



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Rev. 11/7/02

Effective June 20, 2000, Most Green Card Renewal Applicants to Apply at Local INS Application Support Centers

Q. How do I know if I need to renew my Green Card?

A. If you were issued your Green Card about 10 years ago and there is an expiration date on the front of your card, you should check the expiration date to see when your card needs to be renewed.

Q. How soon should I apply to renew my expiring Green Card?

A. You can apply up to six months prior to the expiration date of your card (indicated on the front of the card). However, there is no need to rush to apply for a new card too far in advance since you will be issued temporary proof of status the same day you apply in-person for your new Green Card.

Q. What should I do if my Green Card has already expired? Will the INS penalize me for renewing my card after it expired?

A. If your Green Card has already expired, you should apply to renew your card as soon as possible. Those renewing expired cards will not be penalized.

Q. Where do I need to go to renew my Green Card?

A. Effective June 20, 2000, most Green Card renewal applicants will have the convenience of one-stop, walk-in service at their local INS Application Support Centers (ASCs) (see "**Exceptions-Q. #5**" below). There are more than 120 ASCs throughout the country—about 50 located within an existing INS District or Sub-Office and the remaining located in separate facilities to enhance accessibility to customers. You should call the INS National Customer Service Center toll-free telephone line **1-800-375-5283** for information on how and where to apply

UPDATED

Q. Are there any exceptions to the new walk-in procedures at the ASCs?

A. There are a few exceptions to the new ASC intake procedures:

- In **New York, N.Y.**, renewal applicants will need to call **1-800-375-5283** in advance to be scheduled for an appointment.
- In **Los Angeles, Calif.**, renewal applications **will now be accepted at all** ASCs: Wilshire, Buena Park and Fairfax, Bellflower, South El Monte, Santa Ana, Riverside, Gardena, Van Nuys, Pomona, Oxnard and Goleta. (*Updated*)

The following ASCs will not be accepting renewal applications, but have designated different locations for submitting renewal applications. Applicants need to call **1-800-375-5283** for specific information:

- **Laredo, Tex.** (applications will be accepted at the San Antonio ASC);
- **Columbus, Ohio** (applications will be accepted at either the Cleveland or Cincinnati ASCs);
- **Jackson, Miss.** (applications will be accepted at either the New Orleans; Memphis, Tenn.; or Birmingham, Ala. ASC);
- **Nashville, Tenn.** (applications will be accepted at either the Memphis; Louisville, Ky.; or Atlanta, Ga. ASCs);
- **Salisbury, Md.** Will now accept renewal applications. (*Updated*)

Also, in **Houlton, Me.** and **Sault Ste. Marie, Mich.** applications will be accepted at the port of entry.

Q. How do I apply to renew my Green Card?

A. To renew your Green Card, you should call the INS National Customer Service Center toll-free telephone line **1-800-375-5283** to obtain a Form I-90, "Application to Replace Permanent Resident Card" and information on how and where to apply. (The application form is also available on the INS Web site at www.ins.usdoj.gov or by calling INS' toll-free forms request line 1-800-870-3676.)

Effective June 20, 2000, renewal applicants will be instructed to apply in person at a local ASC (see "**Exceptions**" below). They must bring with them:

- A completed Form I-90 and a check or money order for the \$130 application fee;
- Their expiring/expired Green Card;
- Photocopies of both the front and back of the card;
- Two color photographs, as specified on the Form I-90 instructions;

- Personal identification (e.g., driver's license, state issued identification card or passport).
- Renewal applicants whose name has legally changed must bring documentation of the change (e.g., marriage certificate, divorce decree or court order).
- Renewal applicants who received their Green Card before their 14th birthday and are now over 14, must be fingerprinted. They must bring a check or money order for the additional \$50 fingerprinting fee.

Q. Do these new ASC procedures apply to everyone who needs a new Green Card?

A. No. These new ASC procedures apply only to renewal applicants with expiring/expired 10-year Green Cards. All other applicants filing for a new Green Card must apply at their local INS District or Sub-Office—not at an ASC.

Q. How can I obtain temporary proof of status while I wait to receive my new Green Card?

A. When you come in to renew your Green Card, INS will review your application package on-the-spot for completeness and accuracy. If all is in order, INS will attach a sticker to your expiring/expired Green Card to extend the validity of the card, and return it to you to use as temporary proof of status. The attached sticker will have two hole-punches through the appropriate month and year, indicating how long this temporary proof of status will be valid. When your application is approved, INS will mail you your new Green Card that will be valid for 10 years.

