

## DUAL NATIONALITY

Dual nationality means that a person is a citizen of two countries at the same time. Each country has its own citizenship laws based on its own policy. Persons may have dual nationality by automatic operation of different laws rather than by choice. For example, a child born in a foreign country to U.S. citizen parents may be both a U.S. citizen and a citizen of the country of birth.

### *HOW IT HAPPENS*

One may acquire dual nationality in several ways. For example, a U.S. citizen may acquire foreign nationality by marriage.

### *CAN I LOSE U.S. CITIZENSHIP?*

U.S. law does not mention dual nationality or require a person to choose one citizenship over another. A person who is *automatically* granted another citizenship does not risk losing U.S. citizenship. However, a person who acquires a foreign citizenship by applying for it may lose U.S. citizenship.

In order to lose U.S. nationality, the law requires that the person must apply for the foreign citizenship voluntarily, by free choice, and with the intention to give up U.S. nationality. Intent can be shown by the person's statements or conduct. Most countries permit a person to renounce or otherwise lose citizenship.

Note: Becoming a naturalized U.S. citizen requires an oath renouncing allegiance to other countries. In some cases this will result in loss of citizenship in the country you were a previous citizen of. In other cases, it will not. This depends upon the law of the country you were a citizen of before.

### *WHOSE LAW APPLIES?*

The U.S. Government recognizes that dual nationality exists but does not encourage it as a matter of policy because of the problems it may cause. Claims of other countries on dual U.S. nationals may conflict with U.S. law, and dual nationality may limit U.S. government's efforts to assist nationals abroad. The country where a dual national is physically located generally has a stronger claim to that person's allegiance.

### *TO WHOM DO I PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE?*

Dual nationals are required to obey the laws of both the United States and the foreign country, and, except for naturalized U.S. dual nationals, they owe allegiance to both the foreign country and the U.S. Either country has the right to enforce its laws, particularly if the person later travels there. Most U.S. nationals, including dual nationals, must use a U.S. passport to enter and leave the United States. Dual nationals may also be required by the foreign country to use its passport to enter and leave that country. Use of the foreign passport does not endanger U.S. nationality.

Information on losing foreign citizenship can be obtained from the foreign country's embassy and consulates in the United States. Americans can renounce U.S. nationality in the proper form at U.S. embassies and consulates abroad.

More information is available online at: <http://travel.state.gov/>

## HOURS OF OPERATION

### Legal Assistance

*(Attorney consults by appointment only)*

### Will Appointments

Please complete Will worksheet BEFORE you make a will appointment! Stop by or call our office for more information.

### Italian Legal Assistance

*(Attorney consults by appointment only)*

### Powers of Attorney/Notaries

Mon-Fri 0745 - 1630

You can complete power of attorney, will worksheets, and read information at <https://aflegalassistance.law.af.mil>

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Current as of April 2022