



4. DEFINITIONS.

- a. Department of Defense (DOD) Foreign Clearance Guide (FCG). A reference source containing detailed information on special travel areas, foreign country entrance requirements, and geographic combatant commanders' requirements on visits within their areas of responsibility. The DOD FCG can be found in reference (b).
- b. Department of State (DOS) Special Issuance Agency (SIA). The DOS SIA mandates all policy regarding the issuance and handling of official passports. The DOS SIA is responsible for processing and issuing all diplomatic and official passports worldwide as well as all military and military dependents' passport applications in the United States.
- c. Official Foreign Travel. Travel to the sovereign territory of another nation (including Canada and Mexico) by active, reserve, civilian, or auxiliary Coast Guard personnel under orders for official purposes. It also includes foreign travel by contractors for official purposes, as well as those personnel travelling on Coast Guard-issued invitational orders per reference (c). It does not include travel while on leave.
- d. Official No-Fee Passports. Passports issued to Coast Guard personnel and their family members to be used for carrying out official duties while on orders. The official passport is often referred to as the "no-fee" passport, as there is no fee charged to the passport applicant or the U.S. Coast Guard. The no-fee passport carries an endorsement that identifies the bearer as an agent of the U.S. Government proceeding abroad on official travel, and is unique to official no-fee passports. The types of no-fee official passports provided for official travel are: Diplomatic (black), Official (maroon), and Dependent (blue) no-fee.
- e. Dependent Passport. An official passport issued to Coast Guard family members (dependents) who will be permanently accompanying Coast Guard personnel upon PCS transfer to a foreign country where an official passport is required for entry or exit.
- f. Diplomatic Passport. A passport issued to a Foreign Service Officer, a person in the diplomatic service, or to a person having diplomatic status either because of the nature of his or her foreign mission or by reason of the office he or she holds. Where appropriate, dependents of such persons may be issued diplomatic passports.
- g. Official Passport Acceptance Agent (OPAA). A person authorized and empowered by the Secretary of State and the U.S. Coast Guard Commandant to administer oaths and to accept and execute (sign) applications for no-fee passports for U.S. Coast Guard personnel and family members on official orders. OPAA's are not permitted to process tourist passport applications for U.S. Coast Guard personnel or family members for personal use. The OPAA appointment remains valid until canceled or revoked by the Department of State (DOS) or Commandant (CG-DCO-I). Cancellation automatically occurs when the OPAA is no longer employed by the U.S. Coast Guard. Designation will be terminated upon designee's sub-standard performance. Any unit may elect to have a member of their unit obtain an OPAA appointment by attending OPAA training described in section 11 of this Instruction. While OPAA's are not mandatory at a unit, Commandant (CG-DCO-I) recommends participation in the program to assist all unit members in

obtaining their official and diplomatic passports as swiftly and efficiently as possible to meet all mission requirements.

- h. Tourist Passports. Passports issued to personnel for leave/personal travel only. Tourist passports are not authorized for official travel unless otherwise indicated in reference (b) and must be obtained at a member's own initiative and expense.
  - i. Visa. A visa permits entry into the sovereign territory of another nation for single or multiple entries and for a specific period of time. Visas are usually entered into a passport via stamp, paper seal, or foil. Visas are issued by foreign embassies and consulates of these governments in the U.S. or abroad. Embassies are located in Washington, D.C., while consulates can be found in a variety of major cities throughout the U.S. Consulate locations vary significantly.
  - j. NATO Orders. NATO orders permit entry of members of Armed Forces belonging to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) using a travel order format, which, when such members present their identification card, exempts them from passport, visa, and immigration inspection and allows them to individually and collectively pass easily from one NATO nation to another. The format for NATO orders can be found in reference (d).
5. POLICY. Military and civilian personnel conducting official Coast Guard travel are required to use official credentials when entering a foreign country in accordance with reference (b).
- a. Identification requirements to enter a foreign country may vary depending on the country, and all travelling personnel shall read the applicable section(s) of reference (b) to determine what credentials they will need to present upon arrival to gain authorization for entry.
    - (1) Official passports are only issued to Coast Guard personnel and dependents whose official duties are expected to result in international travel to a country requiring an official passport to enter or exit that country per reference (b). In such cases, personnel shall only use official, diplomatic, and dependent passports as credentials. Members must state the specific country (or countries) they will be travelling to when applying for an official passport.
      - (a) Members assigned to Coast Guard units that must be capable of rapidly deploying to supplement U.S. armed forces overseas to respond to global crises shall apply for an official passport upon transferring to the new unit, as these members must have immediate access to an official passport at all times.
        - 1. Maritime Safety and Security Teams (MSSTs);
        - 2. National Strike Force Units (NSFs);
        - 3. Port Security Units (PSUs); and
        - 4. Deployable Operations Group (DOG) Deployable Element.

