



[Home](#) > [Research](#) > [Responses to Information Requests](#)

RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

[New Search](#) | [About RIR's](#) | [Help](#)

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Venezuela: Documents a person must present to obtain a passport; processing times for passports; description of the passport (2005 - February 2006)

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The Consular Services page on the Website of the Venezuela Embassy in Canada indicates that the following documents must be provided to apply for a passport:

[Translation]

- a completed application form;
- a laminated national identity card (*cédula*);
- two passport-size photographs taken face on;
- a money order in the amount of US\$80 made out to the Embassy of Venezuela (29 Aug. 2005).

While the above may be mailed to Consular Services at the embassy, the applicant must nevertheless go in person to sign the document and have his or her fingerprints taken in the presence of a Consular Services employee (Venezuela 29 Aug. 2005).

A representative from the Consular Section stated in a 20 February 2006 telephone interview that the Venezuelan embassy in Ottawa issues passports within 48 hours but that processing times may be longer at the consular offices in Toronto and Montreal (Venezuela 20 Feb. 2006).

The Website of Venezuela's National Office of Identification and Foreigner Status (*Oficina Nacional de Identificación y Extranjería*, ONIDEX) lists the documents needed and outlines the procedure to follow to obtain a passport in Venezuela:

[Translation]

- File an application on-line and print three copies of the forms;
- Provide four passport-size photographs taken in front of a white background;
- Provide two photocopies of the national identity card (*cédula*);
- Place all contents into a manila envelope (*sobre manila*);
- Pay 1.5 *unidades tributarias* [a national tributary payment] (Venezuela n.d.a).

According to the consular representative, that payment would be the equivalent of 33,600 bolivars [approximately CAN\$18 (XE.com 17 Feb. 2006)] (Venezuela 20 Feb. 2006). Another page of the ONIDEX Website, however, states that the fee to renew a passport is 50,400 bolivars [approximately CAN\$27 (XE.com 17 Feb. 2006)] (Venezuela 2006).

Requests for passports are first filed on-line using the ONIDEX Website (ibid. n.d.b). Applicants, equipped with the above outlined requirements, then visit the ONIDEX branch designated for their place of residence (ibid.). The processing of a passport takes a minimum of 15 days, yet the progress of one's application may be tracked on the ONIDEX Website (ibid.). No other information on processing times for Venezuelan passports could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

According to the Website of the Embassy of Venezuela in Canada, a Venezuelan passport contains nine security features, such as elements visible only under ultraviolet light and needle-printed numbering on every page (Venezuela n.d.c).

The ONIDEX Website states that those in possession of manually produced passports (containing typewritten information) must request their cancellation, a process which takes 48 hours, before procedures for obtaining a new passport may be undertaken (ibid. n.d.b).

No other information on the appearance of the Venezuelan passport could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

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Additional Sources Consulted

Internet sites, including: Ministerio del Interior y Justicia de Venezuela, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Venezuela.

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