



# X Passports: Nonbinary Travel Safety

## Summary

In 2023, the U.S. Department of State began issuing passports with an “X” gender marker for nonbinary, intersex, and gender non-conforming travelers. OSAC has received inquiries about the safety of those traveling on these passports. These are valid, government-issued passports and should be accepted everywhere as any other U.S. passport, but OSAC is aware of travelers encountering issues. There may be additional concerns that security managers want to consider in order to best support their travelers regardless of the destination country.

## U.S. Department of State Resources

The U.S. Department of State maintains resources for LGBTQI+ travelers [here](#). Each country page on [Travel.State.gov](#) notes relevant information under the “Special Laws and Circumstances” tab. The OSAC [Country Security Reports](#) also maintain information about LGBTQI+ concerns for each country, and are working to incorporate any known issues with entering on an X gender passport. This [page](#) contains more information about the X marker and how to select this option for new passports.

The U.S. Department of State is aware of countries that do not accept X gender passports, and their country pages on [Travel.State.gov](#) provide details on available assistance at the nearest embassy or consulate. While the United States government issues passports with the X marker, it cannot guarantee your entry or transit through other countries. Before you travel, check with the foreign embassy or consulate in the United States for more information.

## Considerations

**U.S. Nationality:** Any country that recognizes U.S. passports should make no distinction as to the gender on the passport. There are countries where traveling on a U.S. passport exposes the traveler to greater scrutiny by local officials. If local officials are looking for pretext to harass U.S. travelers, they may use an X gender marker as justification. However, most countries, even those with laws hostile to local LGBTQI+ populations, are less likely to harass a U.S. traveler since being an expatriate often affords some degree of isolation from local customs.

**Local Laws:** Most countries do not have laws about nonbinary, intersex, or gender-nonconforming individuals, particularly laws that would decide the permissibility of X gender passports. In countries with anti-LGBTQI+ policies, laws often only criminalize male homosexual activity and say nothing about transgender people. It is also likely that trans women and femme-presenting people face more concerns than trans men in countries that only criminalize male homosexuality or crossdressing. Often these differences are culturally understood, but not written into the formal laws. Note also that authorities may use local anti-prostitution laws against LGBTQI+ people traveling with items such as gender-affirming prosthetics, which they may classify as “sex paraphernalia.”

**Anti-LGBTQI+ Sentiment:** Most customs officials in most countries will conduct themselves with professionalism regardless of their individual beliefs about LGBTQI+ identities. However, unofficial harassment can still occur based on individual attitudes; this can occur anywhere and is not predictable based on country or region.

**Airport Logistics:** Many countries separate travelers by sex for security screenings. Travelers often self-select into the line they are most comfortable in without having their documents checked. Your traveler

should have a plan in advance to either follow officials' guidance to join the line they are directed to even if it does not match their identity, or should proactively request a private screening. These requests may or may not be granted. While travelers should always treat local officials with respect, it is the prerogative of the traveler to decide how to handle these situations that may force them into a binary decision. If this is likely to be an issue, travelers should leave additional time to comfortably navigate airport security. Airport officials' response to interactions like these likely differs by airport and by person.

## Additional Information

For more information on this topic, contact OSAC's regional teams.

- OSAC Report: [Supporting LGBTQI+ Employees Abroad](#)

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