



## Documentary Requirements for Canadians Entering the United States

Issued October 24, 2006 (Subject to further updates and revisions without notice)

### Documents to Enter the United States

Currently most Canadian citizens are exempt from requiring an actual entry visa and valid passport to enter the United States. Under current U.S. procedures, all travellers may be required to present acceptable photo-identification.

Under U.S. legislation surrounding the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI), the Department of Homeland Security and Department of State are required to develop and implement a plan to require all travellers, U.S. citizens and foreign nationals alike, to present a passport or other acceptable document, or a combination of documents, that denote identity and citizenship when entering the United States.

### A New Deadline Date

As many media stories have reported, the U.S. Congress recently amended certain portions of the legislation surrounding WHTI. These amendments delay but do not cancel the passport entry requirement. While many reports suggest that June 1, 2009 is the new implementation date, it is important to note that the actual wording of these Congressional amendments state that the date could be earlier than June 2009 if the secretaries of State and Homeland Security have a program organized, in place, and ready to implement. These two U.S. government departments are actively working towards an earlier implementation date! Do not rely on June 1, 2009 and wait until the very last minute to act.

### Travelling by Air

On this coming **January 8, 2007**, all persons, including U.S. citizens, travelling by air between the United States and Canada, Mexico, Central and South America, the Caribbean, and Bermuda will be required to present a valid passport, Air NEXUS card, or U.S. Coast Guard Merchant Mariner Document.

Snowbirds who drives to the United States but who may decide to fly back to Canada temporarily mid-winter for a medical appointment, spend the holidays with family, etc., will require a passport to be allowed to fly back to the United States to resume their snowbird winter months.

### Travelling by Land and Sea

**As early as January 1, 2008 but not later than June 1, 2009**, all persons, including U.S. citizens, travelling between the U.S. and Canada, Mexico, Central and South America, the Caribbean, and Bermuda by land or sea (including ferries), may be required to present a valid passport or other documents as determined by the Department of Homeland Security.

## **Other Acceptable Documents (besides a passport)**

In addition to a full passport, the United States is introducing – for its own citizens – the Passport Card (also called the PASS Card). This limited use passport in card format is currently under development and will be available for use for travel only by land or sea (including ferries) between the U.S. and Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Bermuda. Similar in size to a credit card, it will fit easily into a wallet. The passport card is the core element of the PASS (People Access Security Service) System announced by the secretaries of State and Homeland Security.

The U.S. departments of State and Homeland Security anticipate that the following existing documents – which Canadians can acquire – will continue to be acceptable for their current travel uses under WHTI.

- ◆ NEXUS (Canada/U.S. border)
- ◆ SENTRI (Mexico/U.S. border)
- ◆ FAST
- ◆ U.S. Coast Guard Merchant Mariner Document

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**Commitment, Service and Advocacy for Travellers**  
**The voice of travelling Canadians**

The Canadian Snowbird Association is a national not-for-profit advocacy organization dedicated to actively defending and improving the rights and privileges of travelling Canadians.