

If you're flying out of the country anytime soon, you must pack one important thing: your passport.

A new law says anyone who travels to Canada, Mexico, or the Caribbean now has to show a passport to get back into the United States.

Laura Begley, deputy editor of Travel and Leisure magazine, taught "Passport 101" on ***The Early Show*** Thursday:

Who needs a passport and what's required to get one? Every international air traveler to/from the U.S. will need a passport - children included. And all US citizens traveling internationally-- including Canada, Mexico, Central and South America, the Caribbean, and Bermuda--will need one. (If you are going to the USVI or Puerto Rico, you don't need a passport.) Visit <http://travel.state.gov> for passport applications, a breakdown of required documents and fees, and locations of passport acceptance facilities. You can download an application from the State Department web site ([travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov)) or pick one up at many post offices, libraries, and local government offices. Get two identical 2X2 passport photos. Take the photos, application, payment, and a birth certificate or naturalization papers to any of 7,000 passport acceptance facilities. The application will be processed and mailed to you in four and six weeks.

If you've already made travel plans for the next few weeks is there a way to get a passport immediately? There are companies that provide expedited passports for a fee -- some within a few days. For example, Passport Plus can get you passport the next day ([passportplus.net](http://passportplus.net)) for a fee of \$175, on top of the \$157 government fee. (Note: Applications for a first time passport must be witnessed and sealed by an authorized passport acceptance agent at a post office or county clerk's office before Passport Plus can submit your paperwork to the US Passport Office for processing.) You must be able to provide proof of travel within the next 14 days. The government also offers expedited service of about two to three weeks for an additional fee of \$60 and you must have proof of departure date. One tip: even if you don't plan to travel overseas, apply for a passport for and your children anyway so that a last-minute opportunity to travel out of the country doesn't have to be cancelled. Apply now for a passport for everyone in your family.