

Guardianship of a Minor While Traveling

Q: What does the Federal Government say about minors traveling?

A: Federal Law requires that all minors (under the age of 18) traveling internationally must be accompanied by a legally appointed guardian if traveling without one or both parents. It is required that the guardian carry the ORIGINAL GUARDIANSHIP PAPERWORK THAT HAS BEEN NOTARIZED BY A NOTARY PUBLIC AND SIGNED BY ALL LEGAL GUARDIANS.

Q: Who needs a guardianship form?

A: Any child under the age of 18 traveling with only one parent or a legally appointed guardian.

Situations to be aware of when filling out the Guardianship Form

If parents are married:

1. If both parents are traveling with a minor child, no guardianship is required
2. If only one parent is traveling with a minor child, the guardianship form is used to establish that both parents are aware of the trip and that one parent is being listed as the sole guardian of the minor during the stated period of time. Both parents need to sign the form acknowledging that this arrangement is approved by all current legal guardians
3. If neither parent is traveling with a minor child, the guardianship form is used to establish that both parents are aware of the trip and they are legally naming a third party as the guardian of the minor during the stated period of time. Both parents need to sign the form and acknowledge that they are aware of and approve of the legal guardian.

If parents are divorced:

1. If parents are divorced and share custody of a minor child, the same rules apply as above.
2. If parents are divorced and cannot appear before the same notary public, two separate forms can be used to establish a common legal guardian for the trip. The same legal guardian and trip date has to be named on both forms.
3. If parents are divorced and sole custody is established: the minor can travel with the parent who has custody without the need for a guardianship form (however, it may be wise to have a copy of the court papers showing sole custody in your carryon luggage in case you are asked to provide legal documentation for your claim to the child).
 - a. If minor is traveling alone the guardianship form needs to be filled out by the parent with sole custody only.

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If no parents are available and a third party has been granted custody of the minor:

1. The same rules would apply as for parents; however the guardian traveling with the minor should carry a copy of the court papers which appoint sole custody.

If you have any more questions you can call the Operation Serve International offices at 513-939-2000 for more information. The guardianship form that we have provided is required to be notarized and a COPY of it should be submitted to the main offices along with the application for the minor.

Because it is required that minors be accompanied by their guardian at all times while serving, we suggest that more than one person be named as a guardian for each minor. If a guardian is ill the secondary guardian can assume custody for the minor without any interruption to the services that the team provides.

Information on filling out the form:

Fill in the minor's information as it appears on their passport. If the minor does not have a passport yet wait until you receive it to fill out the guardianship form (team applications can be turned in without the guardianship copy).

Only name guardians that will be traveling with the minor, a guardian have to be over the age of 18 and should be someone that you trust.

Do not sign the form until you are in front of a Notary Public. Do not fill in the information in the section marked for the Notary Public.