



Passport photo guidelines

Finland is revising its requirements for passport photos on the basis of the standards set by the International Civil Aviation Organization, an agency of the United Nations. The aim is to standardise passport photos and improve the verification of passport holders' identity. The revised requirements will support the new biometric passports in particular, because the digital facial image to be stored on the passport chip will be used later in automatic face recognition.

At this stage, the guidelines described herein should be regarded as recommendations only. With the introduction of biometric passports in 2006, the guidelines become mandatory. From there on, the photos attached to passport applications must conform to the requirements described here.

This booklet is also available in HTML form at <http://www.police.fi/passport/photoguidelines>.

The guidelines are divided into six categories:

General characteristics: Photo dimensions and other general guidelines. (p. 2)	Background: Requirements for the photo background and children's passport photos. (p. 5)
Position: Guidelines on the position of the subject. (p. 3)	Lighting: Position and intensity of lighting. (p. 6)
Expressions and accessories: Guidelines on facial expressions, glasses and head coverings. (p. 4)	Technical characteristics: Requirements for the print quality and other technical characteristics of the photo. (p. 7)

General characteristics

This page describes the requirements for the dimensions and other general characteristics of the standard passport photo.



1) correct

2) correct

- Both monochrome and colour photos are acceptable.
- The photo attached to a passport application must not be older than six (6) months.



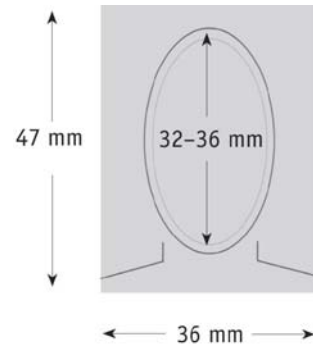
3) correct



4) incorrect:
too far



5) incorrect:
too close



- The photo dimensions remain unchanged: height 47mm, width 36mm, the distance between the bottom of the chin and the top of the head without hair should be 32-36mm in the photo.
- For children younger than 11 years old, a photo with a smaller head size is acceptable if blurring or other distortion cannot otherwise be avoided. In such photos, the height of the head must still be at least 25mm.
- If the subject has a large volume of hair, it is essential to make sure that the distance between the bottom of the chin and the top of the head corresponds to the values given above.

Position of the subject

This page describes the requirements for the position of the subject. The photo must show a full front view of the subject's face with the head centred and both the face and the shoulders turned straight towards the camera.



1) correct



2) incorrect:
shoulders askew



3) incorrect:
head sideways



4) incorrect:
head tilted

- The head must be straight and in the middle of the photo.
- Both the head and the shoulders must be turned straight towards the camera. Portrait-style photos where the subject looks over one shoulder are not acceptable.
- The photo must be taken straight from the front, not from higher up, lower down or from the side.
- The subject must look straight at the camera.

Expressions and accessories

This page describes the requirements for facial expressions, head coverings and glasses. The main principle is that the photo must show the subject's full face, with eyes open and clearly visible.



1) correct



2) incorrect:
mouth open



3) incorrect:
raised eyebrows



4) incorrect:
squinting

- The expression must be neutral.
- The mouth must be closed.
- The eyes must be open and clearly visible.



5) correct



6) incorrect:
forehead covered



7) incorrect:
shadows across face



8) incorrect:
frames covering eyes



9) incorrect:
reflections on glasses

- The photo must show the subject's full face; e.g. garments or hair must not cover any part of the face. Particularly eyes must be clearly visible. Sample picture 8 shows the frames partially covering the eyes, and in sample picture 9, the eyes are concealed by the light reflected from the glasses.
- Tinted glasses and eye patches are allowed only for medical reasons. If the subject has glasses that darken in bright light, the darkening should be prevented by adjusting the background lighting or direct illumination when taking the photo. If this is not possible, the glasses must be removed.

Background

This page describes the requirements for the photo background and children's passport photos.



1) correct



2) incorrect:
uneven
background



3) incorrect:
busy
background



4) incorrect:
dark background

- The photo must be taken against a plain background.
- The colour of the background must be neutral and lighter than the face. The preferable colour is 18% grey.
- There must be no shadows in the background.
- The face must be clearly distinguishable against the background.



5) correct



6) incorrect:
toy, pillow visible



7) incorrect:
shows another
person

- Other people or objects must not be visible in the photo. A small child may be supported, but no part of the supporter is to be visible.
- For children younger than 11 years old, a photo with a smaller head size is acceptable, if blurring or other distortion cannot otherwise be avoided. In such photos, the height of the head must still be at least 25mm.

Lighting

This page describes the requirements for the position and intensity of lighting.



1) correct



2) incorrect:
hot spot on the
forehead



3) incorrect:
directional light,
shadow

- The lighting must be uniform: the face and the background must be free of shadows and hot spots.
 - Hot spots typically appear on the cheeks and the forehead when using a single source of focused, high-intensity light. Diffused lighting, multiple balanced sources or other method of uniform lighting is recommended.
 - The red-eye effect caused by the flash must be prevented.
- The colour of the lighting must be natural, not bluish or reddish, for example.



4) correct



5) incorrect:
overexposed



6) incorrect:
underexposed

- The photo must not be over- or underexposed.

Technical characteristics of the photo

This page describes the requirements for the print quality and other technical characteristics of the photo.



1) correct



2) incorrect:
unnatural
colour, stains



3) incorrect:
pixelated

- The photo must be printed on high-quality photograph paper.
- The photo must be in sharp focus.
- The photo must be clean: no scratches, stains or wrinkles are allowed.
- No manipulation or retouch of the photo is allowed.



4) correct



5) incorrect:
optical distortion

- For 35mm photography, the focal length should be between 90-130mm.
- The use of a wide-angle lens is not allowed.