- (b) Only members of those units listed in paragraph 5.a.(1)(a) will be issued an official passport by the DOS without the need to declare specific travel plans. All other travelers must list a specific country(s) that they will be travelling to on their passport application package in order for the DOS to issue the traveler a passport.
1. Coast Guard cutter crews arriving in a foreign country via a Coast Guard cutter will not be issued official passports unless the members are required to obtain a passport in accordance with reference (b). Cutter crews will not be issued passports as a contingency; i.e., if a crew member is scheduled to arrive in a foreign country via Coast Guard cutter and depart via Coast Guard cutter, and that country does not require a military member arriving/departing via cutter to obtain an official passport, then they will not be issued an official passport.
  2. If a member of a Coast Guard cutter must embark or disembark the ship in a foreign port of call and that country requires an official passport to enter or exit via ground, air, or sea transportation, then that member is authorized to obtain an official passport.
  3. In the event that a military member must enter/depart a foreign country in an emergent circumstance (i.e. serious medical need) and the member does not have an official passport where one is normally required, commanding officers shall contact the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate and make the necessary arrangements to accommodate their member.
  4. The United States does not require U.S. military members to present an official passport upon arrival in the United States when returning from official travel. Military members are required to present their military Common Access Card (military id) and orders to Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) officials. This does not apply to members returning to the United States following leave and/or personal travel; in this case a tourist passport must be presented upon arrival.
- (2) In those countries where an official passport is not required, other accepted forms of identification, such as military id and USCG and/or NATO travel orders shall suffice.
- (3) Although rare, certain countries require a tourist passport in lieu of official credentials. If this is the case, travelers shall contact Commandant (CG-DCO-I) for further guidance.
- b. Unpaid Child Support. The U.S. Health and Human Services (HHS) maintains a list of names of individuals who owe child support payments in excess of \$2500. Anyone certified by the Secretary of HHS as owing more than \$2500 in child support payments will be denied a U.S. passport of any type. HHS communicates with the state child support enforcement agencies when arrangements have been made for payment of the child support, and subsequently notifies the DOS. A letter will immediately be sent to the applicant to inform him/her of the passport denial. The applicant must contact the child support enforcement agency with jurisdiction over the specific case to arrange for payment

and fulfillment of any further obligations. The DOS and Commandant (CG-DCO-I) have no jurisdiction over unpaid child support cases, and cannot expedite the process in any way.

## 6. DISCUSSION.

- a. Processing Point. All applications for official, diplomatic, and dependent passports are to be sent to Commandant (CG-DCO-I) for review and processing. Upon review by Commandant (CG-DCO-I) all official, diplomatic, and dependent passports are forwarded to the DOS SIA, Washington, D.C.
- b. Agency Interaction. The Official Travel Section of the DOS SIA coordinates approval and return of official, diplomatic, and dependent passports with Commandant (CG-DCO-I).
- c. Validity. Official and dependent passports are normally valid for five years but may be issued only for the stated duration of official travel. This is done in an effort to mitigate the number of official passports that are in possession of non-travelling Coast Guard members. Diplomatic passports are normally valid for the duration of the assigned tour. A passport is valid only when signed by the bearer in the proper space.

