§ 51.4 Validity of passports.

(a) Signature of bearer. A passport book is valid only when signed by the bearer in the space designated for signature, or, if the bearer is unable to sign, signed by a person with legal authority to sign on his or her behalf. A passport card is valid without the signature of the bearer.

(b) Period of validity of a regular passport and a passport card. (1) A regular passport or passport card issued to an applicant 16 years of age or older is valid for ten years from date of issue unless the Department limits the validity period to a shorter period.

(2) A regular passport or passport card issued to an applicant under 16 years of age is valid for five years from date of issue unless the Department limits the validity period to a shorter period.

(3) A regular passport for which payment of the fee has been excused is valid for a period of five years from the date issued unless limited by the Department to a shorter period.

(c) Period of validity of an official passport. The period of validity of an official passport, unless limited by the Department to a shorter period, is five years from the date of issue, or so long as the bearer maintains his or her official status, whichever is shorter. An official passport which has not expired must be returned to the Department upon the termination of the bearer’s official status or at such other time as the Department may determine.

(d) Period of validity of a diplomatic passport. The period of validity of a diplomatic passport, unless limited by the Department to a shorter period, is five years from the date of issue, or so long as the bearer maintains his or her diplomatic status, whichever is shorter. A diplomatic passport which has not expired must be returned to the Department upon the termination of the bearer’s diplomatic status or at such other time as the Department may determine.

(e) Limitation of validity. The validity period of any passport may be limited by the Department to less than the normal validity period. The bearer of a limited passport may apply for a new passport, using the proper application and submitting the limited passport, applicable fees, photographs, and additional documentation, if required, to support the issuance of a new passport.

(f) Invalidity. A United States passport is invalid as soon as:

(1) The Department has sent or personally delivered a written notice to the bearer stating that the passport has been revoked; or

(2) The passport has been reported as lost or stolen to the Department, a U.S. passport agency or a diplomatic or consular post abroad and the Department has recorded the reported loss or theft; or
§ 51.5 Adjudication and issuance of passports.
(a) A passport authorizing officer may adjudicate applications and authorize the issuance of passports.
(b) A passport authorizing officer will examine the passport application and all documents, photographs and statements submitted in support of the application in accordance with guidance issued by the Department.

§ 51.6 Verification of passports and release of information from passport records.
(a) Verification. When required by a foreign government, a consular officer abroad may verify a U.S. passport.
(b) Release of information. Information in passport records is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and the Privacy Act. Release of this information may be requested in accordance with part 171 or part 172 of this title.

§ 51.7 Passport property of the U.S. Government.
(a) A passport at all times remains the property of the United States and must be returned to the U.S. Government upon demand.
(b) Law enforcement authorities who take possession of a passport for use in an investigation or prosecution must return the passport to the Department on completion of the investigation and/or prosecution.

§ 51.8 Submission of currently valid passport.
(a) When applying for a new passport, an applicant must submit for cancellation any currently valid passport of the same type.
(b) If an applicant is unable to produce a passport under paragraph (a) of this section, he or she must submit a signed statement in the form prescribed by the Department setting forth the circumstances regarding the disposition of the passport.
(c) The Department may deny or limit a passport if the applicant has failed to provide a sufficient and credible explanation for lost, stolen, altered or mutilated passport(s) previously issued to the applicant, after being given a reasonable opportunity to do so.

§ 51.9 Amendment of passports.
Except for the convenience of the U.S. Government, no passport may be amended.

§ 51.10 Replacement passports.
A passport issuing office may issue a replacement passport without payment of applicable fees for the reasons specified in §51.54.

Subpart B—Application

§ 51.20 General.
(a) An application for a passport, a replacement passport, extra visa pages, or other passport related service must be completed using the forms the Department prescribes.
(b) The passport applicant must truthfully answer all questions and must state every material matter of fact pertaining to his or her eligibility for a passport. All information and evidence submitted in connection with an application is considered part of the application. A person providing false information as part of a passport application, whether contemporaneously with the form or at any other time, is subject to prosecution under applicable Federal criminal statutes.