



Release at Will

How to Safeguard your Passport

Each year more than 300,000 passports are reported lost or stolen by U.S. citizens, according to State Department statistics. The [US Travel Insurance Association](#) advises that, if a client loses his or her passport, the assistance services that are included with most travel insurance policies can help clients in several ways.

- If the client is traveling, the assistance service can help locate the nearest embassy or consulate, as well as help provide necessary paperwork. Often, it's possible to receive a new passport within 24 hours.
- If the client has forgotten his or her passport at home, the assistance service can help make arrangements to get it to the client.
- In cases where a passport has been lost or stolen, some travel insurance policies may also offer protection against identity theft.

USTiA notes that the 24-hour hotline services provide travel agents with the peace of mind of knowing that their clients can get help any time of the day or night and anywhere in the world. Other assistance services available with a single phone call include legal and medical referrals, plus help tracing lost luggage and changing travel reservations in case of emergencies.

USTiA additionally offers these helpful hints for clients in case a passport is lost or stolen.

- Before leaving home, the U.S. State Department suggests that you make photocopies of your passport's face page, bring one with you and leave one with a friend at home. Also consider scanning your passport and emailing it to yourself, and/or scanning a copy of your passport to an encrypted thumb drive that you can carry with you.
- Pack an extra set of passport photos to help expedite replacement in case of loss.
- Use the hotel safe to store passport and other important documents.
- Do not leave any documents out in a hotel room or on the dresser.
- Consider specially designed outerwear such as a vest with an inside zipped pocket if you plan to take your passport with you while exploring the town.
- Report the loss to your hotel and to local police immediately.

These and other helpful travel hints on travel security, safety, and health are available at www.trip.ustia.org. Sponsored by UStiA, TRIP stands for, “Travel Responsibly, Informed, and Protected.” The site is an insider’s guide to travel tips, featuring more than 130 useful articles, all searchable by keyword.

About UStiA

UStiA promotes fairness, integrity and a commitment to excellence in the travel insurance industry. With a mission to educate the public on travel insurance while maintaining high industry standards, UStiA is a non-profit association of insurance carriers and allied businesses involved in the development, administration and marketing of travel insurance and assistance services. Travel insurance is commissionable to travel agents.

For more information and a listing of UStiA members, visit www.ustia.org. Videos explaining travel insurance and medical evacuation are available by visiting the [UStiA YouTube channel](#) or by keying in *ustravelinsurance* on YouTube.

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