(1) Coast Guard Auxiliary members are authorized an official passport valid for one year.

(2) Dependents accompanying a Coast Guard member on a PCS OCONUS assignment will typically be issued an official passport for the duration of the Coast Guard member's tour, provided it is required by the foreign country in which the Coast Guard member is stationed. Dependents accompanying military members on PCS travel to Alaska and are flying in/out of Alaska (i.e. not passing via ground transportation through the Canadian border) do not need an official passport and subsequently will not be issued one. If the dependent is transiting to Alaska via ground transportation, they are eligible for the official passport. However, if they are returning with their military family member on PCS travel from Alaska to CONUS and will be passing via ground transportation through the Canadian border on their final transit, the dependent(s) will normally be issued a dependent passport valid for only one year simply to facilitate the PCS travel.

## 7. PASSPORT APPLICATION PROCEDURES.

- a. Official No-Fee Passports. Official passports shall only be issued to U.S. Coast Guard personnel whose official duties (temporary or permanent change of station) are expected to result in foreign travel into or out of a country requiring U.S. military and civilian personnel to present an official passport to enter or exit. Personnel applying for an official passport must provide dates of travel, country(s) of travel, and purpose of travel. This is a requirement, and applications submitted without complete travel information will be rejected. All application packages for official passports must be sent to Commandant (CG-DCO-I) for processing. Applicants are not authorized to send any application packages directly to DOS SIA. See enclosure (1) for the "Official No-Fee Passport

Application Checklist”, which details each item that must be included in an application package.

- (1) Timeline. Immediately upon learning of expected travel, personnel shall refer to reference (b) to determine country entrance requirements. If an official passport is required, the traveler shall complete a passport application **as soon as possible**. Average processing time for an official passport is 30-45 business days. When mailing an application package, travelers shall take into account mail delays, federal holidays, weather delays, and any other potential delays.
- (2) Expedite. Commandant (CG-DCO-I) recognizes that international travel may be required on short notice. A passport application may be processed in less than 30 days (20 business days); however, the DOS SIA establishes the passport processing timelines depending on the current volume of applications in process and Commandant (CG-DCO-I) cannot always guarantee a passport return in less than 30 days. Therefore, it is critical that a traveler makes their travel plans accordingly. Travel requiring less than 20 business days to process an official passport will need to have the passport process expedited, and will require further justification from the applicant.
  - (a) Passport applications which require less than 20 business days to process (including postal delivery time) **must** be accompanied by a memorandum of justification signed by the member’s command.
  - (b) The memorandum for expedited processing must contain an original signature, identify the originating unit, and provide the unit’s mailing address.
  - (c) Requests must be dated and contain the following information:
    1. traveler’s last name, first name and middle initial;
    2. date of birth;
    3. commercial telephone number of the approving official signing the correspondence;
    4. date traveler was tasked for TDY or PCS;
    5. why it is imperative that the applicant travel on the date indicated;
    6. justification for late submission;
    7. the date required; and
    8. an enclosure containing either a signed copy of travel orders or associated CGMS message designating member travel.
  - (d) Applications requiring expedited processing should be sent via a DHS-approved commercial express carrier such as FedEx or UPS in order to minimize processing time.
  - (e) The ultimate decision to process a passport rests with the DOS SIA.
- b. Request for No-Fee Passport Form, CG-4650. In addition to the documents identified in subparagraphs (b) and (c) above, personnel applying for official, diplomatic, or dependent

passports must also submit one copy of the form CG-4650. This form must be filled out completely and can be typed or completed in pen. This form can be found online per section 16 (Forms/Reports). If an applicant did not complete their application package with the assistance of an OPAA; or, had someone other than a Coast Guard OPAA execute their DS-11 Form, then they shall have their supervisor sign Block 12 of the CG-4650 in lieu of an OPAA in order to verify their travel and their need for an official passport.

c. Application Procedures for First-time Applicants.

