



Customer Identification Requirements

Chapter Summary: This chapter contains information about when customers need to present identification, and what kind of identification is acceptable.

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Policy

When identification is required

Customers must present identification when:

- Exchanging, refunding or reprinting Amtrak travel documents
- When purchasing documents with a stored eVoucher or Transportation Credit
- Pass Riders (active or retired)
- Storing baggage at stations (parcel check)
- Checking baggage (including firearms)
- Sending Amtrak Express shipments
- On trains, when asked for it by train crewmembers, other Amtrak or operating railroad employees, or the Amtrak police
- Asked for it at any time by law enforcement officers
- Traveling into Canada
- Guardian purchasing an unaccompanied minor travel documents or signing the NRPC 770
- A credit card is presented that is not signed or asks the agent to request identification from the customer.

Acceptable identification: basic policy

The following are deemed acceptable identification for persons who appear to be 18 years or older:

- One piece of original, current photo identification issued by a government authority, or
- Two pieces of original, current identification, at least one of which is a non-photo ID issued by a government authority.

“Government authority” means:

- USA: Federal, state, county, or local government.
- Canada: Federal, provincial, county, or local government.
- Other countries: The country’s national government or a subdivision thereof.

“Local government” includes entities such as public school districts.

“Original identification” means an original document. Photocopies, facsimiles, or any other type of copy, are not acceptable. (Certified copies of birth certificates are acceptable.)



Acceptable identification: examples

The following are examples of acceptable identification or ID, and not an exclusive list. Any identification meeting the above basic policy is acceptable, unless excluded as shown under “Unacceptable Identification”, below.

United States residents – examples of government-issued photo identification

One of the following is required:

- State-issued driver’s license*
- State-issued identification card issued by the same agency that issues driver’s licenses (note that some do not have expiration dates)
- City issued identification cards
- U.S. Passport
- U.S. Legal Permanent Resident Card or Resident Alien Card
- University, college, middle or high school photo identification – public or private
- United States Armed Forces military identification
- Job Corps photo identification
- Veterans Access Card issued by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
- Tribal identification (Native American/First Nations, etc.)
- Law enforcement (police, etc.) photo identification
- Amtrak employee photo identification
- California state issued medical marijuana card
- Federal, state, county, or local government employee photo identification

*Some states may issue a Temporary Visitor's driver's license (TVLD) to a foreign national. A TVLD is not an acceptable form of identification. In general, if an ID is presented that says “not valid for identification” another form of photo ID should be requested.

United States undocumented residents drivers licenses

Some states and the District of Columbia have changed their laws to allow undocumented residents to obtain driver’s licenses. This type of state government issued identification is acceptable for the purchase of travel documents.

Canadian residents – examples of government-issued photo identification

One of the following is required:

- Provincial driver’s license
- Provincial identification card issued by the same agency that issues driver’s licenses
- Canadian Passport



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- Canadian Citizenship Card
- Canadian Permanent Resident Card
- Provincial health insurance card
- Other identification similar to that shown for United States residents

Mexican residents – examples of government-issued photo identification

One of the following is required:

- Mexican driver's license
- Mexican government issued photo identification card
- Mexican Passport
- Other identification similar to that shown for United States residents

Residents of other countries – examples of government-issued photo identification

One of the following is required:

- Passport
- Driver's license issued by a foreign government or subdivision thereof, if it has a photo
- Other identification similar to that shown for United States residents

Examples of Non-Photo or Non-Government-Issued Identification - not an exclusive list

Two of the following are required. One must be government-issued:

- Non-photo driver's license*
- Temporary driver's license*
- Social Security card
- Voter registration card
- Certified copy of birth certificate issued by a city, county, state, provincial, or federal government; must have raised, embossed seal and a dated certification that it is a true copy of the original on file at the issuing office. A birth certificate is unacceptable if it contains a notation indicating that it is informational only, and not a valid document to establish identity, even if it has the embossed seal and the certification that it is a true copy.
- Public assistance card
- Medicare/Medicaid card
- Concealed Carry Permit card
- Professional or Occupational License (nurse, doctor, lawyer, hairdresser, etc.)
- Police report of lost or stolen identification if no more than 30 days old**
- Prison or court-issued release papers if no more than 30 days old**



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- Military discharge papers (DD214) if no more than 30 days old
- Employee identification card with photo, from a major employer such as a bank

*Must describe the named person by physical characteristics which match the person presenting the document

**Second piece of identification not required. If the police department where the customer filed the report did not give him or her copy of the report and the customer needs to travel, refer to the customers who have lost identification section.

