

## U.S. passport delays getting longer

by UPI

AUSTIN, Texas - U.S. travelers planning to travel outside the country this summer are caught in a backlog that adds weeks to the time it takes to get passports.

As of January, U.S. citizens must have passports to travel by air to Canada and Mexico -- and this is typically the busiest time of the year for passport applications, as people plan summer vacations, the Austin American-Statesman said Thursday.

In March, the State Department was telling people it would take 10 weeks for a passport. The official word is that it now takes 12 weeks, although a Texas woman said the National Passport Information Center recently told her that applications can take up to 14 weeks.

Even an expedited application can take up to three weeks, the State Department said.

A spokesman for consular affairs with the State Department said applications are up 33 percent so far over last year, the newspaper said.

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