

# A Guide to Selected U.S. Travel and Identity Documents



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This guide has been prepared to assist those tasked with examining travel and employment authorization documents. The guide contains color photographs of the most commonly used documents **but it is not comprehensive**. There are earlier valid revisions of the illustrated documents and other less common documents that are not included.

Because the attachments are reproductions, the exact size and color may deviate from the original. Do not make identifications based on size and/or color alone.

If you have any questions concerning the authenticity of one of those documents, you are encouraged to contact your local INS office.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION CONCERNING ALIEN STATUS**

In accordance with the 14<sup>th</sup> amendment of the U.S. Constitution, any person born in and subject to the jurisdiction of the United States is a citizen of the U.S. at birth. U.S. citizenship may also be acquired through **DERIVATION** from the U.S. citizen parent when children are born abroad or through **NATURALIZATION** after meeting the necessary residency requirements. All persons not citizens or nationals of the U.S. are aliens, which generally are classified as **PERMANENT RESIDENTS** (“Immigrants”), **NON-IMMIGRANTS**, or **UNDOCUMENTED ALIENS**.

**PERMANENT RESIDENT ALIENS** enjoy almost all of the same rights as U.S. citizens. This status may be obtained through a number of different procedures and, unless taken away administratively, is granted for life. Aliens with permanent residency must carry evidence of their status. The INS no longer requires permanent residents to report their address annually.

**NON-IMMIGRANT ALIENS** are admitted to the U.S. for a temporary period of time and for a specific purpose, most often as a tourist. There are different categories of non-immigrants, and they are identified through letter/ number symbols (e.g. B-2). Non-immigrants are also required to present evidence of their lawful status in the U.S. to offices of the INS. This will usually consist of a passport containing a visa and an Arrival/Departure Record (INS Form I-94).

**UNDOCUMENTED ALIENS** are those who may have crossed the border illegally and/or been smuggled into the interior of the U.S., or those who have violated their non-immigrant status by accepting unauthorized employment, remaining longer than permitted, or committing some other violation. Some of these aliens purchase counterfeit documents or assume another person’s identity by using fraudulently obtained genuine documents.

## UNITED STATES PASSPORT

A **UNITED STATES PASSPORT** is a document that is issued by the State Department to persons who have established that they are citizens of the United States by birth, naturalization, or derivation of citizenship. The primary purpose of the passport is to facilitate travel to foreign countries by establishing U.S. citizenship and acting as a vehicle to display any appropriate visas and/or entry/exit stamps that may be necessary.

Passports are also very reliable documents which may be used within the United States to establish citizenship, identity, and employment authorization.



**NOTE:** There are approximately fifteen different versions of the U.S. passport that are presently valid and vary from the 1998 version illustrated above

The **RESIDENT ALIEN CARD**, Form I-551, was introduced in January 1977 and phased in over a period of time. In addition to the photograph, the I-551 contains the bearer's signature and fingerprint.



Form I-551





The **EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION CARD**, Form I-688A, is the first card issued to aliens who qualified under the “Amnesty Program” of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. It was produced with a Polaroid identification camera and covered with a special secure plastic laminate. The expiration date is found on the front of the card while the authorized use is explained on the reverse of the card.



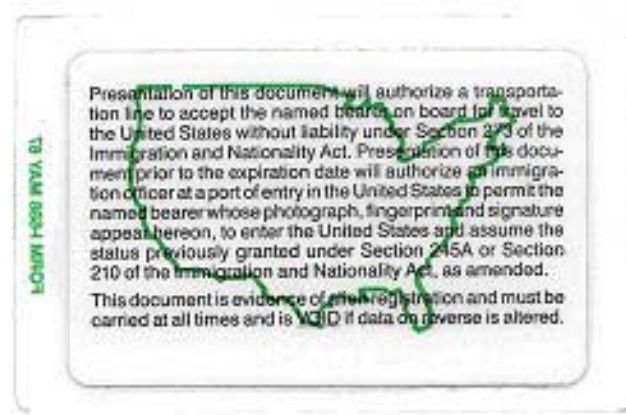
Form I-688A

The expiration date may be extended by placing a small sticker on the reverse side. There are two different types of extension stickers which have been used. One extends the expiration date for 90 days and the other for 1 year. Multiple stickers may be used for further extensions.





