FactSheet

e-Passport facts at a glance

The U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO) is the sole provider of blank U.S. Passports to the Department of State. The e-Passport (electronic Passport) program has improved Passport quality, performance, and reliability. Its design incorporates numerous security features including the integrated circuit in the Passport booklet.

- **GPO Employees**, working in a secure GPO facility in Washington, DC, operate two shifts per day, five days a week to meet citizen demand for e-Passports. They are craftspeople dedicated to the printing, manufacture, assembly, binding, quality control, and shipping of the world's most respected travel document.
- **GPO and the Department of State** developed the e-Passport in response to the requirements for Visa Waiver Program (VWP) countries in the 2002 Enhanced Border Security and Visa Entry Reform Act. The Act required VWP countries to produce e-Passports and the U.S., while not legislatively mandated to do so, committed to incorporate this new technology into the U.S. passport in light of the clear security and identity advantages. International e-Passport Standards are established by ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organization), a Secretariat of the United Nations. It governs many aspects of international air travel, including Passports.
- **The U.S. e-Passport Meets ICAO Standards and is Globally Interoperable.** Adherence to these standards ensures that U.S. e-Passports will function properly when presented at a foreign port of entry, and that foreign e-Passports will function properly when presented to border control officials in the United States.
- **GPO Issued a Request for Proposal** at the request of the Department of State to procure components necessary to build an e-Passport. GPO included Buy America Act requirements in the procurement. No vendor responded to the RFP offering domestic made products that met the rigorous compliance testing mandated by the ICAO standards.
- **The Department of State** conducted security evaluations on potential suppliers that submitted proposals.
- **GPO and the Department of State Conduct Ongoing Security Evaluations** and inspections of supplier facilities.
- **Providing Additional Security**, there are layers of security features incorporated throughout the process. These security features include strict integrated circuit tracking and accountability, secure transport of integrated circuits and e-passport books, and the personalization of the integrated circuits at domestic Department of State locations.
- **GPO locks the Integrated Circuit** with a transport key which can only be unlocked by the Department of State prior to personalization.
- **The Personal Information** loaded on the integrated circuit by the Department of State is the same data that is visually displayed on the photo page of the passport.
- **The Traveler's Photograph** is now stored in digital form, giving border crossing authorities an additional means of verifying traveler identity.
- **For Additional Protection,** GPO adds an embedded metallic element to the cover of the e-Passport book that helps to protect against the unauthorized reading of the personal information contained within the integrated circuit.
- **$14.80 per Booklet** is the price GPO charges the Department of State. This price includes materials, labor, equipment, overhead, required inventory, and investment in necessary equipment and facilities.
- **The Price Charged to the Public** is determined by the Department of State based on cost of service analysis.
- **GPO Has Invested in a Secure Backup Manufacturing Facility,** at the Stennis Space Center in Mississippi. NASA and about 30 other Federal agencies are located there. The alternate GPO plant establishes a contingency facility and adds capacity to meet future increases in demand. By investing in this location, GPO has created new jobs and is contributing to the growth and development of the local economy.

For more than 80 years, GPO has employed technology to continuously improve the security of the world's most trusted travel document.

1783	Benjamin Franklin prints first U.S. Passport
1856	Department of State centralizes control of Passport applications and issuance
1926	League of Nations creates international standard for booklet-style Passport and GPO, with binding and printing expertise, selected to manufacture U.S. Passports
1961	GPO employs new technology to expand the capacity and security of Passport numbering system
1980	Machine Readable Code used to automate aspects of Passport issuance and identity verification, adding an additional layer of security
May 2002	Visa-waiver nations* required to develop e-Passports
2002 – 2004	GPO and the Department of State jointly develop the U.S. e-Passport
December 2005	GPO delivered the first U.S. e-Passport to the Department of State
April 2006	Diplomatic and Official e-Passports are issued
August 2006	e-Passports available to U.S. travelers
May 2007	Last non-electronic Passport produced, all U.S. Passports manufactured will now be e-Passports
March 2008	GPO has produced more than 30,000,000 e-Passports to date

*Citizens of visa-waiver nations are not required to have a visa to enter the U.S.

The U.S. e-Passport features multiple layers of security to protect an individual traveler's personal information and photograph.