



<https://www.passports.gov.au/Web/Requirements/PhotographGuidelines.aspx>

Guidelines for the photographic industry and camera operators

The following notes draw on International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) standards for photographs to be included in machine-readable travel documents such as passports. These notes are to be read in conjunction with the following [Australian Passport Photo Guide 2008](#) and the [Photograph Guidelines](#) web pages.

These notes will help in providing suitable photographs, so that applications for passports are not delayed by having to submit new photographs in the required format. For security reasons it is important that photographs meet Australian Passport Office (APO) standards, therefore these standards are mandatory.

Acceptable camera types

Correct capture devices are crucial to ensure enrolled images accurately match live scans at border control. Cameras must comply with the standards set out below in "[Camera optical lens and settings requirements](#)". Photographers must ensure accurate "perspective" is maintained as specified in "[Camera optical lens and settings requirements](#)". The following Camera types are acceptable.

- Instant Film Cameras
- Digital SLR Cameras (refer to [Camera optical lens and settings requirements](#))
- 35 mm Film Cameras (refer to [Camera optical lens and settings requirements](#))

Photograph requirements

The photograph must

- be taken no more than six months before lodgement of a passport application form
- be 45-50 mm in height and 35-40 mm in width (as per [Australian Passport Photo Guide 2008](#))
- show a close up of the applicant's head and the top of the shoulders such that the vertical size of the head (as measured from the bottom of the chin to the crown of the head) is between 32 and 36 mm
- be centred, clear and in sharp focus with no shadows
- be of high quality, with no ink marks or creases
- have appropriate brightness and contrast that show skin tones naturally

Photograph background

You must use a uniform background to provide a contrast to the face and hair.

Preferred background colour

- 18 percent grey

Other recommended background colours are

- light blue
- cream
- beige
- pale grey
- white

Camera optical lens and setting requirements

- 35mm SLR or DSLR cameras only (the camera's image capture chip must replicate 35mm film plane image capture dimensions) with a fixed Optical Focal Length Lens (or variable lens locked into position) between 90 to 130mm (35mm film camera equivalent)
- a wide angle or telephoto view should **not** be used as this will result in a distorted facial image
- distance between lens and subject should be approximately 1.2 metres, this is to achieve an image of proper head size, with correct perspective and without distortion
- set the Aperture to maximise the depth of field, approximately f16 to f22
- set the Shutter Speed to ensure no camera shake – recommend 125th to 250th of a second (within Flash sync requirements)
- digital Zoom technology must **not** be used
- sharpening functions within the camera software **must be turned off**
- the image must be taken using "shadow less lighting". Background slave flash can be used to remove shadows. The lighting should **not** give the subject "red eyes"
- a head size template placed on the camera viewing screen must be used as a guide in obtaining the correct head size
- the camera should be set to capture the image as a TIF (preferable) or JPG at highest quality setting with minimum file compression

Digital camera resolution

- it is recommended that digital cameras should be at least 12 Mega pixels resolution (preferably higher)

Person

Expression and frame

The photograph must show the applicant

- with a neutral expression
- alone
- looking directly at the camera
- with no other person or object (including toys or furniture) visible
- with the mouth closed
- facing the camera and **not** looking over one shoulder (for example in portrait style photographs)
- with the head upright such that an imaginary line drawn between the centres of the eyes is parallel to the top edge of the picture
- their eyes open and clearly visible and without hair obscuring any part of the eyes
- with both edges of the face must be clearly visible

Head coverings

- Head coverings such as hats or caps are **not** permitted
- if an applicant wears a head covering for religious purposes, a photograph of the applicant wearing it will be accepted provided all facial features from bottom of the chin to top of the forehead (including both edges of the applicant's face) are clearly shown

Glasses

Even if applicants normally wear glasses, they do **not** need to wear them for a passport photograph. If they do:

- the photograph must show the eyes clearly
- there must be **no** flash reflection off the glasses
- tinted lenses are **not** permitted
- the frames must **not** cover any part of the eyes
- heavy framed glasses are **not** permitted

Facial piercings

Facial piercings such as nose rings and studs are acceptable provided

- they are worn permanently by the applicant
- they do **not** cause a reflection in the photograph

Hair and ears

- ears do **not** need to be visible in the photo
- most hair types (covering the complete frame) are acceptable providing the hair does **not** cover the face and the face/eyes are visible

- earrings are acceptable provided they do **not** obstruct the view of the edges of the face
- hair accessories are acceptable provided they do **not** obstruct the view of any facial feature

Infants

Infants under three years of age

Generally, attempts should be made to ensure that photographs of infants comply with all requirements. The APO, however, is prepared to relax some requirements for photographs of infants under the age of three.