Unacceptable identification

- Expired identification.
 - Exception – When senior citizens present an expired identification. Refer to “Expired identification – senior citizens” section below.
- Photocopies, facsimiles, or any other type of copy (see birth certificates, above)
- Birth certificates that contain a notation that they are informational only and not a valid document to establish identity, even if it has the embossed seal and the certification that it is a true copy.
- Identification not that of the customer.
- Non-employee photo identification issued by a private company or merchant (in particular, photo ID cards issued by check cashing stores)
- Prison or court-issued release papers if more than 30 days old
- Police report of lost or stolen identification if more than 30 days old
- Photo ID’s on smartphones.

Other Identification Considerations

Children 15 and under

- A child 15 and under does not need identification at any time.
- The following applies to a child 13-15 traveling under the unaccompanied minor policy:
 - Another person 18 or over must bring him or her to the boarding station, show his or her own identification, and sign the unaccompanied minor form;
 - Another person 18 or over must pick him or her up at the destination station, show his or her own identification, and sign the unaccompanied minor form;
 - If the travel documents are obtained in advance of travel, rather than on the day of travel by the adult bringing the child to the boarding station, they may be obtained by another person 18 or over.



Children 16-17

- A child 16-17 who has acceptable identification may obtain his or her own travel documents and check his or her own baggage.
- A child 16-17 who does not have identification must have another person 18 or over obtain his or her travel documents. That person must show his or her own identification when obtaining the travel documents.
- Fares paid on trains for a child 16-17 traveling alone: If the child does not have his or her own identification, another person 18 or over must wait with the child for the train to arrive and then pay the conductor the fare on behalf of the child, showing his or her own identification. The person waiting with the child may not leave until the train has arrived, the fare has been paid, and the child is safely on the train.

Note: Since the station-issued or conductor-issued travel document is issued to the child after acceptable identification has been presented, receipts or subsequent travel documents issued by the station, or the receipt from the conductor-issued travel document, are acceptable as identification for onward or return travel or if the child needs to make subsequent travel document purchases as part of the same trip.

Customers 18 and over

- A customer 18 and over must have acceptable identification to check baggage.
- He or she must also be prepared to show that identification on the train if asked.
- Each customer traveling under a group reservation must have his or her own individual identification.

Senior Customers

- A senior customer (65 and over) still needs acceptable identification. If he or she no longer drives, he or she can normally obtain a non-driver identification card from the same agency that issues driver's licenses, or use another acceptable ID.
- Senior customers may present expired identification.
- Senior customers have the option to present a credit card as a second form of identification.

Who is not required to have Identification

- Children 15 years old and under
- Children 16-17 who are traveling with other 18 or over with proper identification. Identification is required on board the train.

Conditions for accepting identification

When accepting identification from a customer:

- The name, information, and/or photo on the identification must be that of the person presenting it.



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- Examine the identification for obvious counterfeiting.
- This name must match the name on the travel document (but see “Obtaining travel documents for others”, below). This need not be exactly letter for letter, as many people have a formal name they use only rarely and a common name they use for everyday matters. Examples:

Name on identification:	Elizabeth Anne Robinson
Name in PNR:	Liz Robinson
Name on identification:	Shirley James Edwards
Name in PNR:	Jim Edwards

Such a variation is acceptable if it is obvious that it is the same person.

- A name on a travel document must be the full first and last name, not an initial and last name, and not a false or generic name. Correct the name in the PNR to meet this requirement if necessary.

