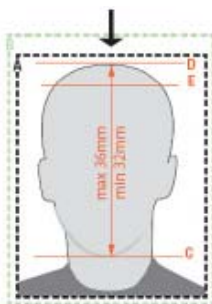


Guidelines for Photographers on producing photographs suitable for Irish Passports

From 16 October the Passport Office will begin issuing the new Irish electronic passport (ePassport). The introduction of the ePassport is a further demonstration of the Government's commitment to the safety and security of Irish travellers. Under the US Visa Waiver Scheme participating countries, including Ireland, are required to ensure that all passports issued on the 26th October 2006 and thereafter are ePassports. Previously issued passports can be used for worldwide travel until they expire.

In order to generate the digital facial image for the microchip it is essential that the photographs submitted with the application meet the Passport Office photo guidelines. These guidelines are based on internationally accepted standards and are included with the new application form.

Size



The photographs should be 45-50mm in height and 35-38mm in width. They should show a close up of the face and the top of the shoulders so that the length of head measures 32mm-36mm and takes up 70%-80% of the frame. The length of head is the distance between the base of the chin and the crown (top of head through the hair). This can be checked using the template provided to photographers.

Pose

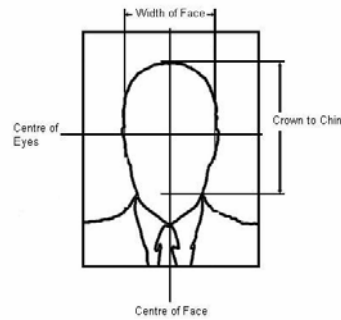
A frontal pose looking directly at the camera and showing full face must be used. Rotation or tilting of the head either in an up/down or left/right direction must be avoided. The mid points of the mouth and the bridge of the nose should lie on an imaginary vertical line in the centre of the image.

Expression

The expression should be neutral with both eyes open and mouth closed. There should be no hair covering the eyes. Contrived expressions such as raised eyebrows, squinting or frowning are not acceptable.

Position of eyes

The centre of the eyes should lie between imaginary horizontal lines located at 50% and 70% from the bottom of the photograph. In the case of children under the age of 11 the eyes should be between 40% and 70%.



Background

The background must be plain white, cream or light grey with a plain smooth surface. There should be a marked contrast between the facial features and the background of the photographs. There should be no shadows visible on the background.

Shadows

The region of the face, from the crown to the base of the chin, and from ear-to-ear, must be clearly visible and free of shadows. Special care must be taken where scarves or headdresses cannot be removed for religious reasons. In all other cases head coverings must be absent. There should be no shadows in the eye sockets. The iris and pupil of the eye should be clearly visible.

Hot Spots

Care must be taken to avoid 'hot spots'. These artefacts are typically caused when one, high intensity, focussed light source is used for illumination. Instead, diffused lighting, multiple balanced sources or other lighting methods should be used.

Eyeglasses

There should be no lighting artefacts on eyeglasses. This can typically be achieved by increasing the angle between the lighting, subject and camera to 45 degrees or more. If lighting reflections cannot be removed then the glasses themselves should be removed. The glass on light reflective glasses must be clear.

Lighting and Focus

The photograph must be in sharp focus and correctly exposed. There should be no shadows or glare on the image or background. The photograph must have a good colour balance and natural flesh tones, and no 'Red Eye'.

Over and Underexposure

A proper exposure level must be set for each individual's face. For each patch of skin on the person's face, the gradation in textures must be clearly visible.

Unnatural Colour

Unnaturally colour lighting, yellow, red, etc is not allowed. Care must be taken to correct the 'white balance' of image capture devices. The lighting must produce a face image with natural looking flesh tones when viewed in typical examination environments. Greyscale (black & white) photographs should be produced from common incandescent light sources. Colour photograph should use colour-balancing techniques such as using high-colour temperature flash with standard film or tungsten-balanced film with incandescent lighting.

Greyscale Density

A process that overexposes or under-develops a greyscale image is not allowed. The full greyscale spectrum must be represented on the face where appropriate, e.g. dark features must be clearly dark and white of eyes should be clearly white.

Infants

Infants or very small children who are unable to support themselves should be photographed lying down. Hands, arms, etc. used to support the child should not be visible.

Persons with Disabilities

Exceptions to some of the above can be made for persons with disabilities. If in any doubt please contact the Passport Office for advice.