

THE

NATIONAL

ARCHIVES



HM Passport
Office

Reproduction of the British passport

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this guidance is to describe the circumstances in which the British Passport may be:

- copied (including paper photocopies and electronic scans)
- used in television or theatre productions.

This guidance, authorised by The National Archives (TNA), has been produced in consultation and has been approved by the Lord Chamberlain's Office and Her Majesty's Passport Office (HMPO).

2. Background

2.1 Crown copyright

The British passport (the passport) is subject to Crown copyright protection under section 163 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. This means that no part of it may be lawfully reproduced without the prior permission of The Keeper of Public Records, an official who, as Queen's Printer and Queen's Printer for Scotland, manages Crown copyright on behalf of Her Majesty The Queen under Letters Patent. Crown copyright is administered on behalf of The Keeper of Public Records by TNA.

2.2 The Royal Arms

The front cover of the passport contains an image of the Royal Arms. The Royal Arms are the personal property of Her Majesty The Queen and may be used for official purposes by the Monarch and members of the Royal Family, by Her Majesty's Government and its departments, Her Majesty's Armed Forces, and by Royal Warrant Holders only.

TNA must approve any request to show the cover of a passport bearing the Royal Arms, this includes in film, television or theatre productions. Use of the Royal Arms without permission is a breach of Crown copyright which is a criminal offence.

2.3 Official documents

Passports are official documents issued by HM Passport Office. UK variant passports are also issued by passport offices in the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man and British Overseas Territories.

Failure to ensure the security of these documents can lead to:

- fraudulent use including the opening of bank accounts, obtaining of credit cards, loans, state benefits and duplicate documents, such as passports and driving licences
- stolen 'identities', creating difficulties in obtaining loans, credit cards or mortgages.

3. Reproducing the passport

3.1 Definition of copying

For the purposes of this guidance, the term copying includes:

- photocopying
- scanning
- filming
- reproduction in any other medium, including the placing of material on the internet.

3.2 Record keeping

A passport contains the personal details of the passport holder. HM Passport Office advises that:

- passport holders should record or photocopy the information of the personal details page, keeping it secure and separate from the passport. This will help HM Passport Office to process an application for a replacement passport if the current passport is lost or is stolen
- only the original document may be used as evidence of identity; but a photocopy may be made to record the fact that identification checks have taken place. It is for organisations to ensure that they comply with requirements under legislation, and the information in this document does not seek to interpret legal requirements on the taking of copies of passports
- notarised or certified photocopies of passports are not acceptable as proof of identity
- passport holders should only agree to the reproduction of the personal details page in the passport if they are satisfied that the person, or organisation, will hold this securely
- unless there is a legal requirement, the organisations which are required to retain a reproduction of the personal details in the passport, must first obtain the consent of the individual
- organisations should retain a record of the consent and should store the passport details securely

- photocopies of the personal details page of the passport may be made, for the purposes of record keeping only, by the following persons:
 - ✓ the holder of the passport
 - ✓ notaries, solicitors, banks and government departments
 - ✓ a person or institution subject to the requirements of the Money Laundering Regulations
 - ✓ a person certifying that identification checks required under these Money Laundering Regulations have taken place
- where copies of the bio-data, observations or visa pages are required, copies may be taken in either black and white or colour, and may be held electronically or in paper format. The person or organisation taking the image must ensure that it complies with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) within the EEA when holding personal information. Please note this won't apply outside of the EEA.

3.3 Restrictions on reproduction

The image of the cover of the passport, including the Royal Arms, or any of the inside pages of the passport may not be used:

- as the main focus of the cover of a work, for example, the dust jacket or cover of a publication, or as a passport wallet
- in advertising
- in facsimile form for use as a passport holder or cover.

3.4 Sale of passports

Passports remain the property of HM Government and they may not be sold by the person named in the passport, or any other person.

Expired or cancelled passports are returned to the holder. If the old passport is not required, HM Passport Office advises the secure disposal of the passport in order to protect the holder's identity.

4. Use of passports in film, television and theatre

4.1 Introduction

HM Passport Office can on request produce a current British passport for production companies for use as a prop in film, theatre or television (known by HM Passport Office as specimen passports). They cannot provide copies of previous historic passports designs and will charge a fee for the passport if they approve the request.

Companies which provide imitation British passports (historic, present or future) must make sure the imitation is amended in a way that it cannot be mistaken for an official document. Any imitation passport design must be submitted via email to both TNA and HM Passport Office to authorise its design.

4.2 Specimen passports produced by HM Passport Office

HM Passport Office will consider requests for the production of a specimen passport for use as a prop in film, television, or theatre. If the request is approved they will provide guidance regarding the application process.

The production company must advise HM Passport Office as to how the passport will appear during their production. If the cover is shown, HM Passport Office will seek additional Crown copyright approval from TNA. Failure to tell HM Passport Office and obtain approval will constitute a copyright infringement.

Production companies must agree that the specimen passport:

- must only be used for the purposes described in the request for approval
- should not knowingly contain the details of a living individual, such as a name and date of birth, without their prior consent
- must be securely stored when not in use, and only removed from the secure area when in use for the purposes described
- passport number must not be displayed at any time; the number can be hidden during filming using a finger
- will be returned to HM Passport Office immediately after filming for secure destruction

4.3 Imitation passports produced by a third party

Companies who design and submit imitation passports to TNA and HM Passport Office for approval must make sure:

- the watermarked visa pages are significantly different from the official HM Passport Office version
- the personal details page (which includes the holder's name and photo) must have a number of differences from a genuine passport, including different images and fonts used
- the document must not include security features used in a genuine passport such as embedded security fibres and holograms
- any passport number created must comprise of eight digits, to make sure a live nine-digit passport number is not mistakenly generated
- any image of a Royal Arms is significantly different to the official Royal Arms shown on a British passport
- the passport should not knowingly contain the details of a living individual, such as a name and date of birth, without their prior consent.

5. Contact details

The National Archives: psi@nationalarchives.gov.uk

HM Passport Office: props@hmpo.gov.uk