

Last-Minute Holiday Travel Documentation Checklist

Verify your documents now — before it's too late to fix problems

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Christmas and New Year's travel approaches quickly. If you're crossing international borders in the next few weeks, verify your documentation now while there's still time to correct problems.

Passport Verification

Most critical document for international travel — requires immediate attention.

Expiration date rules:

- Many countries require six months validity beyond your travel dates
- Some countries require three months validity
- A few accept passports valid only for duration of stay
- Check specific requirements for your destination

Processing times for renewals:

- Routine service: 6-8 weeks
- Expedited service: 2-3 weeks
- Emergency/urgent travel: 1-2 weeks (requires proof of travel)
- Regional passport agencies: same day for emergencies (appointment required)

If your passport expires within six months:

- Verify destination country requirements immediately
- Consider expedited renewal even if destination technically allows
- Have backup travel plans if renewal doesn't arrive in time

Children's Documentation

Traveling with minors requires specific documentation often overlooked until too late.

Required documents:

- Passport for international travel (any age)
- Birth certificate for some land border crossings (check specific requirements)
- Government-issued ID for domestic flights (age requirements vary by airline)

Parental consent requirements:

- Letters required when child travels without both parents
- Must be notarized in most cases
- Should include: child and parent info, travel dates, contact info, authorization
- Carry custody documents if relevant

Enhanced Driver's Licenses and Trusted Traveler Programs

Enhanced Driver's License (EDL):

- Accepted for land and sea crossings to Canada, Mexico, Caribbean
- NOT valid for air travel internationally
- Available in limited states — check your state DMV
- More secure than standard license but different from REAL ID

REAL ID:

- Required for domestic flights beginning May 2025
- Does NOT work for international travel alone
- Check your current license for compliance (gold star indicator)

Trusted Traveler Programs:

- NEXUS, SENTRI, Global Entry, FAST cards work at borders
- Expedite processing at dedicated lanes
- Apply well in advance — processing takes weeks to months

Vehicle and Pet Documentation

Vehicle documents:

- Current registration in vehicle
- Proof of insurance valid in destination country
- If driving a rental: authorization letter from rental company
- If driving someone else's vehicle: notarized permission letter

Pet documentation:

- Current health certificate from licensed veterinarian
- Rabies vaccination records
- Microchip documentation for dogs entering US
- CDC Dog Import Form completed 2-10 days before entry

Final Documentation Checklist

Before you leave — verify you have:

- Valid passports for all travelers
- Children's documents and consent letters if applicable
- Vehicle registration and insurance
- Pet health certificates if applicable
- Digital copies saved on phone
- Physical copies stored separately from originals
- Emergency contact has copies of all documents
- SafelyArrived check-in set up for your crossing

Set up your SafelyArrived check-in at safelyarrived.com

No app. No download. If you don't check in — your emergency contacts are automatically notified.

Be Prepared. Not Scared.

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