

How to obtain a PASSPORT:

1. Go to this link to the U.S. Department of State Travel web page http://travel.state.gov/passport_services.html
2. Read all pertinent information under the "Passport Services" section and print the appropriate passport application from the web.
3. Read the appropriate section under the "How to..." section. If you are applying for the first time, pay special attention to the birth certificate requirements. If you need to get a proper copy of your birth certificate, **DO IT NOW**. If you send in the wrong documentation, the processing center will send your application back to you, so it will be best to do it right the first time.
4. You can get passport photos at Kinkos or Costco much cheaper than at the Post Office. Do that ahead of time. It is suggested that you get an extra pair of passport photos while you are at it. Carry them in your suitcase just in case you lose your passport.
5. Take the required information, documents, etc., (and \$\$\$--check the fee schedule) to the Main Billings Post Office at 481 S. 27th Street. The passport office is down the hall past the service counters. It is open M-F 8:30 to 4:30. (4:30 is CLOSING TIME, so if your paperwork cannot be completed by then, they may not even start to process you. Advice: show up before 4:00.)
6. The Passport Clerk will take your application, birth certificate, and photos and send them to the passport processing office (probably on the east coast). You will get the birth certificate back when they send you your passport.
7. Allow the full time for your passport to be issued. If you are lucky, it will be sent to you sooner. If you are in a time bind, you can pay extra fees to expedite the process. If you are REALLY pinched for time, there are private companies that charge big bucks to insure speedy processing.
8. When you get your passport, check it over carefully to make sure all information is correct. Then sign it and make several photocopies of the page that has your picture, signature and passport number on it. Put at least one copy in a safe deposit box or other safe storage place. When traveling abroad with your passport, put at least one photocopy in your suitcase or other place where you will not be keeping your passport.