Acceptable:	SMITH/MARY
Unacceptable:	SMITH/M
Unacceptable:	WELCOME/ABOARD
Unacceptable:	VRU/0384

Also, if a woman is using her husband’s name (example: Mrs. John Smith), obtain her own name and use that.

Acceptable:	SMITH/MARY
Unacceptable:	SMITH/JOHN MRS

Identification not shown as required

In the station

If a customer does not have identification as required, or has identification but refuses to show it, do not check baggage, accept an Amtrak Express shipment, or accept an item for storage (parcel checking).

If the customer has already begun travel on Amtrak, and this situation arises at an intermediate station, a connecting station, or the outbound station of a round trip, contact the Amtrak Police Department at 800-331-0008 and describe the circumstances about the situation, including how the customer was able to travel as far as he or she did, before denying the above services. Be governed by the decision of the Amtrak Police.



On the train

Train service employees have their own procedures, which are in the Service Standards Manual for Train Service and On-Board Service Employees, as modified by Operations Standards Updates. Also see "Random identification checks on trains" below.

Obtaining travel documents for others

- The travel documents must be in the names of those individuals actually traveling.
- The other customers need not be present at the time travel documents are issued.
- The person obtaining the travel documents need not be one of the customers traveling.
- Conductors are required to ask for identification from anyone 18 or over who presents a travel document and has been selected for a random ID check.

Identification required for special fares

Certain discounted fares require that the customer show a membership card or other document to prove that he or she is eligible for the fare. This is in addition to identification required for travel document purchase or to travel.

In all cases, the card must be that of the person named on the travel document, and cannot be used by others or to obtain discounted travel documents for others.

Examples of this include:

- Military discount – current Armed Forces of the United States identification card.
- National Association of Railroad Passengers discount – current NARP membership card.
- Senior citizen discount – identification that contains a birth date so the age of the senior citizen can be determined.
- Mobility Impaired Discounts – information can be found in the *Assisting Passengers with Disabilities* chapter.

Identification checks on trains

Random identification checks

Before the start of the trip, the conductor's eTicketing Mobile Device (eMD) will randomly choose one digit (0 through 9), and will display a message to the conductor to ask for ID if a customer's eTicket travel document being scanned by the eMD has a system ticket number ending with that digit.



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Normally only one digit is selected, but if the security situation requires that more customers be asked for identification, two or more may be selected.

The conductor will ask all customers for identification who have travel document numbers ending with the number chosen for identification on the train.

Since the customers will not know which number has been chosen before they board, and since the conductor will not know which customers have travel documents ending with this number, the selection process is entirely random.

For this reason, agents must tell customers that identification might be required, that there is no way to predict whether or not this will happen, and that they therefore need to bring identification with them when traveling.

If the customer does not have valid identification, or if the customer's identification does not match against the name on the face of the travel document, and there is no reasonable explanation for the discrepancy, the Amtrak police must be notified immediately. Failure to possess the proper identification is not by itself sufficient reason to have the customer removed from the train.

This process randomly chooses a predetermined percentage of the customers for identification checks, if one number is chosen. If it is decided at any time to increase the percentage, this can be done by simply reprogramming the eMD or by instructing the conductors to select additional numbers for checking.

Travel documents issued from Quik-Trak or through the mail

When an eTicket travel document or a paper value ticket is obtained from Quik-Trak kiosks or through the mail (TBM), no one has requested identification from the customer.

Quik-Trak, TBM, eTicket travel documents or paper value tickets have an endorsement in the upper left corner "ID REQD ON BOARD". All customers with travel documents bearing this endorsement will be asked for identification by conductors.

Assistance with customer identification situations

Notify the Amtrak Police Department, 800-331-0008, in case of a dispute or an intentional violation of this policy.

The responding APD officer will conduct an inquiry to determine the true identity of the customer and how the customer obtained the travel document. The APD officer will take appropriate action depending on the nature of the situation, or tell you what to do.



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If the customer begins to behave in a dangerous or threatening manner, call the local police immediately. If no Amtrak police officers are on duty at your location, dial 911 or contact Amtrak Police at 1-800-331-0008 or send a text to APD11 from a smartphone or to 27311 from a standard cell phone.

