



APPS & TECHNOLOGY

Mobile Passport Control: skip the line at US customs

A free CBP app that cuts 20–45 minutes off your re-entry to the US. We wish every client knew about it.

Prepared by Demo Advisor · April 20, 2026

ADVISOR TIP

Demo content — illustrative only. This is a showcase of Compass features, not travel advice. Verify anything you'd actually act on.

Mobile Passport Control (MPC) is CBP's free app that lets eligible US citizens and lawful permanent residents submit customs forms from their phone and use a dedicated expedited line at 30+ US airports. It's free, takes 2 minutes to set up, and saves 20–45 minutes of line time on arrival.

IMPORTANT

MPC is free. If you see a "MobilePassport" app charging a subscription, you've got the wrong one. The official app is published by CBP directly and has "CBP Mobile Passport Control" in the name.

Before your trip

1. Download "CBP Mobile Passport Control" from the App Store or Google Play.
2. Open the app and tap "Add Traveler."
3. Take a photo of your passport — the app fills in your info.
4. Take a selfie. The app uses it for facial recognition at arrival.
5. Save your profile. You only do this once.

At the airport (after you land)

1. Before you disembark, open the app and tap "New Trip."
2. Answer the 4 customs questions (food, livestock, currency over \$10k, etc.).
3. Select your arrival airport.
4. Submit. You'll get a QR receipt valid for 4 hours.
5. Walk to the MPC line (separate from the regular customs line — usually marked clearly).
6. Show the QR code to the CBP officer. Have your passport ready in case.

Where MPC works

MPC is available at most major US international airports, including ATL, BOS, DEN, DFW, IAD, JFK, LAX, MIA, ORD, PHL, PHX, SAN, SEA, SFO — plus the Canadian pre-clearance airports (YVR, YYZ, YUL) and several cruise ports. The CBP app lists all supported locations.

Common questions

Is this the same as Global Entry?

No. Global Entry costs \$120 for 5 years and involves a background check and interview. MPC is free, no interview, no background check. If you have GE, use that — it's faster. If you don't, MPC is the next-best option.

Can I submit for my whole family?

Yes. Add each family member as a traveler under your profile. Submit one trip that includes everyone.

Does it work if I'm bringing goods to declare?

Only if declarations fit within the standard 4 yes/no questions. Anything unusual, use the regular line so you can talk to an officer.

What if my QR expires before I reach the officer?

Just submit again. The 4-hour window rarely expires unless your plane sits on the tarmac for hours.

ADVISOR TIP

Pro move: submit your trip while still on the plane, before the WiFi cuts out. The QR code is stored locally — you don't need connectivity at the customs desk.

If you travel internationally more than twice a year, Global Entry is still the best \$24/year (amortized) you'll spend. MPC is perfect for the in-between.
