



# Police Certificate Application Guidance Notes

**These notes apply to those applicants wishing to obtain an immigration visa for Australia, Canada, New Zealand or the United States of America**

The Association of Chief Police Officers Criminal Records Office (ACRO) will aim to produce all Police Certificates (standard service) within 10 working days. This will be measured from the day the application is accepted by ACRO, to the day of dispatch (see also urgent requests).

The completed application form will be processed and the results sent directly to you at your current address as quoted on the application form or to another address as requested by you.

To help to avoid errors, the application form should be completed in clear BLOCK CAPITALS.

ACRO will carry out extensive authentication exercises including searching various databases.

The following factors are likely to delay the processing of a Certificate:

- Incomplete information provided
- Inability to authenticate your current address
- Failure to enclose correct payment
- You are subject of impending/outstanding criminal proceedings
- An event or occurrence outside of ACRO's control, for example a postal strike or computer systems failure.

To minimise the risk of errors ACRO have developed administrative procedures and safeguards including the right of appeal and a formal dispute procedure. You should contact ACRO if you dispute the content of your Police Certificate (see page 2 for contact details)

ACRO will initiate the formal dispute procedure if there is an alleged error in the criminal history information including:

- Disputed Identity (The whole record is incorrect)
- Accuracy (Yes that's me, but some of the details are wrong)
- Relevance (Why is that on the Certificate?)

If an error occurs due to illegible handwriting, a new Certificate will be issued at a cost of £5.

Please ensure the form is completed using BLOCK CAPITALS.

**Proof of Identity:** ACRO require a copy of your passport description page (usually carrying your photograph) and 2 items of correspondence, no more than 6 months old, that confirm your current address, e.g. utility bills, such as a phone bill, gas bill, electricity bill or bank statement. **(Do NOT send originals, they will not be returned)**

If you are living outside the UK you need to provide confirmation of your current residential address, together with a list of previous UK addresses within the last 5 years.

**Urgent Requests:** If you require your Police Certificate urgently, the Premium Service\* will provide this in 2 working days (excludes days of receipt and dispatch). Note - £70 fee applies.

If you are the subject of impending/outstanding criminal proceedings, you will not be eligible for the premium service.

**Fees (in Pounds Sterling):**

Standard Service - £35.00 (10 working days)  
Premium Service - £70.00 ( 2 working days)  
Additional Copy (ies) £5.00 each

Payment must be by UK Bank Cheque, UK Postal Order, or Bankers Draft. **Please note - cash will not be accepted.**

**Payments should be made payable to HPA.**

If your payment is not cleared, your Certificate will be deemed invalid and the appropriate Embassy/High Commission will be notified.

**Additional Copies:** If you require more than one copy of the Certificate, please submit £5 for each additional copy. Additional copies can only be provided at the time of the original application. Subsequent requests for extra copies will require a new application.



A POLICE CERTIFICATE IS PROVIDED FOR THE AGREED SPECIFIED PURPOSE OF OBTAINING A CONSULAR CERTIFICATE FOR IMMIGRATION PURPOSES. KEEP THE DATA SECURE AND PROTECT THEM AGAINST LOSS OR UNAUTHORISED ACCESS.

**Photographs:** Please enclose a recent passport size colour photograph (45mm x 35mm). This will be scanned onto your Police Certificate.

(For guidance, please refer to the Home Office Identity and Passport Service's guide to passport photographs, or [click here](#)).

The back of your photograph needs to be signed by a person listed below.

This person is someone other than yourself, your partner or a family member who can confirm your identity and has **known you for a minimum of 2 years**.

Your chosen individual must:

- Complete and sign the declaration on the application form.
- Write "I certify this to be a true likeness of (your full name)" on the back of your photograph, which should be signed and dated.

In order to satisfy ACRO requirements, the person endorsing should be included in one of the following groups:

- Accountant
- Bank/building society official
- Barrister
- Broker
- Chairman / Director / Manager / Personnel Officer (limited company)
- Chiropodist
- Commissioner of Oaths
- Councillor: local or county
- Civil Servant (permanent)
- Engineer (Qualified)
- Fire Service Official
- General Practitioner
- Minister of a recognised religion
- Nurse (SRN and SEN)
- Member of Parliament
- Merchant Navy Officer

- Commissioned Officers and Warrant Officers of the Armed Services (active or retired)
- Optician/Chemist/Dentist
- Police Officer / Police Staff
- Post Office Official
- Solicitor
- Teacher or Lecturer

Please note that this list is not exhaustive, but you must ensure that the endorsing individual is a Professional.