Q. How long will it be before I receive my new Green Card?

A. Currently, it takes about five months (national average processing time) to receive your new Green Card. However, you will be issued temporary proof of your lawful permanent resident status when you go to renew your card.

Q. What if my temporary proof of status expires before I receive my new Green Card?

A. If your temporary proof of status expires before you receive your new Green Card, you should go to your local INS District or Sub-Office (not the Application Support Center). After verifying the status of your case and determining that your application is approvable, the local INS District or Sub-Office will issue you new temporary documentation.

Q. Why does the INS put 10-year expiration dates on Green Cards?

A. INS began implementing 10-year expiration dates on Green Cards (Form I-551, Alien Registration Receipt Card) in 1989 to allow the agency to update photo identification and implement new card technologies that will increase the card's resistance to counterfeiting and tampering.

Q. Do I need to renew my Green Card if it was issued between 1979 and 1988 and does not have an expiration date?

A. No. Green Cards issued between 1979 and 1988 do not have expiration dates and do not need to be renewed at this time. INS will develop an orderly plan for replacing these cards at a future time. *(Note: If you obtained your Green Card before your 14th birthday and are now over 14, and your Green Card does not have an expiration date on it, you will still need to get a new card. You will need to go to your local INS District or Sub-Office—not an Application Support Center—and File a Form I-90, “Application to Replace Permanent Resident Card.” However, you will not need to pay the \$130 application fee. You will only need to pay the \$50 fingerprinting fee.)*

Q. Will I lose my permanent resident status if I do not renew my Green Card?

A. No, you will not lose your permanent resident status if you do not renew your Green Card — permanent resident status will not expire or change. However, you are required by law to carry evidence of your status/registration (e.g. a valid, unexpired Green Card or the temporary proof of status you receive at the time of filing to renew your Green Card.)

Q. What will happen if I don't renew my expiring Green Card?

A. If you fail to renew your expiring card, you may experience difficulties in obtaining employment, benefits, and re-entry into the United States from abroad. When you submit your renewal application in-person, you will receive temporary evidence of your lawful permanent resident status.

Q. What will happen if I present an expired Green Card when I try to reenter the United States after traveling abroad, or when I obtain a new job, or when I apply for entitlement benefits?

- **Re-entry into the United States from abroad:** To the extent possible, apply for your new Green Card before you travel and bring with you on any trip the temporary documentation you received. If after traveling abroad you try to re-enter the United States with an expired Green Card, you may experience a delay during the inspection process at the port-of-entry.
- **Obtaining employment:** While employers will not accept an expired Green Card to verify employment authorization for new hires, you may use other documents listed on the Form I-9 (Employment Eligibility Verification Form), or the temporary proof of status you received when you submitted your renewal application.

- **Applying for benefits:** Your status as a lawful permanent resident has not changed. Therefore, your eligibility for benefits will not change. The temporary proof of status that you received when you submitted your renewal application is sufficient evidence to verify your legal status.

Q. What if I cannot afford the application fee, or I am ill or disabled and cannot go to my local INS office?

A. If you cannot afford the fee you may request a fee waiver according to standard procedures. If you are unable to appear in person because you are confined due to advanced age or physical disability, you may contact your local INS office to request accommodations.

Q. What should I do if I already filed to renew my Green Card prior to June 20, under previous mail-in procedures? Should I apply again under the new walk-in procedures?

A. No, you should not apply again. If INS has already scheduled you for an appointment, follow those scheduling instructions. If you mailed in your application before June 20 but INS has not yet scheduled you for an appointment, you will receive a scheduled appointment soon.

Q. What should I do if I've already applied for naturalization and my card is expiring? Do I still need to renew my Green Card and pay the \$130 renewal application fee?

A. If you have applied for naturalization **more than six months prior to your card's expiration** you do not need to apply to renew your Green Card. If you are in the process of obtaining new employment you may use other documents listed on the Form I-9 (Employment Eligibility Verification Form) for employment verification purposes. However, if you need a new Green Card for employment or benefits verification purposes, you should apply and pay the \$130 filing fee to renew your expiring Green Card.

Q. What if I applied for naturalization less than six months before my card expires, or I choose to apply for naturalization instead of applying to renew my Green Card?

A. If you have applied for naturalization **less than six months prior to your card's expiration**, you will still need to apply and pay the \$130 filing fee to renew your expiring Green Card and ensure that you have evidence of your legal status.