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Administrative Assistant to
The Secretary of the Army



Directorate of
Executive Travel
(DET)

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DoD Passport and Visa Office Newsletter



Andy Hare Director DET

Happy Spring everyone. As we roll into the Summer months, the Washington, DC Spring brings with it warm temperatures, beautiful downtown sights and sounds and the obligatory allergy sneezes and coughs. It has been a busy Winter and early Spring in the passports and visas arena and this newsletter will hopefully bring you up to date on the significant actions taking place.

First and foremost, deployment of the Visa and Passport Automated System (VPAS) version 3.0 draws close! I have been amazed at the teams of IT professionals and our subject matter experts and testing groups that have been involved behind the scenes in making this application the best it can possibly be. As I discussed with you in the last newsletter, change is sometimes daunting but I am convinced that VPAS will be an

enormous improvement in terms of data capture and tracking and its evolving ability to provide key metrics to users and senior leaders alike. With any major application upgrade, it's normal to expect glitches in the course of routine business and I am confident we have the right people in place to quickly identify those and get updates out to repair them. Communication DoD-wide between the users both here and abroad is key to the continued development and success of the program.

We are continuing to work on the loss of access to Passport Matters to non-.mil addresses. As you can imagine given the news of today, the need for a robust Cyber Security program throughout DoD has impacted all of us in one way or another. That said, we have our IT and program experts working every day with the Cyber community to ensure key sites get back online for everyone as soon as possible. I cannot emphasize enough the need for current agents to get their training requirements met as soon as possible. We are closely tracking the agents whose training certifications will expire over the next few months and reaching out to Commands and facility

managers as much as possible to identify those agents who may be at risk. Again, as you listen to the nightly news, the focus on proper passport and visa procedures has never been more crucial to national security. It's imperative that agents keep current with their training requirements so that facilities can remain properly manned to handle their community's needs and meet the rigorous standards of the global program. To this end, our Department of State partners are working with us closely to create additional training opportunities, whether it be additional classes or rolling into the world of online distance learning opportunities. Stay tuned for information as soon as it becomes available.

I'd like to wish a fond farewell to Tom Wiecks, Chief, Passports and Visas. Tom accepted a promotion with the Office of the Secretary of Defense and departed DET in April. Tom was a true expert in this field and I will forever be grateful for the time, patience, expertise and most importantly his friendship that he provided me on a daily basis since the mission merged with DET. On behalf of the men and women of DET, thank you Tom, you will be missed. (cont pg 2)

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Director's Message (cont)

As I close out this column for the quarterly newsletter and continue my learning process, I want to again offer my gratitude to everyone including facility managers, agents, State Department and Special Issuance Agency personnel and of course my

own team here for their dedication, loyalty and attention to detail. This program is so critical to our nation and you should take pride every day in being a part of that. Your willingness to communicate, adapt and offer patience as we move toward a bet-

ter passports and visas program world-wide has not been overlooked or taken for granted. I hope you enjoy health and happiness as we enter the Summer and I look forward to providing you an update in the next newsletter. Be well.

Visa News and Updates

The Government of India will now require all persons traveling on official business with a U.S. diplomatic or official passport to present an original diplomatic note with their visa application. The Department of State's Special Issuance Agency (SIA) will continue to support U.S. government official travelers as described below. Individuals applying for Indian visas must provide the information referenced in the attached form to TSD at Ft Belvoir, we will then forward to DoS/SIA. SIA will use that information to generate the required diplomatic note. A fillable version of this form will be available on SIA's website at <https://travel.state.gov/content/sia/en.html>. Incomplete forms may delay processing. Completed diplomatic notes will be picked

up at SIA by our couriers, generally within two business days of SIA's receipt of the request and completed form.

Indian Visa Questionnaire

Information Required for Indian Official and Diplomatic Visa Request

- i. Name and date of birth:
- ii. Position and title:
- iii. Is this a new position or replacement (with details of person being replaced):
- iv. Place of assignment or visit:
- v. Travel date and anticipated length of stay or visit in India:
- vi. Purpose of travel:
- vii. Invitation letter from sponsoring organization in India (if any):
- viii. Description of duties:
- ix. Type of visa request-

ed (Diplomatic or Official):

- x. Details of prior visits to India:
- xi. Information about any other nationality, if held:
- xii. The names, relationships, and dates of birth of any dependents and other members of household who will be accompanying or joining the principal:

If there are additional questions please contact our customer service team at 703-545-0003/0004.

Passport and Visa Quarterly Update will Be held May 24 and 26 at 1300 EST This event will be hosted at the following link:
<https://conference.apps.mil/webconf/368b0c9d36c59b88edfb56e5434f64a1>

Audio Bridge information to follow on Passport Matters.

Passport News and Updates

Often questions are raised on which form to use when applying or renewing a passport. The following checklist, should help alleviate some of this worry.

Customers applying for an Official U.S. Passport can use the DS-82 Form if they are eligible. They must complete the checklist below to determine if they are eligibility to use the form. Here is the checklist:

“I can submit my most recent U.S. passport book and/or U. S. passport card with this application.”

“I was at least 16 years old when my most recent U. S. passport book and/or passport card issued.”

“I was issued my most recent U.S. passport book and/ or passport card less than 15 years ago.”

This is a very important question! The passport book or card must be less than 15 years old!

“My most recent U. S. passport book and/or U.S. passport card that I am renewing has not been lost, stolen, mutilated, or damaged.”

“I use the same name as on my recent U.S. passport book and/or U.S. passport card.”

“I have had my name changed by marriage or court order and can submit proper documentation to reflect my name change.”