If you are currently residing outside of the UK and are having problems identifying anyone from the above list, please contact ACRO at:

**[acro.policecertificates@acro.pnn.police.uk](mailto:acro.policecertificates@acro.pnn.police.uk)**

**Declaration:** Before signing the declaration, you must ensure that all the information provided on your application form is correct and accurate.

Please note that signing the declaration allows ACRO to share any information to enable a decision on your immigration application, and update police systems where appropriate.

Your completed application form, proof of identity, photograph and payment must be sent to:

**ACRO, PO Box 481, Fareham, PO14 9FS (UK)**

For enquiries concerning the completion of this form, please contact ACRO on **0845 60 13 999** during our office opening hours (8:30-16:30) Monday to Friday or via email to:

**[acro.policecertificates@acro.pnn.police.uk](mailto:acro.policecertificates@acro.pnn.police.uk)**

International callers from outside of the UK should call **00 (44) 1962 871111** during the above UK times

**All documents referring to your Police Certificate, including your application form and identity documents, will be destroyed after 12 months.**



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# Police Certificate Application Form

Please complete the application clearly using **BLOCK CAPITALS**

Title (Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms, other): .....Surname: .....

Forename (s): .....

Sex: Male  Female

Any other names by which you have been known (including maiden name, all married names, names prior to or after change by Deed Poll) Please tick if not applicable

.....

.....

Date of Birth: dd / mm / yyyy Place of Birth (town & country): .....

Nationality (include all): .....

*If you have more than one Nationality and you require details of all Nationalities included on your Police Certificate, you must include details from the relevant passports to support your claims.*

Passport Number and Issuing Country: .....

Country for which you require the Certificate: .....

Date of travel if known.....

Current Address:

Postal Address for Return of Your Certificate:  
(If different from current)

Postcode: .....

Postcode: .....

Have you lived at this address for 5 years or more? Yes  No

If No, please provide details of your previous address(es) for the last five years (including dates) on the continuation sheet provided\*.

Contact detail(s):

Home: .....

Work: .....

Mobile: .....

Email: .....



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Are you the subject of outstanding criminal proceedings? Yes  No

Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence in Northern Ireland? Yes  No

Have you ever lived in Northern Ireland? Yes  No

*If YES, please provide details on a separate sheet*

Service Required: Standard (£35)  Premium (£70)

Number of additional copies requested at the time the application is made (£5 each):.....  
(Subsequent requests will require a new application)

Total Payment Enclosed (Pounds Sterling): £

Payment Method: Cheque  Postal Order  Bankers Draft

### Applicant Declaration

The Applicant must agree to the following conditions:

1. I understand the questions asked in this application form and I declare that the information I have supplied is accurate and I am the person to whom it relates.
2. I declare I have listed all the names by which I have ever been known.
3. I authorise ACRO to make any enquiries it deems necessary in relation to the information given on this form and to share this information to the extent necessary to enable a decision on my Immigration Application.
4. I understand that ACRO will check the details I provide against the Police National Computer and Police Service of Northern Ireland Records (where applicable) to obtain details of criminal convictions where they exist.
5. I understand that ACRO will update the aforementioned police systems if appropriate, with the information provided.
6. I am aware that it is an offence to make a statement or representation which I know to be false or do not believe to be true, or obtain or seek to obtain a Police Certificate by any means which include deception.

Signature (Applicant) .....Date... dd / mm / yyyy



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## Photograph Endorsement

**(to be completed by the Endorser of the photograph)**

I am not a relative or partner of the Applicant. I have endorsed and signed on the back of the photograph confirming that the image is a true likeness of the Applicant.

Signature .....Date... dd / mm / yyyy

Print name .....

Occupation .....

Contact Telephone Number .....

\*please refer to the guidance notes regarding photographs

**Your Check List – please tick when you are satisfied the item is included**

### What your envelope should contain

- |   |   |                          |
|---|---|--------------------------|
| Application Form (fully completed and signed)                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Two proofs of current address (copies will not be returned)  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Passport size photograph (signed and endorsed on reverse by endorser) | <input type="checkbox"/> Copy of Passport photo page, if UK Passport, or the page containing identification detail if other | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Your payment (cheque dated, signed & payable to <b>HPA</b> )          | <input type="checkbox"/>  |                          |

**Applications to be sent to:**

**ACRO  
PO Box 481  
Fareham  
Hampshire  
(UK)  
PO14 9FS**

**Ensure the correct postage is paid**

**Please do not staple or pin documents together**



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**\*Continuation Sheet**

**If you have not lived at your current address for longer than five years, or you are now living outside the UK, please list any addresses you have lived at within the UK over the past five years below:**

.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....