The **TEMPORARY RESIDENT CARD**, Form I-688, is the second document issued to aliens who further qualify under the “Amnesty Program”. It is produced in the same manner as the I-688A and contains the same security features. The text statement on the reverse side is different and explains the additional privileges granted to the bearer.



Form I-688

The I-688 may be extended by placing a sticker on the reverse. Again, multiple stickers may be used for further extensions.

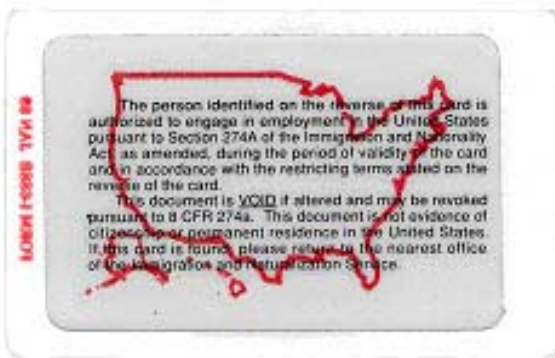
I-688 VALIDITY EXTENDED ONE YEAR FROM DATE OF EXPIRATION

Once the bearer becomes a permanent resident, a larger sticker is placed on the reverse which explains the new status of the bearer. With this endorsement, the bearer has the same privileges as a permanent resident.

00054608

Temporary evidence of lawful admission for permanent residence and employment authorization. Valid for 1 year from the expiration date on the reverse of this I-688. Valid for travel outside the United States if the named bearer has not abandoned his or her residence and is returning after a temporary absence abroad not exceeding one year. Presentation of a valid document will authorize a transportation line to accept the named bearer on board for travel to the United States without liability under section 273 of the Immigration and Nationality Act. This card is void if altered and must be carried at all times. Form I-688-E

This **EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION DOCUMENT**, Form I-688B, is issued to aliens who are not permanent residents but have been granted permission to be employed in the U.S. for a specific period of time. The card was produced originally with a Polaroid process similar to the I-688 and I-688A, but has the added feature of interlocking gold lines across the front.



Form I-688B

In May 1995, some INS offices began issuing a modified I-688B. The most significant change was to the card stock which was changed from a Polaroid process to a synthetic material called Teslin on which the biometric and biographic data of the bearer was printed. Note that, on this version, the bearer's name is printed on two lines.



Form I-688B (May 1995)

In August 1995, changes were made to the software which prints the I-688Bs and the name reverted to the one line format similar to that of the original card.



Form I-688B (August 1995)

In January 1997, INS began issuing a new **Employment Authorization Document**, Form I-766. The new card is a credit card type of document. The front of the card contains a photo, fingerprint, and signature of the rightful holder. The reverse contains a standard bar code, magnetic strip, and a two-dimensional bar code which will contain unique card, biographic, and biometric data.



Form I-766 (January 1997)



June 1, 2004

# Press Release

## USCIS INTRODUCES NEW EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION DOCUMENT WITH ENHANCED SECURITY FEATURES

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is now issuing a new version of the Employment Authorization Document (EAD) or Form I-766. The EAD serves as proof to employers that an individual is authorized to work in the United States. The new card is designed with numerous security features to prevent counterfeiting and fraud. The card includes a magnetic strip, a two-dimensional barcode, and several features that can be used in forensic examination to determine the card's authenticity.

“USCIS is continuously looking for new ways to enhance national security to maintain the integrity of the immigration system,” said Eduardo Aguirre, Director of USCIS. “Including these new security features into one of the most widely used immigration document allows USCIS to make sure the right applicant receives our country’s benefits.”

