

## Get Ready To Shell Out More For A U.S. Passport

July 2, 2010: Americans who have yet to apply for a U.S. passport had better hurry up and do so. The U.S. State Department intends to raise the fees for new passports from \$100 to \$135 beginning July 13th.

Nationals and naturalized residents under 16 will pay \$105, up from \$85. The State Department says the higher fees stem from a study of how much it costs the Bureau of Consular Affairs to provide services. And it added that the new fee scale will cover actual operating expenses for the 301 overseas consular posts, 23 domestic passport agencies and other centers that provide these consular services to U.S. and foreign citizens.

Passport cards, which can be used by Americans traveling by land or sea on trips to the non-U.S. parts of the Caribbean, Canada and Mexico will also cost more. The card will now cost \$55 for an adult, up from \$45 and \$40 for a minor, up from \$35.

Those frequent travelers seeking to add more pages to an existing passport for visas and stamps by immigration officers will also be hit by a new charge of \$82.

Under U.S. travel rules, Americans seeking to re-enter the U.S. from travel abroad must have a valid passport.

Meanwhile, immigrants seeking visas to enter the U.S. will also be hit by an increase in charges. Employment based visas will increase from \$355 to a whopping \$720 and those looking to pick up their diversity visas will have to pay a \$440 surcharge, up from \$375.

A non-immigrant visa or a visitor's visa will now cost \$140 while an E or treaty investor visa has been increased to \$390, up from a mere \$131. K visa recipients or those with fiancé (e) visas, will also have to shell out a whopping \$350, up from \$131.

Those in the H, L, O, P and R categories will see their fees increase from \$131 to \$150. H, O and L visas are for mainly skilled migrants allowed to work in the U.S. while P visas are for athletes and sports men and women and R visas are for religious workers.

Interestingly, family based visa rates have been lowered, down from \$355 to \$330. - CaribWorldNews