**If you have further information you would like to provide, please comment below:**



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## Frequently Asked Questions

- **How long does it take to get my Police Certificate?**

*The Certificate will be prepared and dispatched within 10 working days of receipt for a standard service and within 2 working days for a premium service. In each case this excludes days of receipt and dispatch. Postage times are not guaranteed. The Certificates are sent 1<sup>st</sup> class through Royal Mail wherever you are in the world. You are advised to allow extra time if your application is made close to a UK Bank Holiday.*

- **By what postal methods may I have my Certificate returned to me?**

*Your application fee includes:*

*To UK addresses – Standard 1<sup>st</sup> Class Return*

*To International addresses – Royal Mail Airmail return.*

*You can request and pay an extra fee for the following (this fee must be sent with your application):*

*UK – Registered Mail, Recorded Mail, Special Next Day delivery*

*International – International Sign For, AIRSURE*

*Email ACRO for a costing of the above. Please note, these prices may change without notice.*

- **How much does a Police Certificate cost?**

*The standard service costs £35 and the premium service costs £70.*

*Extra copies of Certificates can be purchased at a cost of £5 each **at the time the application is made**, for either service. (Subsequent requests will require the full fee of a new application to cover all costs)*

- **Can I email or fax my application to you?**

*No, you must post your application to us as we require an original signature and a passport photograph.*

- **Who can apply for a Police Certificate?**

*Anyone who has lived in the UK for any length of time, regardless of Nationality.*

- **Can I pay online?**

*No, you can pay by cheque, bankers draft or postal order. Your payment must be in pounds sterling. You can arrange for someone else to pay the fee for you if necessary.*

- **How long is my Certificate valid for?**

*There is no set period of time for which the Certificate is considered to be valid. The Certificate is only truly accurate on the date of issue. Embassies or High Commissions will usually require you to produce a Police Certificate, which has been issued less than six (6) months before your visa interview.*

- **I live abroad and I cannot prove my UK addresses, what can I do?**

*If you live abroad you do not have to prove your UK address. You only have to prove your current address and inform us of your previous UK addresses over the past FIVE years. These should be written on the continuation sheet provided with the application form.*



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- **I don't know anyone who can sign the back of my photograph in the country I'm in, what do I do?**  
*You will need to post your photograph to someone who can sign it for you. If you are not in the UK, we suggest you post the entire application form to someone who can sign your photograph and ask them to forward it on to us.*
- **I don't have any utility bills, how can I prove my address?**  
*We accept copies of documents from "official bodies" e.g. bank statement, letters from a GP, letters from a school or college, utility bills, phone bills etc. Ideally they should be for different months and in either case should not be more than six months old.*
- **I don't know anyone from the list of guarantors, who can sign my photograph?**  
*The list is not exhaustive, but you must ensure that the certifying individual is a professional. A professional who could sign your photograph for a passport application would be acceptable.*
- **Does the person signing my photograph have to reside in the UK**  
*No this can be any person who is in one of the Professions we mention and who has known you for two years or more*
- **Can more than one application be sent in the same envelope with one form of payment for the total amount?**  
*Yes, providing all the documents are complete and the total payment covers each application made. Any missing items may delay the processing for **all** the applications.*
- **What is the difference between a Police Certificate and a Subject Access request?**  
*A Police Certificate is issued solely for Immigration Purposes. The Subject Access request is used to provide an applicant with details of any information held about them on police computers. Both check the Police National Computer to see if you have a criminal record. A Police Certificate is needed if you require a work or residency visa for Australia, New Zealand, Canada or the USA only). In the case of the USA you will also need a Police Certificate for holiday purposes if you have ever been arrested or convicted of any offence, no matter how long ago it was.*
- **What will show up on my police Certificate?**  
*All convictions, Warnings, Reprimands and Cautions are recorded on the Police National Computer. We apply the principles of the 'Retention Guidelines for Nominal Records on the Police National Computer', which incorporates the Step Down Model, when preparing the Police Certificate. For a fuller explanation CTRL + [click here](#).*
- **When will the Embassies or High Commissions cease accepting the Subject Access Certificate**  
*The USA will no longer accept subject access for visa interviews. After 01<sup>st</sup> January 2009, Canada will no longer accept Subject Access checks for visa interviews. Although Australia and New Zealand have not positively defined an end date, they both inform all new visa applicants that they should acquire and ACRO Police certificate. They will however continue to accept Subject Access checks if submitted at this current time..*
- **I have a CRB Certificate, can I use that instead of the Police Certificate**  
*No, the Embassies and High Commissions will only accept the ACRO Police Certificate.*



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