

# PASSPORTS - PHOTOGRAPH GUIDELINES

## Notes to accompany *Australian Passport Photo Guide 2008*

The following notes draw on International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) standards for photographs to be included in machine-readable travel documents such as passports. The notes are designed to be read in conjunction with the *Australian Passport Photo Guide 2008* and the pamphlet, *Passports: Photograph Guidelines*, issued by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in April 2008.

The *Australian Passport Photo Guide 2008* supersedes the *Australian Passport Photo Guide - July 2005*, copies of which should now be destroyed.

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. It is important that photos are submitted to ICAO standards for security reasons.

### Photograph requirements

The photograph must be taken no more than six months before lodgement of a passport application form. It must be 45-50 mm in height and 35-40 mm in width.

It must 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.

In addition, the photograph must:

- be centred, clear and in sharp focus with no shadows;
- be of high quality, with no ink marks or creases;
- be of high resolution; and
- have appropriate brightness and contrast that show skin tones naturally.

If taken with a digital camera, the photograph must be of a high quality and resolution (no pixelised images) and printed on photo-quality paper (see Attachment A).

### 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
- sublimation dye photographic standard gloss
- RA4 silver halide photographic standard gloss.

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

- inkjet paper
- photocopy paper
- paper with heavy watermarks (light watermarks are acceptable).

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.

### **Expression and frame**

The photograph must show the applicant alone, with no other person or object (including toys or furniture) visible. The applicant must be looking directly at the camera with:

- a neutral expression
- the mouth closed.

### **Style and lighting**

The photograph must show the applicant facing the camera and not looking over one shoulder (for example in portrait style photographs). The head should be upright such that an imaginary line drawn between the centres of the eyes is parallel to the top edge of the picture. The photograph must show the applicant with eyes open and clearly visible and without hair obscuring any part of the eyes. Both edges of the face must be clearly visible.

The photograph must be taken with uniform lighting, with:

- no shadows across the face or behind the head
- no reflections on the face
- no red eye.

Note: **DO NOT** remove red eye in post production software. These photographs should be taken again. Photographers should use an appropriate flash mount above the lens, via a hot shoe mount. The flash must be angled slightly down.

### **Photograph background**

A uniform, light-coloured or white background must be used to provide a contrast to the face and hair. Recommended background colours are light blue, cream, beige, pale grey or white.

### **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 should be avoided if possible; and
- lighter framed glasses are preferable.

## **Facial ornaments**

Facial ornaments such as nose rings and studs are acceptable provided they are worn permanently by the applicant and 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 under three years of age**

See Attachment B for more information.

## **Attachment A**

# **AUSTRALIAN DIGITAL PASSPORT PHOTO STANDARDS & REQUIREMENTS - A GUIDE TO INDUSTRY**

The information below contains guidelines for taking digital and SLR passport photographs. Passport photography outlets should also refer to the Passport photographs poster dated 1 July 2005 and the passports website ([www.passports.gov.au](http://www.passports.gov.au)) for further guidelines. To ensure passport photographs are accepted at enrolment, you must adhere to the following guidelines.

## **IMAGE CAPTURE REQUIREMENTS**

### **Digital Camera Resolution**

- Digital camera resolution must be at least 7 Mega pixels (preferably higher).

Low resolution cameras (less than 3.2 mega pixels) cannot create an image suitable for biometric scanning. Pixels may be noticeable (and can be checked under a loupe) at the printed output size and the image would therefore be unacceptable.

Instant and conventional cameras are acceptable, providing they are modified to meet the above guidelines.

### **Camera Optical Lens and Setting Requirements**

- 35mm SLR cameras (the camera's image capture chip must replicate 35mm film plain image capture dimensions) with a fixed Optical Focal Length Lens (or variable lens locked into position) between 90 to 130mm (35mm film camera equivalent) must be used as a wider angle or telephoto view will result in a distorted facial image.
- Distance between lens and subject (approx. 1.2 metre) should be suitable to achieve an image of proper head size, with correct perspective and without distortion.
- Digital Zoom technology must not be used.
- Sharpening functions within the camera software must be turned off.
- Front flash must always be used. Ambient room lighting alone is not suitable.
- The image must be created 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.

## **IMAGE PREPARATION REQUIREMENTS**

- Image must not be cropped in post production software below the minimum pixels of the required output size (see last point “Image Size” specifications).
- Do not resize image in any way that might alter image perspective.
- Images must not be retouched or altered so that subject’s appearance has changed. Images must reflect a true likeness of the person.
- Do not use “sharpening tool functions” in post production software.
- Do not remove red eye or shadows in post production software. Use appropriate flash mount technology to avoid these issues. The flash must be angled slightly down.
- Do not remove facial moles, freckles or other blemishes from the image.
- The final saved image must be uncompressed and saved as a 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.

## **OUTPUT & PRINTING REQUIREMENTS**

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

- Full colour continuous tone printers with a minimum 300ppi 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;
- 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); and
- 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 300ppi.
- Inkjet printers (unless they match the above standards using archival photographic paper and inks).
- Colour laser printers.
- Very high gloss, lustre, silk or matt papers.
- Thermal papers with heavy backing (for example, 350gsm or above).

It is important that passport operators follow these guidelines and do not alter images.

## Attachment B

### INFANTS UNDER THREE YEARS OF AGE

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

The photo requirements the APO is prepared to relax are limited to the head sizes shown below, which are a variation of acceptable infant photos. The **Preferred** image is the image which is shown on the *Australian Passport Photo Guide 2008*. The two images on the right show the variances in head size that will be accepted. As a **Minimum** the infant's head must touch all three sides of the shaded area.

**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 infants 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 infant can be shown smiling and/or with mouth open if this cannot be avoided. The requirement for the infant to be looking directly at the camera remains.

All other requirements remain for photographs of infants. In particular, care should be taken to ensure that:

- the print is of good quality, with no ink marks or creases and no shadows across the face or behind the head;
- there is no reflection on the face or glasses, if worn;
- the background is plain and light-coloured; and
- the photograph shows both edges of the infant's face clearly (no toys, blankets, chair backs or other people visible) and with no hair across the eyes.