

## New U.S. Passport Rule

In some twelve days, the much discussed U.S. passport rule will become official.

That means that Caribbean and other Americans and legal residents returning to the U.S. from travel in the Caribbean, as well as Bermuda, Mexico and Canada, will be required to show a passport or other valid travel documents before being allowed back in to the country. This will apply to all persons, whether they are returning by land, air or sea.

The Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative, which has been introduced in phases since last 2005, will now take full effect on June 1.

The U.S. State Department is warning all to make sure they have a U.S. Passport Book, U.S. Passport Card, or other document approved by the Department of Homeland Security. These include the Trusted Traveler Cards (NEXUS, SENTRI, or FAST); a State Issued Enhanced Driver's License (when available); Enhanced Tribal Cards (when available); U.S. Military Identification with Military Travel Orders; U.S. Merchant Mariner Document when traveling in conjunction with official maritime business; Native American Tribal Photo Identification Card and Form I-872 American Indian Card.

U.S. citizens who do not have a single document verifying identity and citizenship must present both an identification and citizenship document; for example, a driver's license and a copy of a birth certificate or naturalization certificate.

U.S. citizen children under the age of 16 will be able to present the original or copy of their birth certificate, or other proof of U.S. citizenship such as a naturalization certificate or citizenship card.

Groups of U.S. citizen children ages 16 through 18, when traveling with a school or religious group, social organization, or sports team, will be able to enter under adult supervision with originals or copies of their birth certificates or other proof of citizenship.

Green card holders will be required to present their green card and valid passport from their country of birth. To apply for a U.S. passport log on to: [http://travel.state.gov/passport/get/first/first\\_830.html](http://travel.state.gov/passport/get/first/first_830.html)

The Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative is a result of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004, requiring all travelers to present a passport or other document that denotes identity and citizenship when entering the United States.