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Any citizen wishing to visit a foreign country must have a passport to enter and leave that country as well as to get back into the United States. Instructions for getting a passport are quite specific. The passport must have a picture of the citizen, and give one's name, social security number, sex, date and place of birth. Ordinary passports expire in ten years and must be renewed. It is now possible to fill out an application form for a new or renewed passport on the Internet. The form is then printed out, on the computer, to be signed. Two pictures and the fee must accompany the application. If it is for a renewal the old passport must also be surrendered.

People visiting foreign countries have increased dramatically over the past few years. The year 2007 showed a total of over eighteen million United States passports issued. The majority of the passports issued were Ordinary, which is carried by the regular citizen. There are many different types of passports issued depending on the status of the carrier. Some of them are Official, Diplomatic, Emergency, Collective and Family.

The Family passport is issued when a family is traveling together with one adult named as the passport holder. A family member cannot use it unless the passport holder is present. This is a very convenient passport for a family going on a trip as they will be entering and leaving the foreign country together.

When groups of students or adults go on a trip to another country there is always the concern of one getting separated or coming home by themselves. Using a Collective passport insures that this will not happen. The passport is issued in the name of the group leader and they are the only ones who can use it. This is very assuring to the parents whose child might be in a group. Those going on missionary or humanitarian projects often use this passport.

It is much easier to obtain a passport these days than it was in the past. Due to the huge increase in travel, the government has speeded up their method of issuing a passport. With security concerns they are very careful when issuing the passports to scrutinize them very carefully. Passports can be applied for at post offices, most county recorders offices and on the Internet. Emergency passports can be obtained on the same day or within twenty-four hours under special circumstances.

When one is going to stay in a country for an extended length of time, such as a student or overseas worker, they must have a Visa. This Visa is issued by the country being visited to allow the person to stay for an extended time. They must also have a passport in their possession to show their country of origin. The Visa does not take the place of a passport.

The State Department has a department called the Office of American Citizens Services and Crisis Management (ACS). This office furnishes Consular Information. It works with our embassies and consulates overseas in providing emergency services for American travelers. This has been of great help for people who find themselves in unusual circumstances.

There are several non-emergency services and emergency U.S. passports services provided by the ACS through the overseas American consulates and Embassies. Among other services are getting deceased Americans' bodies home, assisting crime victims and those who have been arrested. One of their greatest services is a loan program for destitute Americans to enable them to return home. These loans must be repaid at a later date. Anyone [getting your US passport](#) and traveling should be aware of this service. Get your [pasports](#) today!

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