- A U.S. Coast Guard Mariner Document.

For U.S. Armed Forces on active duty, traveling on official orders, no passport is required.

See <http://travel.state.gov> for full details. Further information on port of entry procedures and requirements is available www.dhs.gov.

Get Your Passport NOW!

- If planning or even considering international trips, don't wait – apply for a passport NOW!
- Historically, we receive fewer passport applications during the fall – making it the best time to apply.
- We are currently processing routine applications within four to six weeks.

For the latest information on obtaining a U.S. passport, we urge you to regularly visit our web site: <http://travel.state.gov>