(1) First Time Applicants. First-time applicants include the following personnel: those who are applying for an official, diplomatic, or dependent passport for the first time and have never held any type of U.S. passport; those whose most recent passport (either tourist or official) was issued more than 15 years ago; or, those whose most recent passport was issued while they were less than 16 years of age.

(a) DOS Form DS-11. All first-time applicants shall complete DOS Form DS-11, "Application for a U.S. Passport". This form and instructions for completion can be found online per section 16 (Forms/Reports) of this Instruction. The form may be completed electronically and printed (preferred); or it may be printed out and then filled in by hand.

1. Once the DS-11 form is filled out by the applicant, it must be signed or "executed" by a person certified by the DOS to verify the applicant's proof of U.S. citizenship. Once this person has verified the applicant's identity, they shall sign the DS-11 Form and seal the application package. The Coast Guard has many Official Passport Acceptance Agents (OPAAs) in the field that are certified to execute the DS-11 Form and assist first-time applicants with their application package. Applicants should visit the Commandant (CG-DCO-I) website found in section 16 (Forms/Reports) to obtain a listing of Coast Guard OPAAs. If an applicant's unit does not have an OPAA at their unit or in the near vicinity of their unit, there are several other options available:

- a. OPAAs are not specific to the Coast Guard. The DOS trains and certifies OPAAs within every branch of the U.S. military. There are designated OPAAs at various U.S. military commands that may assist an applicant with preparing and executing the DS-11 Form.
- b. An applicant may appear in person at a regional passport agency or before a clerk of any federal or state court of record, or judge or clerk of any probate court, as these personnel are typically empowered to verify proof of identity and execute the DS-11 Form.
- c. Many U.S. Postal Service offices have one or more designated postal employees that are authorized to accept and execute passport applications. The Post Office may charge an administrative fee to process and sign the

passport application; however, any fee incurred is reimbursable in accordance with references (e) and (f).

- d. A notary public is not authorized to verify proof of identity and cannot execute the DS-11 Form.

Upon executing the DS-11 form, the application package shall be sealed, and the executor must sign over the seal. Once this has been done, Commandant (CG-DCO-I) cannot, by law, open the package. It is the responsibility of the member and the Passport Agent that executed the DS-11 to ensure that the contents within are correct.

d. Subsequent Application Procedures.

- (1) Subsequent Applicants. Subsequent applicants include those personnel who already hold a valid passport, either tourist or official; or, whose most recent passport was issued less than 15 years from the date.

- (a) DOS Form DS-82. All subsequent applicants shall complete DOS Form DS-82, "Application for a U.S. Passport By Mail". This form and the instructions for completing the form can be found online per section 16 (Forms/Reports). The DS-82 Form is very similar to the DS-11; however, the DS-82 is signed solely by the applicant and does not need to be executed by an OPAA. All applicants are strongly encouraged by Commandant (CG-DCO-I) to complete their subsequent application package with the assistance of an OPAA in order to mitigate any errors that could lead to denial of a passport; however, this is not mandatory.

- e. Requirements for Diplomatic Passports. Personnel assigned to U.S. embassies or missions may be eligible for diplomatic passports. Diplomatic title is not automatically assumed and all personnel must be granted diplomatic title by the DOS, Office of Title Rank, prior to processing applications for diplomatic passports. Applicants must provide a copy of their PCS orders noting the assignment to the U.S. embassy with the passport application.

- f. Dependents. All dependents accompanying active duty military and civilian members incident to PCS assignment orders to countries which require an official passport for entrance are entitled to obtain an official passport. Official no-fee dependent passports contain verbiage that indicates the bearer of the passport is a military dependent. The decision to issue dependents an official or diplomatic passport ultimately rests with the DOS. Personnel applying on behalf of a minor under 16 years of age shall consult with their OPAA and refer to the DOS official website in order to determine the requirements for a minor/dependent application, as there are significant restrictions imposed by the DOS associated with a minor's passport application. Failure to comply with DOS regulations will result in denial of the dependent's passport application.