Questions

Amtrak employees with non-emergency questions about Amtrak's identification policies may call their supervisors for assistance.

Customers and other members of the general public who have questions that you cannot answer from this chapter may phone Amtrak at 800-USA-RAIL; the call center agent will consult with the support desk.

Media representatives (radio, TV, newspaper, etc.) may phone Amtrak Corporate Communications at the phone numbers located in the Contact with the News Media chapter.

Federal, state or local government officials may contact Amtrak Government Affairs at 202-906-3916.

Special situations

Amish or Mennonite

Many Amish or Mennonite people do not have their pictures taken.

A customer who states that he or she is Amish or Mennonite, and is wearing the distinctive dress of the Amish or Mennonite community, may be asked to produce two required pieces of non-photo identification, one of which is government issued, if preselected for a random ID check.

Expired identification – senior citizens

Some senior citizens (defined as 62 or over) do not renew their driver's licenses because they no longer drive, but still keep them for identification.

If the expired license is obviously that of the person presenting it, accept it, but ask for a second piece of identification.



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Groups

Each customer traveling under a group PNR (15 or more customers in one PNR) must have his or her own separate identification. This will be checked against the name list in the PNR or on the train manifest.

Customers who have lost identification

A copy of a police report which includes mention of the lost identification is acceptable as a substitute piece of identification as long as it is not more than 30 days old. A second piece of identification is not required.

Some police departments do not immediately give the person a paper copy of the police report, only the report number. If this is the case, contact the Amtrak Police Department at 800-331-0008 for assistance.

Individuals just released or paroled from prison

These individuals usually do not have current acceptable identification. However, they are often traveling immediately (the prison sometimes transports them directly to an Amtrak station to return home).

You may accept a copy of their current and official prison-issued or court-issued release papers as long as they are not more than 30 days old. A second piece of identification is not required.

Women who wear veils for religious reasons

Observant women in some religions wear veils, some of which cover most of their faces except their eyes. In such cases, when they present identification, compare the physical characteristics noted on the identification (height, weight, eye color) with the person. In most cases you will be able to determine beyond a reasonable doubt that the identification presented is indeed that of the woman, and you may issue the travel document.

In the rare cases where there is doubt, please ask the customer for a second piece of valid identification.



Appendix

Update history

- 2018-03-19: Removed mention of the Veteran’s advantage discount
- 2018-02-08: Removed mention of AAA and raised the senior fare to age 65.
- 2017-12-21 Clarified children traveling information and added information about credit card not signed.
- 2017-10-25 Customers no longer required to present identification to purchase tickets.
- 2017-05-22 Photo ID’s on smartphones are unacceptable.
- 2016-11-03 Reviewed by the Emergency Management, Police and Legal Departments.
- 2016-02-12 added the California state issued medical marijuana card
- 2015-04-07 Clarified senior citizen requirements.
- 2015-01-22 Acceptable identification updated with language on a Temporary Visitor's driver's license.
- 2015-01-09 Added information about undocumented resident’s driver’s license, city and middle school issued identification cards
- 2015-01-02 Information added about driver’s licenses for undocumented residents
- 2014-04-23 Document reformatted; person buying travel documents for another must now be at least 18 years old (matches change to unaccompanied minor policy); both prison-issued and court-issued release papers are acceptable.
- 2011-11-15 Reference to old Unaccompanied Minor Policy deleted
- 2011-07-06 Clarification about children 15-17 and another person 15 or over obtaining the travel documents.
- 2009-11-18 Notation made that some state ID cards do not have expiry dates.
- 2009-07-20 Credit card removed from non-photo ID types for most customer types. Senior citizens are still able to present a credit card for ID
- 2009-07-09 USA Rail Pass passport reference removed (pass is now sold to anyone). “Resident Alien Card” changed to “Legal Permanent Resident” card.
- 2008-01-14 Clarification on birth certificates with an “informational only” endorsement.
- 2007-09-26 Clarification on who calls Amtrak Police for lost identification questions.

About this chapter

Contact(s): Phil Bouchard / Ann Adams	Subject: Customer Identification Requirements
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