

Justification for Non-Substantive Change

1405-0004 (DS-11), Application for a U.S. Passport

The Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs requests a revision to the instructions on Form DS-11. Currently these forms instruct passport applicants that photos showing the applicant wearing dark eyeglasses will not be accepted unless the applicant provides a statement from a doctor that the applicant wears the dark eyeglasses for medical reasons. The Department has authority to establish the criteria for acceptable passport photographs under 22 C.F.R. 51.26. Recently, the Department began using facial recognition technology as part of its review of all passport applications. Facial recognition technology enhances the Department's ability to detect passport fraud by identifying applicants who apply or have previously applied for a U.S. passport or a U.S. visa using a fraudulent identity. The Department has found that glasses of any kind can significantly reduce the ability of the facial recognition technology to match accurately the applicant's photo with other photos of the same person from different applications. Since the purpose of the facial recognition technology is to detect passport fraud by identifying people applying under different identities, the Department needs to direct applicants to not wear any glasses in their passport photos, with an exception for documented necessary medical reasons.