

THE

NATIONAL

ARCHIVES



HM Passport  
Office

# Reproduction of the British passport

# Contents

1. Introduction .....	3
2. Background .....	3
2.1 Crown copyright.....	3
2.2 The Royal Arms.....	3
2.3 Official documents.....	3
3. Reproducing the passport.....	4
3.1 Definition of copying.....	4
3.2 Record keeping.....	4
3.3 Restrictions on reproduction .....	5
3.4 Sale of passports.....	5
4. Use of passports in film, television and theatre.....	5
4.1 Introduction.....	5
4.2 Imitation passports produced by a third party.....	6
5. Contact details.....	6

# 1. Introduction

The purpose of this guidance is to describe the circumstances in which the British Passport may be:

- copied (including paper photocopies and electronic scans)
- used in television or theatre productions.

This guidance, authorised by The National Archives (TNA), has been produced in consultation and has been approved by the Lord Chamberlain's Office and His Majesty's Passport Office (HM Passport Office).

## 2. Background

### 2.1 Crown copyright

The British passport (the passport) is subject to Crown copyright protection under section 163 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. This means that no part of it may be lawfully reproduced without the prior permission of The Keeper of Public Records, an official who, as King's Printer and King's Printer for Scotland, manages Crown copyright on behalf of His Majesty The King under Letters Patent. Crown copyright is administered on behalf of The Keeper of Public Records by TNA.

### 2.2 The Royal Arms

The front cover of the passport contains an image of the Royal Arms. The Royal Arms are the personal property of His Majesty The King and may be used for official purposes by the Monarch and members of the Royal Family, by His Majesty's Government and its departments, His Majesty's Armed Forces, and by Royal Warrant Holders only.

TNA must approve any request to show the cover of a passport bearing the Royal Arms, this includes in film, television or theatre productions. Use of the Royal Arms without permission is a breach of Crown copyright which is a criminal offence.

### 2.3 Official documents

Passports are official documents issued by HM Passport Office. UK variant passports are also issued by passport offices in the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man and British Overseas Territories.

Failure to ensure the security of these documents can lead to:

- fraudulent use including the opening of bank accounts, obtaining of credit cards, loans, state benefits and duplicate documents, such as passports and driving licences
- stolen 'identities', creating difficulties in obtaining loans, credit cards or mortgages.

### **3. Reproducing the passport**

#### **3.1 Definition of copying**

For the purposes of this guidance, the term copying includes:

- photocopying
- scanning
- filming
- reproduction in any other medium, including the placing of material on the internet.

#### **3.2 Record keeping**

A passport contains the personal details of the passport holder. HM Passport Office advises that:

- passport holders should record or photocopy the information of the personal details page, keeping it secure and separate from the passport. This will help HM Passport Office to process an application for a replacement passport if the current passport is lost or is stolen
- only the original document may be used as evidence of identity, but a photocopy may be made to record the fact that identification checks have taken place. It is for organisations to ensure that they comply with requirements under legislation, and the information in this document does not seek to interpret legal requirements on the taking of copies of passports
- notarised or certified photocopies of passports are not acceptable as proof of identity
- passport holders should only agree to the reproduction of the personal details page in the passport if they are satisfied that the person, or organisation, will hold this securely
- unless there is a legal requirement, the organisations which are required to retain a reproduction of the personal details in the passport, must first obtain the consent of the individual
- organisations should retain a record of the consent and should store the passport details securely

- photocopies of the personal details page of the passport may be made, for the purposes of record keeping only, by the following persons:
  - ✓ the holder of the passport
  - ✓ notaries, solicitors, banks and government departments
  - ✓ a person or institution subject to the requirements of the Money Laundering Regulations
  - ✓ a person certifying that identification checks required under these Money Laundering Regulations have taken place
- where copies of the bio-data, observations or visa pages are required, copies may be taken in either black and white or colour, and may be held electronically or in paper format. The person or organisation taking the image must ensure that it complies with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) within the EEA when holding personal information. Please note this won't apply outside of the EEA.

### **3.3 Restrictions on reproduction**

The image of the cover of the passport, including the Royal Arms, or any of the inside pages of the passport may not be used:

- as the main focus of the cover of a work, for example, the dust jacket or cover of a publication, or as a passport wallet
- in advertising
- in facsimile form for use as a passport holder or cover.

### **3.4 Sale of passports**

Passports remain the property of HM Government and they may not be sold by the person named in the passport, or any other person.

Expired or cancelled passports are returned to the holder. If the old passport is not required, HM Passport Office advises the secure disposal of the passport in order to protect the holder's identity.

## **4. Use of passports in film, television and theatre**

### **4.1 Introduction**

HM Passport Office cannot produce a British passport (current or historic design) for production companies for use as a prop in film, theatre or television.

Production companies may choose to produce a British passport prop (imitation) for use in film, theatre or television. Companies which provide imitation British passports (historic, present or future) must ensure the imitation is amended in such a way that it cannot be mistaken for an official document.

Any imitation passport design must be submitted via email to both TNA and HM Passport Office to authorise its design.

#### **4.2 Imitation passports produced by a third party**

Companies who design and submit imitation passports to TNA and HM Passport Office for approval must make sure that their design conforms to the following guidelines:

- the visa pages are significantly different from the official HM Passport Office version
- the personal details page (which includes the holder's name and photo) must have a number of differences from a genuine passport, including using a different design and different fonts
- the reproduction document must not include any security features used in a genuine passport such as watermarks, embedded security fibres, holograms or UV features
- any passport number created must comprise of eight digits or less
- any image of the Royal Arms is significantly different to the official Royal Arms shown on a British passport
- the passport should not knowingly contain the personal details of any living individual, such as a name and date of birth, without their prior consent.

HM Passport Office cannot grant usage permissions for any overseas passports, passport stamps or visas. Permissions for reproduction of these should be obtained from the relevant overseas authorities.

### **5. Contact details**

The National Archives: [psi@nationalarchives.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gov.uk)

HM Passport Office: [passportprops@hmpo.gov.uk](mailto:passportprops@hmpo.gov.uk)