Final two statements:

“If you answered NO to any of the statements above, STOP –You cannot use this form!”

“You must apply on application form DS-11 by making a personal appearance before an acceptance agent authorized to accept passport applications.”

This checklist is located on page one of the DS-82 U.S Passport Renewal Application for Eligible Individuals.

Finally, if you have any questions concerning the DS-82 form, please call our DET Customer Service number at 703-545-0003/0004.

Customer Service Operations news and updates

Welcome to spring and with that comes a few personnel moves. As Mr Hare noted, Mr Tom Wiecks accepted a new position working in the Pentagon. I would like to echo Mr Hare and add Tom did a fantastic job over the past two years. His friendship and expertise will be missed. We have one additional loss that has impacted our team. Ms Betty Siadto has decided to retire. Betty is an icon within the DoD Passport process and that loss of experience will be very hard to replace. As we push forward, we have made three job offers and are reviewing resumes for a

few additional positions. One other key point I would like to make you aware of is the addition of a New Agent Course to be held at Ft Belvoir this summer. The date is still being worked.

The anticipated unveiling of VPAS3 has hit a milestone, the new tool was moved from the test server to the production server. We are still testing the tool in the new environment to see if any of the process broke in the new environment. We will be asking the few facilities that helped with the testing to start loading transactions into the new tool over the next week or two. Once we are

sure the tool is stable and functioning as we intended we will stress the system by opening it to all; but just to establish connectivity and access. Only about 50% of the current agents had the required documentations on file to be rolled over. For the other 50% you will need to sign up as a new prospective agent and upload your required documents. The training course we need you to use will be clearly noted as admin use only to help distinguish between the remaining active training courses. (cont pg 4)

Customer Service Operations (cont)

During the webinars three basic record cloning models came to the forefront: family, unit, and frequent travelers. The major intent of building this functionality is to save you time building the new DD 1056. The general definitions are:

Family – Start with the sponsor and once the DD 1056 is generated you will have a means to add a family member. This action will keep all the sponsor and travel data. The only new data required is to add the new traveler data.

Unit – Develop the first DD 1056 and once the DD 1056 is generated you will have a means to add a unit member. The travel information is the only data that will be saved for the next unit member.

Frequent traveler – Search traveler record and mark the record as new trip. The traveler data will be retained so you can add the next destination and generate a new DD 1056.

For the past 18 months we have been actively working to get all our agents current with the Department of State training requirements.

Last Summer the Special Issuance Agency (SIA) and DoD agreed that the hard cut date was any agent that had not attended training since June 2013. To that end we established three courses to ensure the targeted agents had a training set. As we approach the final course we are still showing 35 agents that must either attend the June course or they will be automatically deactivated. We have eight instances where the agent at risk is the only agent at the facility. In those instances, the facility will be deactivated by default. As we move forward the training requirement will be based on a 24 month rolling period. It is incumbent upon you to ensure you attend training within the required timeframe. One of the enhancements we want to add is to develop a set of automatic emails to help remind you that you need to sign up for training; at the 14/15 month window and again at the 18/19 month window. Your recertification memo is a self-terminating memo based upon the language in paragraph three – “this appointment remains valid for two years or revoked by DoS, SLW/DET, or your supervisor”. Your training cer-

tificate and recertification memo are *inspectable* items by the Acceptance Facility Oversight (AFO) analyst.

Department of State’s Office of Acceptance Facility Oversight (AFO) is scheduled to conduct a blitz of inspections in the New York/New Jersey area the week of 16-20 May 2016. Facilities in and around that area have already been notified about an AFO inspection that week. Another tentative blitz of inspections is scheduled for mid-September 2016 for all active DoD Passport Acceptance facilities in Hawaii, Guam, Japan (including Okinawa), South Korea and Australia. Specific details and dates of facility inspections will be forthcoming in the coming weeks. We would like to remind everyone that AFO blitzes are highly condensed inspection periods where there is little to no flexibility for schedule deviations or adjustments. Access to installations and facilities must be coordinated in advance in order to facilitate these compressed schedules.

Employee Spotlight

This edition we spotlight a superb member of the passport and visa team, Mr. Marcus Shields. Marcus comes to us via Landover, Md and currently is assigned as an intern supporting training operations while pursuing his degree in Business Management from Prince Georges Community College. Marcus is a key player in the organization and administration of our training program. He assists the training coordinator with enrollment, agent documentation verification and when necessary scheduling. Along with

his training duties he has been integral to the modernization of the VPAS program bringing fresh insight on how to make various processes more user friendly, especially for his less technically inclined coworkers.

Marcus' long term goals include completing his 4 year degree and potentially seeking employment with the US Government in one of its many branches. His quiet drive and work ethic will serve him well in any agency he should choose to pursue after graduation.



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Important Notices

Any PAAF that has Dept of State Letterhead/Template for use with the submittal of local area visas, use of the Letterhead/Template must stop. Use of the DoS Letterhead/Template is controlled and any use outside of the Fort Belvoir Passport and Visa Office is in violation of the agreement between Dept of State and Dept of Defense.

As a reminder any walkthrough services at the Dept of State must first be approved and coordinated by the DOD Passport and Visa office at Fort Belvoir. Applicants without prior approval and coordination will be turned away and asked to return once they have the proper approval.

Please remember that the recertification window for those agents outside the 2 year window is quickly coming to a close. If you have not scheduled your class you must do so immediately to avoid suspension or removal of your agent ID.

Prior to submitting a visa request please be sure to check Passport Matters website at <https://passportmatters.hqda.pentagon.mil/index.aspx>