

eHomeAffairs making passport applications easier

Getting your passport has become quicker and easier with the eHomeAffairs system which Minister of Home Affairs Malusi Gigaba launched a year ago. eHomeAffairs enables South Africans to submit their application and pay online, or if they live in Cape Town, Johannesburg or Pretoria, they can step into their local bank.



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Online applicants have to have their biometrics (fingerprints, a photograph, and signature) captured at their nearest Home Affairs office before their application is sent to Pretoria for processing. Residents of Johannesburg, Pretoria, and Cape Town can also have their biometrics captured at their nearest supported Absa, FNB, Standard Bank or Nedbank branch.

“It should be noted, however, that only applicants with access to internet banking can apply online,” says Andrew Stark, managing director of Flight Centre Travel Group

He points out that while Johannesburg and Pretoria residents will be provided with the list of supported banks after they make their payment, currently the only bank branch that supports this service in Cape Town is Standard Bank Canal Walk.

“Those outside of Johannesburg, Cape Town and Pretoria have to go to their nearest Home Affairs office to have their fingerprints, photographs and signature captured. While online applicants who apply via a bank can make an appointment, those who have to have their biometrics captured at Home Affairs need to queue like other applicants,” says Stark.

Applicants who apply through a bank can also collect their passport at the same branch.

No restrictions on who can apply online

Stark – who recently applied through a bank for his child’s passport – says there are no restrictions on who can apply online for a passport or for a renewal.

“When the system was launched, only applicants aged 30 - 35 could apply online, but that age restriction has now been waived and anyone can apply online. Those applying for a child’s passport need to remember that both parents and the child need to be present when applying. They also have to take along the child’s birth certificate,” says Stark.

He points out, however, that eHomeaffairs is only for those applying for a first passport or for a routine renewal. For replacements of passports that have been lost or stolen or for travel documents reflecting name changes or other more complicated applications, applicants should contact the Department of Home Affairs to ascertain whether they can apply online.

Cutting down time spent in queues

“Many people remember the nightmare that is Home Affairs from years ago, but things have changed. eHomeaffairs has made it so much easier for everyone to apply for a passport though the residents of Johannesburg, Pretoria and Cape Town are obviously the most fortunate in that they can apply at their local bank. We applaud this initiative by Minister Gigaba and the Department of Home Affairs. It is a great initiative and we urge them to roll out supported banks across the country so everyone can apply for a passport at their local bank. In any event, eHomeaffairs already cuts down the time people have to spend in queues, waiting to apply for or renew their passport,” he says.

Stark advised that only South Africans resident in the country can use the eHomeAffairs website.

South Africans applying for a new passport or who are renewing a passport need to take along their ID. A regular passport costs R400 while a maxi one costs R600. To apply online, go to [eHomeAffairs](#).

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