

# Replacing the Green Card

**By Reuben S. Seguritan**

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The alien registration receipt, or more commonly known as the green card, comes in various versions in previous years: Form I-151, Form AR-3 and Form AR 103. Currently, green cards are identified as Form I-551.

Other than the color shading of the card, one other significant difference is that the new card carries a ten year expiration date. The old card has no expiration date. The expiration date has no bearing on alien's status; it only applies to the validity of the card.

Permanent residents should prepare to apply for a replacement card should any one of these conditions apply:

1. Alien is in possession of old edition of the card.
2. Alien's card was lost, stolen or destroyed.
3. Alien needs a corrected version of information on the card.
4. Alien has never received his card even after being admitted as lawful permanent resident
5. Alien has turned 14 years old.

A full set of fingerprint record is required from all replacement applicants who are 14 years or older.

When considerable time has elapsed since a permanent resident adjusted status or entered the United States, he may inquire first from his local INS district office if the paperwork has been sent to the card processing facility in Texas. Smaller offices will usually go through the trouble of locating an alien's paperwork. If nothing comes out of the search, alien will be instructed to file the Form G-731. Larger INS offices will usually require an alien to fill out a G-731 right off. Form G-731 is the Inquiry Regarding Status of Green Card.

Once the INS office receives the notice from the facility stating that no paperwork was received by the facility, specifically, the Form I-89 which had been previously completed by alien with a stamp of his forefinger, his signature and photograph attached to it, the INS office will then only start to determine the cause of the delay in the issuance of alien's alien registration receipt card.

The inquiry form or G-731 is meant to be sent directly to the card processing facility in Texas by the alien. Permanent resident aliens may use this form normally after waiting 90 days since alien's adjustment of status interview, or 60 days since his entry to the US with his new immigrant visa status.