

October 14, 2015

New photo requirements starting November 1, 2016

Beginning November 1, 2016, applicants for U.S. passports and visas must remove their glasses for their application photos.

After November 1, 2016, applicants may wear glasses only in rare circumstances of medical necessity, (e.g., when an applicant has had recent surgery and glasses are necessary to protect the applicant's eyes during urgent travel.) Applicants should obtain a signed statement from a medical professional or health practitioner (such as a surgeon or ophthalmologist) in these cases.

Applicants who have submitted their applications before November 1, 2016 do not need to submit new photos. After that date, applicants will need to submit compliant photos.

This change will ensure consistent photo standards for passport and visa services, eliminate glare on lenses and shadows from frames, and improve the performance of our facial recognition systems, which are an important part of our biometric security screening. Last year, more than 200,000 passport customers worldwide submitted poor quality or otherwise non-compliant photos, which delayed processing their passport applications. The change will prevent many such delays.

If the photo of you in your unexpired U.S. passport has glasses, don't worry about it. You don't have to get a new passport now. Next time you renew your passport, though, you'll have to take your glasses off. Likewise, if you currently have a valid U.S. visa, you do not need to replace the visa.

For more information on passport and visa photos, check out the photo requirements and photo examples on the Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs website:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/news/no-glasses.html>

<https://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/general/photos.html>

You can find more information about how to travel to the US on the embassy's website at kingston.usembassy.gov and the website of our authorized service provider at usvisa-info.com. Keep on top of embassy news on our Facebook page, facebook.com/pages/USEmbassy-Jamaica, and by following @USEmbassyJA on Twitter. We also answer general visa questions on our Facebook and Twitter pages.

You may also send your questions to: editorial@jamaicaobserver.com to be forwarded to the embassy.

Reminder: Your appointment time is your arrival time, NOT your interview time. Do not show up earlier than your appointment time.