



**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT TO THE SECRETARY  
U.S. ARMY HEADQUARTERS SERVICES  
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FORT BELVOIR VA 22060-5527

AAHS-ZA

27 JUN 2013

MEMORANDUM FOR DOD PASSPORT AGENTS

SUBJECT: Command Support of the DOD Passport and Visa Office

1. The DOD Passport and Visa Office is responsible for ensuring compliance with passport and visa applications, as well as accountability and protection of DOD passport and visa documents to include appropriate supporting documents required for validation prior to issuance of passports and visas. As you may be aware, the DOD Passport and Visa Office has a severe manpower shortage resulting from a personnel hiring freeze due to sequestration, which will be further impacted by the upcoming DOD civilian furlough. The result of these personnel shortages is extended processing time for both passports and visas. We are obtaining additional personnel; but regret the impact on DOD overseas travel.
2. Recently, we have experienced an unusually high volume of individuals coming to "wait" in our DOD Passport and Visa Office lobby for their passport to be completed by the State Department or their visa to be issued by a foreign embassy. These visitors are disruptive to the operation and frankly are adding to the processing time.
3. Additionally, in recent months, a number of passport agents and travelers have contacted an embassy directly about the status of their visa request. These inquiries are very disruptive to both DOD processes and also the embassy processes. The embassies are also under strain during the summer--the peak traveling season. In many cases such direct contact with embassies by DOD travelers (unfortunately sometimes belligerent) causes immeasurable harm to our relationship with the embassy. In one recent case, a traveler visited the Italian embassy demanding a status on their visa request. As a result, the embassy withdrew our ability to do "walk through" requests. Further, they asked that we don't call the embassy for status updates. As you can imagine, this impacts many travelers and greatly hampers our ability to provide support.
4. We understand your frustration regarding the extended time to process a passport or a visa request and the stress it can cause. We are doing all that we can to minimize the impact on both the travelers and our DOD passport agents. In return, we ask that you comply with our recent request to provide both passport and visa requests at least 60 days prior to your expected travel date. We are committed to working with each of our DOD passport agents to ensure our DOD travelers get their travel documents on time. We also ask that in cases where large groups are traveling together, or you have large batches of passports or visa requests for one location, that you contact us immediately so we can make arrangements to most efficiently process your requests.

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5. I greatly appreciate your continued support of the DOD Passport and Visa Office and request you place increased emphasis on the timely submission of requests. Also, your cooperation with DOD and the embassies by respecting embassy requests to only interface with our DOD Passport and VISA Office will go a long way in creating more effective business practices and more expeditious receipt of travel documents for all DOD travelers. We greatly appreciate your support.

  
STEVEN J. REDMANN  
Executive Director

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Commanders, Passport Agent Acceptance Facilities