Biometric Passports

Introduction

E-Passport readers public viewing policy

Right to view

Right to view by IPS staff

Foreign (non-GBR) biometric passport holders

Contingency procedures

Annex A – Biometric passports questions and answers

Introduction

The first e-passport was issued by our central production facility on the 6th March 2006. These e-passports introduced a new design with additional security features, including a chip with the holder’s facial biometric. The passport showed the personal details at the back page with the chip and antenna visible on observation page. They were introduced gradually throughout 2006. This mirrored the introduction of e-passports in over 40 other countries and ensured the UK remained within the US visa waiver scheme.

From 4 October 2010 IPS will start to issue a new style, e-passport (version 2), to UK nationals. The personal details page (which includes the photograph) and the observations page have been moved to the front. The electronic chip, which includes the same information as printed on the personal data page, is in the back cover.

E-Passport readers public viewing policy

E-passport readers are installed in all Identity and Passport Service (IPS) public counters to enable e-passport holders to view the information contained within the electronic microchip (chip) in their passports.

In addition, holders of both version 1 e-passports and the new version 2 e-passports will be able to use the passport readers. Customers wanting to view their new, version 2, e-passport may need some assistance until the existing e-passport readers are updated with information on how to read these type of passports.

The provisions of this service are required to meet International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) recommendations.
This service is available to casual callers. It is a stand alone self service facility available to anyone in possession of a United Kingdom (GBR) e-passport or United Kingdom new style e-passport (version 2).

Members of the public making such requests should be directed to the reader kiosk in the public area of the IPS counter.

There will be no charge for this service.

**Right to view**

This service is available to anyone who possesses a United Kingdom (GBR) Biometric Passport.

**Right to view by IPS staff**

Staff wishing to view the microchip in their own or family and friends' United Kingdom (GBR) biometric passports should ensure that this is done in their own time (i.e. tea breaks and lunch breaks, etc.). Line Managers will be responsible for ensuring that staff adheres to the guidance. Any staff member not adhering to these procedures or seen to be misusing the equipment will be dealt with under IPS Disciplinary Procedures.

**Foreign (non-GBR) biometric passport holders**

IPS Biometric Passport Readers are not configured to read any details in foreign passports.

**Contingency procedures**

A contingency reader service will be made available through the utilisation of a back up service offered at the appropriately indicated counter, should the self service reader fail to function due to a system/power failure, and the self service facility has to be suspended awaiting the attention of an engineer.

Should the reader fail to read the chip in the passport initially, the customer should contact the reception/enquiry desk for further advice/instruction. Reception/enquiry should assist or advise the customer to call the IPS Adviceline so that an appointment can be made (if travelling urgently). See next question for non-urgent travel.

Customers who are not travelling urgently should be advised to return the passport with the faulty chip to the issuing office together with a letter detailing the circumstances as to how the fault was discovered. Please see Faulty Passports for further information.

It will be the responsibility of the regional counter manager (or delegated individual) to ensure that the Adviceline/Customer Enquiry Centre (CEC) are
informed of the suspension/return of this service should both of the above facilities be unavailable.

Kiosk faults will be escalated to the supplier via regional system teams.

See also Faulty Passports, Cancellation of Passports and Damaged Passports.

Annex A - Biometric passports questions and answers

Q: What if the kiosk facility fails to read the chip in the passport?
A: The customer should be advised to re-try and ensure that they clearly follow the on-screen guidance.

Q: What if I am advised by someone other than IPS (Immigration Officers at border control) that my chip has failed to read?
A: Customers should be instructed to call into a regional office to have the chip re-checked in the unlikely event of the chip failing to read. (This may be due to a faulty reader which may have given the wrong reading.)

Q: What if the chip still fails to read after it has been re-read / re-checked?
A: If failure to read the chip continues then the customer should follow the on-screen message which advises the customer to either proceed to the IPS reception/enquiries desk for advice/instruction or call the IPS Adviseline. Customers who not travelling urgently should be advised to return the passport with the faulty chip to the issuing office together with a letter detailing the circumstances as to how the fault was discovered.

Q: My chip has failed to read and I need to travel urgently. What do I do?
A: The passport holder should be advised to make a Premium Service appointment by calling the Adviseline Tel: 0300 222 0000 (this can be made at any office). They will also need to submit a fully completed application form, 2 recent photographs, the passport that contains the faulty chip, the relevant fee (including the Premium Service fee) and a statement detailing the problem, the circumstances surrounding how they discovered the problem and any other relevant information. The fee for both the replacement passport and the Premium Service will apply to all applications made in the above circumstances.

Q: Do I need to have the application form countersigned?
A: IPS staff may accept a completed form that has not been countersigned if the biometric passport or new style e-passport was issued in the United Kingdom, as records of all e-passports issued in the United Kingdom will be available to confirm identity and nationality. A fully countersigned form will be required if the e-passport was issued abroad.

Q: When will I be notified of the outcome of IPS investigations?

A: You will be informed of the outcome of the investigations by letter once the chip has been examined and the correct diagnosis of any potential fault has been found.

Q: Can I read the chip in the passport if I hold a foreign national biometric passport?

A: No, IPS e-Passport Readers are not configured to read any details in foreign passports.