The new EAD eliminates all references to the former Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and includes only markings that identify it as a Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and USCIS document. On March 1, 2003 USCIS became one of the three former INS components to join DHS. USCIS is charged with fundamentally transforming and improving the delivery of immigration and citizenship services.

An EAD is normally valid for up to one year, although there are some cases in which a longer validity period is authorized. An EAD is typically produced and mailed within three days after an individual’s application for benefits is processed and approved. The current production rate of the EAD is about 24,000 per week.

-USCIS-





When an alien has been granted admission into the U.S. by an Immigration Inspector at an authorized Port of Entry, he/she will be issued an **ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE RECORD**, Form I-94, the bottom portion of which is stapled to a page in the Alien's passport. This document explains how long the bearer may remain in the U.S. and the terms of admission.

Departure Number  
**742831632 01** U.S. IMMIGRATION  
 225 WMS 127

Immigration and  
 Naturalization Service  
 I-94  
 Departure Record

**SEP 13 1991**  
 ADMITTANCE B-2  
 UNTIL MARCH 16, 1992 EXPIRES

1. Family Name  
DOE

2. First Name  
JOHN

3. Country of Citizenship  
ENGLAND

10. Birth Date (DD/M/YY)  
01/01/91

See Other Side **STAPLE HERE**

**Warning** - A nonimmigrant who accepts unauthorized employment is subject to deportation.  
**Important** - Keep this permit in your possession; you must surrender it when you leave the U.S. Failure to do so may delay your entry into the U.S. in the future. You are authorized to stay in the U.S. only until the date written on this form. To remain past this date, without permission from immigration authorities, is a violation of the law.

**Surrender this permit when you leave the U.S.:**  
 - By sea or air, to the transportation line;  
 - Across the Canadian border, to a Canadian Official;  
 - Across the Mexican border, to a U.S. Official.

Students planning to reenter the U.S. within 30 days to return to the same school, see "Arrival/Departure" on page 2 of Form I-20 prior to surrendering this permit.

**Record of Changes**

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Pass: \_\_\_\_\_ Departure Record  
 Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Carrier: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Flight #/Ship Name: \_\_\_\_\_

For sale to the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office  
 Washington, D.C. 20402

Form I-94

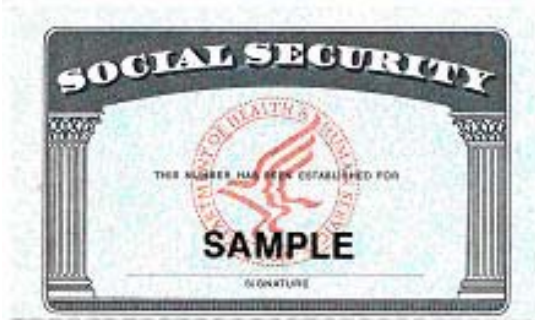


## SOCIAL SECURITY CARDS

Although **SOCIAL SECURITY CARDS** are not immigration documents, they are mentioned here because they are often used as identification and to establish employment authorization.

Social Security cards have been issued since 1936 and have been revised more than 20 times. Originally, the seal on the social security card read Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. In May 1980, it was changed to the Department of Health and Human Services. In April of 1995, it was changed again to read Social Security Administration. Some counterfeiters have failed to notice these changes.

In October of 1983, security features were added to the card. All social security cards issued since October 1983 have been printed on raised (intaglio) printing and the signature line consists of microline printing of the words "SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION" in a repeating pattern.



Do not laminate this card.

This card is invalid if not signed by the number holder unless health or age prevents signature.

Improper use of this card and/or number by the number holder or any other person is punishable by fine, imprisonment or both.

This card is the property of the Social Security Administration and must be returned upon request. If found, return to:

SSA-ATTN: FOUND SSN CARD  
P.O. Box 17067 Baltimore Md. 21203

Contact your local Social Security office for any other matter regarding this card.

Department of Health and Human Services  
Social Security Administration  
Form O.A.-702 (1-88)

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