- g. Coast Guard Auxiliary. The Auxiliary is not recognized by DOS SIA as an entity that can normally apply for an official passport to perform duties on behalf of the Coast Guard. In

special circumstances, Auxiliary members may be issued an official passport. Auxiliary members must route their passport requests through the Office of Auxiliary and Boating Safety, Commandant (CG-542), at Coast Guard Headquarters for approval. If Commandant (CG-542) approves the request, it is then forwarded to Commandant (CG-DCO-I) for processing. Auxiliary members will typically be issued a passport valid for one year; however, in the event that an auxiliary member will need an official passport beyond one year's duration, they shall contact Commandant (CG-DCO-I). The final decision to issue an official passport for Auxiliary members rests with the DOS.

- h. Contractors. DOS SIA will issue contracted employees of the Coast Guard official passports strictly on a case-by-case basis. Contractors are directed to obtain a tourist passport; however, contractors may apply for an official passport if they have had significant difficulties entering a foreign country with their tourist passport. This passport will be a limited passport, issued either for contractor's length of travel, contractor's contract length with the U.S. Coast Guard, or any other factor that DOS SIA uses to determine the length of validity. The contractor shall submit the following to apply for an official passport:
- (1) A written statement detailing why the contractor's entry into a foreign country on a tourist passport was not permitted;
  - (2) An endorsement by the command along with or on the written statement;
  - (3) A copy of the contractor's contract with the U.S. Coast Guard (required by DOS SIA); and
  - (4) A copy of the contractor's contract with their contracting company (required by DOS SIA).
- i. Second No-Fee Official Passport. Personnel performing frequent international travel may be eligible to maintain two no-fee official passports at once. The second no-fee official passport is issued to assist with time constraints imposed by obtaining multiple visas for international travel. Applicants should follow the application procedures listed in paragraph 7.c. of this Instruction to apply for the second no-fee official passport. Applicants are required to submit a memorandum detailing six months of projected international travel. Information should include countries of travel, dates of travel, and reason for travel. If the application package lacks the memorandum, or the projected travel does not warrant the need for a second official passport, the request will be denied. The final determination to issue a second no-fee official passport rests with DOS SIA.
- j. Suspensions. If an application package is submitted with inaccurate, incorrect, or incomplete information, DOS SIA will suspend the application. They will not process the passport, and the applicant must submit the required information, or, in most cases, a new application in order to get their passport application processed. The DOS SIA will notify Commandant (CG-DCO-I), who will inform the applicant. If the required information is not submitted within 90 days of suspension, the application will be rejected, and the applicant will need to resubmit an entirely new application package.

8. ALIEN COAST GUARD PERSONNEL AND ALIEN FAMILY MEMBERS. Non-U.S. citizens are not eligible to obtain and use a U.S. passport. This includes Coast Guard personnel who are non-U.S. citizens and their dependents (if their dependents are non-U.S. citizens). Any non-U.S. citizen who is conducting foreign travel must contact the applicable embassy or consulate of the country they are visiting to determine official entry requirements (i.e. passport, visa, etc.).
  
9. ACCOUNTABILITY.
  - a. Custody. No-fee passports are the property of the U.S. Government, not the individuals to whom they are issued. No-fee passports shall be afforded the same level of security as unit health and personnel records. Personnel whose duties require routine foreign travel may maintain custody of their official no-fee passport; however, this will be at command discretion. When making the determination on whether a member(s) may retain custody of their official passport, commands shall take into account frequency of foreign travel, potential for future foreign travel, job description, and the maturity and professionalism of the passport holder. If the command does not authorize individual passport holders to maintain custody of their passport, they must ensure that the passport(s) are properly stored at the unit in a locked container.
  
