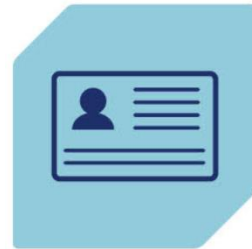




September 2021

EU, EEA and Swiss national identity card (ID card) factsheet



Top lines

- From the 1 October 2021, most EU, EEA and Swiss citizens will only be able to travel to the UK using a valid passport.
- ID cards will no longer be accepted as a valid travel document for entry to the UK.
- If EU, EEA and Swiss citizens do not have a passport from 1 October, they are liable to be refused entry to the UK.
- EU, EEA and Swiss citizens who hold pre-settled or settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme, or who have made a valid application under the scheme which is still pending, and those whose rights are protected under the Citizens' Rights Agreements (such as Frontier workers) will be able to use their national identity cards to enter the UK until 2025 at least.
- Most EU, EEA and Swiss citizens will only be able to travel to the UK via Ireland using a valid passport, unless they are exempt. As is the case now, if travellers are refused entry at the UK border, it is generally the requirement for the carrier bringing them to the UK to return them. For more information, visit [travelling between the UK and Ireland, Isle of Man, Guernsey or Jersey](#) on GOV.UK.
- British nationals using Gibraltar ID cards, and Irish nationals using Irish passport cards, can continue to use these to travel to the UK as they do now.
- The removal of ID cards will strengthen UK borders and pave the way for a future digitised border, delivering a more streamlined and seamless customer experience for travellers entering the UK.



Q&A

Who is impacted by this change?

- Most EU citizens, except for the exemptions outlined below.
- EU, EEA and Swiss citizens who hold pre-settled or settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme, or who have made a valid application under the scheme by 30 June 2021 which is still pending, and those whose rights are protected under the Citizens' Rights Agreements (such as Frontier Workers) will be able to use their national identity cards to enter the UK until 31 December 2025 at least.
- We encourage all EU, EEA and Swiss travellers to use a passport where possible. This allows them to use e-Gates; the quickest and most efficient method of crossing the border.

Why are you making this change?

- EU, EEA and Swiss ID cards are among the least secure documents seen at the border and are, as a rule, not as secure as corresponding national passports. They are the most abused documents we see at the border.
- We do not accept ID cards as a travel document from other nationalities and, this change brings rules for EU citizens in line with the rest of the world now that we have left the EU.

When is this happening?

- This will come into effect from 1 October 2021.
- Between now and then, travellers using ID cards to enter the UK may be reminded that they will no longer be able to use them in future.
- We encourage all EU, EEA and Swiss travellers to use a passport where possible. This allows them to use e-Gates; the quickest and most efficient method of crossing the border.

Won't this discourage European tourists from coming to the UK?

- We expect EU, EEA and Swiss citizens to hold a valid passport in order to enter the UK, the same way they would for any other third country (e.g. USA, China and India).



Home Office

- We have given people plenty of time to plan ahead and obtain a passport, if they need to, before they travel.

Are there any exceptions?

- EU, EEA and Swiss citizens whose rights are protected under the Citizens' Rights Agreements (such as people with status under the EU Settlement Scheme and frontier workers) will be able to use their national identity cards to enter the UK until 2025 at least.
- Irish citizens can continue to use a passport card to travel to the UK.
- British Citizens in possession of Gibraltar Identity Cards will also still be able to enter the UK using those cards.

This will be a disincentive for school groups to visit the UK. Why have you not made an exception for them?

- This would mean treating a particular group of EU, EEA and Swiss citizens more generously than other EU, EEA and Swiss citizens and students from other countries.
- EU, EEA and Swiss students will be treated like students from the rest of the world; they will be able to come either under the visitor route or as a student.
- Various short-term study activities will be permitted under the standard visitor rules, for which entry clearance will not be required in advance, but EU, EEA and Swiss citizens will require a passport like everyone else.
- We have given people plenty of time to plan ahead and obtain passports, where they don't already have them, before they travel.

Can ID cards still be used as proof of identity and nationality in the UK?

- ID cards will remain a valid proof of identity and nationality for EU, EEA and Swiss citizens applying to the EU Settlement Scheme. EU citizens will need their passport to demonstrate their rights to work and to rent, or to access benefits and services.

What will happen if EEA citizens travel to the UK without a passport?

- If EU, EEA and Swiss citizens without protected rights under the Citizens' Rights Agreements travel to the UK without a passport from 1 October, they are liable to be refused entry.



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How do EEA citizens apply for a passport if they do not have one?

- EU, EEA and Swiss citizens should contact their consulate in the UK or the relevant authorities in their country of nationality for information on how to apply for a passport.

Where can I find out more about visiting the UK?

- For more information go to the GOV.UK Visiting the UK as an EU, EEA or Swiss Citizen page here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/visiting-the-uk-as-an-eu-eea-or-swiss-citizen>
- Anyone travelling to the UK will also need to comply with COVID-19 health measures.