



Lost or stolen passports

Key points

- **Your passport is a key document that provides evidence of your identity and citizenship**
- **You must safeguard your passport at all times to combat possible fraud and stop criminals from assuming your identity**
- **If you lose your passport (or it is stolen) you are required by law to report it**

Identity theft is a growing problem

Each of us has a unique identity. Today, it is more important than ever to protect your identity, both for international security reasons and to combat possible fraud.

Identity theft, where one person illegally claims to be another person, is a growing problem with serious consequences for our security at home and abroad. Fraud-related identity theft is estimated to cost the Australian community around \$1.5 billion a year.

Lost or stolen passports provide criminals with the opportunity to assume another identity, to travel illegally and to commit other crimes. *The Australian Passports Act 2005* contains specific measures to encourage Australians to protect their passports.

Preventing misuse

You are responsible for the safekeeping of your own passport. Always keep your passport in a safe place, whether you are at home or abroad. Considerable inconvenience and disruption to travel plans may result from the theft or loss of your passport.

If you need to send your passport in the mail for any reason, for example to a foreign embassy or consulate to obtain a visa, the Australian Passport Office recommends you use, as a minimum, a form of registered post in Australia. Overseas, you should use an equivalent mail service that requires a signature from the recipient.

If necessary, you should also provide as a minimum a self-addressed prepaid registered post envelope for the recipient to use when returning your passport.

You are required by law to report the loss or theft of your passport as soon as possible.

Cancelled passports must not be used

Passports reported as lost or stolen are immediately and permanently cancelled. A cancelled passport must not be used for travel. It is illegal to do so and heavy penalties apply. Border control authorities in Australia are notified when a passport is cancelled and they have the authority to demand the surrender of a cancelled passport. We also advise Interpol of all lost or stolen Australian passports

so that the use of these passports in foreign countries can be prevented.

These measures help prevent the misuse of your lost or stolen passport.

In Australia – if your passport goes missing you can report it to us online at www.passports.gov.au or by calling the Australian Passport Information Service (APIS) on **131 232**.

Overseas – if your passport goes missing you can report it to us online at www.passports.gov.au or at the nearest Australian diplomatic mission or consulate.

Recovered passports

If you recover a passport after reporting it lost or stolen, you must return it to the nearest passport office. If you are overseas, return it to an Australian diplomatic mission or consulate. The passport will be physically cancelled and may be returned to you on request. However, the cancelled document can no longer be used for travel purposes.

Under no circumstances should you try to use a passport that has been reported as lost or stolen for travel or identification.

Additional lost or stolen fee

To obtain a new passport, you will need to complete an application form and meet all the normal requirements. Make sure you complete Section 10 of the application form, with details of the loss or theft of your previous passport.

You will need to pay a lost or stolen passport fee additional to the normal application fee. The amount of this additional fee depends on the number of passports you have lost or had stolen in the previous five years. These fees are available on the passport website at www.passports.gov.au.

Alternatively, if you are in Australia, call the Australian Passport Information Service on **131 232**. If you are overseas, contact the nearest Australian diplomatic mission or consulate.

If you have provided inaccurate information regarding the number of passports you have lost or had stolen in the previous five years, you will be contacted by the Australian Passport Office. Your application cannot proceed until the lost or stolen fee amount has been paid in full.

Possible fee refund if loss or theft is not your fault

The lost or stolen passport fee may be refunded if:

- the refund claim is received within three months after the replacement passport was issued,
- the circumstances of the loss or theft were outside your control and were not due to your carelessness, and
- you are not able to claim the loss or theft on any insurance policy.

Claims for refund must include:

- full name, passport number, and date and place of lodgement of your application for a replacement passport,
- a supporting statement describing the circumstances of the loss or theft of your passport,
- confirmation that the circumstances of the loss or theft of your passport are not covered by an insurance policy,
- the original police report describing the circumstances of the theft of your passport and details of where your passport was stolen, and
- bank details where any refund is to be deposited (available in Australia and some overseas locations) or the address to which a refund cheque should be sent.

Recovery payment

If you find or recover your passport and personally return it to an Australian Passport Office or an Australian diplomatic mission or consulate within three months of reporting it as lost or stolen and you have paid a lost or stolen passport fee, you may qualify for a payment equal to the basic lost or stolen passport fee for one travel document.

Claims for a recovery payment must be received within three months of the passport being reported as lost or

stolen. It is not possible to receive both a refund of the lost or stolen passport fee and the recovery payment.

Applying for a refund or recovery payment

If you paid the lost or stolen passport fee in Australia, your application for a refund or recovery payment should be made in writing to:

**The Manager
Australian Passport Office
In your state or territory capital city.**

If you paid the lost or stolen fee while you were overseas, your application for a refund or recovery payment should be made in writing to:

**The Consul
Australian diplomatic mission or consulate at which
the lost or stolen fee was paid.**

Lost or stolen fee waiver

If you recover your passport and you can produce it during your interview for a replacement passport within three months of its reported loss, you may be eligible for a waiver of one lost or stolen fee, provided you had only one previous document lost or stolen in the preceding five years.

If you have lost or had stolen more than one passport in the last five years, you will be required to pay the full amount of the lost/stolen fee together with your application fee. You may then apply for a refund of the recovery fee.

Right of review

A decision not to refund the lost or stolen passport fee is a reviewable decision under Section 48 of the *Australian Passports Act 2005*.

Please safeguard your passport

Remember to safeguard your passport at all times. Please store it in the wallet provided to prevent damage. Additional fees apply to replace lost or stolen passports.

We value your comments

We work hard to improve our service to you and we welcome your input about how our staff can make it even better. Please submit any compliments, complaints or comments to us in any of the following ways:

 www.passports.gov.au
passports.australia@dfat.gov.au

 APIS 131 232

 **Communications Unit
Australian Passport Office
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
R G Casey Building, John McEwen Crescent
Barton ACT 0221**

Further information

For the latest information about passports and copies of our other publications, visit our website, www.passports.gov.au or call the Australian Passport Information Service (APIS) **131 232** in Australia. If you are overseas, contact an Australian diplomatic mission or consulate.

For travel advice and practical information to help you prepare for safe overseas travel, go to www.smartraveller.gov.au.

Accessibility

If you are not fluent in English, you can use the Australian Government's Translating and Interpreting Service at your passport interview at no cost. If you need an interpreter or are visually impaired and need general passport information, please call APIS on **131 232**.

If you are deaf, or have a hearing impairment or speech impairment, contact us through the National Relay Service: TTY users telephone **133 677** and Speak and Listen users telephone **1300 555 727**. Ask for APIS on **131 232**.



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