ACCEPTABLE PHOTO STANDARDS FOR INFANTS (UNDER 3 YEARS)

Photograph Dimensions
35mm - 40mm Width

36 mm
32mm

Bottom of chin

PREFERRED

The chin to crown measurement (the vertical black dashed line) is between 32mm and 36 mm and the head fits within the shaded area.

ACCEPTABLE

The infant's head fits within the shaded area.

MINIMUM

The infant's head touches the edges of the shaded area. Head size smaller than this will not be accepted.

INFANT PHOTO REQUIREMENTS

- Look straight at the camera
- No flash reflections on glasses or face
- Plain light background
- No hands in photograph
- Good quality gloss prints only
- No shadows or red eye

Do not cut, crop or trim the photo or staple the photo to the application. If the photograph does not meet the photograph or head size requirements, or fail to comply with the minimum infant threshold, the photograph should be rejected.

The photo requirements the APO is prepared to relax are limited to the head sizes shown below, which are a variation of acceptable infant photographs. The **Preferred** image is the image which is shown on the [Australian Passport Photo Guide 2008](#).

The three images show the acceptable variances in head size.

- as a **Minimum** the infant's head must touch all three sides of the shaded area
- the infant can be shown smiling and/or with mouth open if this **cannot** be avoided

Printing

Image preparation requirements

The photographer

- must **not** crop the image in post production software below the minimum pixels of the required output size (see last point "Image Size" specifications)
- must **not** resize the image in any way that might alter the perspective
- must **not** retouch or alter the image so that subject's appearance has changed, images must reflect a true likeness of the person
- must **not** use "sharpening tool functions" in post production software
- must **not** remove red eye or shadows in post production software. Photographs showing red eye should be taken again. Use appropriate flash mount technology to avoid these issues. It is recommended that the flash is angled slightly down
- must **not** show shadows across the face or behind the head
- must **not** show reflections or shine on the face
- must **not** remove facial moles, freckles or other blemishes from the image
- must save the image as an uncompressed TIF, BMP or PSD file, the image must **not** be saved as a compressed JPG

Image size must be:

- for printing using 300ppi Printers: 35mm x 45mm @ 300dpi or 413pixels x 531pixels
- for printing using 400ppi Printers: 35mm x 45mm @ 400dpi or 551pixels x 709 pixels

Paper types and surfaces

Incorrect paper types and surfaces can cause problems affecting the quality of the image printed in the passport.

Only the following paper types are **acceptable** for printing passport photographs:

- instant photographic standard gloss
- dye sublimation photographic semi gloss (without watermarks)
- silver halide photographic semi gloss (without watermarks)
- Drylab photographic inkjet bases standard gloss (without watermarks)

The following paper types are **not** acceptable:

- inkjet paper
- photocopy paper
- paper with heavy watermarks

The paper surface used must be

- 'semi gloss' photographic paper

The following paper surface types are **not** acceptable:

- lustre surface photographic paper
- matt surface photographic paper
- high gloss surface photographic paper
- inkjet paper
- photocopy paper

Printed image output should only be made on printers with these minimum specifications

- full colour continuous tone printers with a minimum 400ppi print resolution, for example photographic paper silver halide type printers (with laser or similar print engines), dye sublimation printers (using low gloss paper) or other continuous tone printers using a 6 colour process note: ALL Sublimation Dye Printers (built in or external) must be a minimum of 400 ppi
- printed output 8 Bit RGB Colour (for example, 24 Bit Colour)
- paper weight between 180 to 290gsm (standard weight and de-luxe weight silver halide photographic papers are suitable)
- paper surface can be gloss but **not** very high gloss

Do not use

- photographic paper silver halide analogue printers with "digital print attachments" unless they print at a minimum of 400ppi
- inkjet printers (unless they match the above standards using archival photographic paper and Inks)
- colour laser/thermal printers
- dye sublimation printers unless they print at a minimum of 400ppi
- very high gloss, lustre, silk or matt papers
- thermal papers with heavy backing (for example, 350gsm or above)
- water marked papers, with markings on the back of the Photograph