  - b. Stolen Passport. All passport holders should make a note of their passport number, date of issuance, and date of expiration. This information should be protected and stored away from the passport in case the passport is lost or stolen.
    - (1) If a passport is lost or stolen, DOS Form DS-64, "Statement of Lost or Stolen Passport" must be completed by the member and sent to Commandant (CG-DCO-I) for processing. This form can be found per section 16 (Forms/Reports) of this Instruction. If the loss occurs while traveling in a foreign country, the bearer shall immediately report the loss to the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate, and fill out the DS-64 immediately upon their return to the United States.
  
    - (2) If the member needs to apply for another official passport after their passport is lost or stolen, they shall fill out the DS-11 *in addition* to the DS-64 and submit their package to Commandant (CG-DCO-I). Applicants shall follow all guidance in paragraph 7.b. (1)(a) of this Instruction when completing the DS-11. Although the member may already hold a valid tourist passport, it is DOS policy that a member completes the DS-11 in lieu of a DS-82 when re-applying for a new official passport following the loss of a previous passport.
  
    - (3) All lost or stolen passports and/or visas shall be reported immediately in accordance with reference (g).
  
  - c. Personnel Transfer. Official passport holders must ensure that they retain their passport upon PCS transfer. If the command does not authorize individual passport holders to maintain custody of their passport, the command is responsible for ensuring that official

passports of transferring personnel are transmitted to the new unit immediately upon their departure.

- d. Cancelling Official Passports. Passports shall be returned to Commandant (CG-DCO-I) when a passport holder is separated from the Coast Guard. Commands are responsible for ensuring official passports are returned to Commandant (CG-DCO-I) for all retired, discharged, or deceased personnel; or, when a member's official passport has expired. Commandant (CG-DCO-I) will return passports that are expired or no longer needed to DOS SIA for cancellation and destruction. An official passport is the property of the U.S. Government, and individuals are NOT authorized to destroy a passport on their own accord.
  - (1) Personnel who would like to keep an expired passport book as a memento may do so, and must present a request in writing to Commandant (CG-DCO-I), providing a proper mailing address and contact information in order to return the canceled passport book. Commandant (CG-DCO-I) will ensure the passport is cancelled and returned to the member. A written request to return the canceled passport to the member as a memento will usually be honored, but is not guaranteed. Final authority rests with the DOS SIA.
  - (2) Personnel who separate from the Coast Guard but transfer to another government agency position may keep their official passport if needed in their new position. In this situation, the passport must be officially transferred from agency (DHS) to agency via DOS SIA. A separated member is not allowed to simply retain the passport upon departure from their last Coast Guard unit. The member's most recent command must return the separated member's official passport to Commandant (CG-DCO-I) along with a memorandum explaining that the member has separated from the Coast Guard and has taken a position in another government agency. Commandant (CG-DCO-I) will then return the official passport to DOS SIA, and request a 'hold' on the passport until it is transferred to the new agency. Once the official passport is returned to DOS SIA, Commandant (CG-DCO-I) is no longer responsible for tracking the status of that passport.

## 10. MODIFICATIONS AND RENEWAL.

- a. Supplemental Visa Page Inserts. A passport holder who requires extra visa pages in their passport must make a request to Commandant (CG-DCO-I). DOS SIA will insert a set of 12 blank passport pages in a passport book. They will do this only two times, inserting a maximum total of 24 blank pages into a passport. If a member needs more than 24 blank pages they must obtain a new passport. Any request for supplemental visa page inserts will only be honored provided the passport is valid for at least twelve months. If the member has less than twelve months validity left on their passport and expects to conduct official travel within that year and beyond, the member shall renew their passport vice inserting additional pages.
- b. Renewal. An official passport which is due to expire may be submitted for renewal, provided the member still requires the passport for specified official travel. In order to

renew an official passport, the member must still prepare a complete application package per section 7 of this Instruction. They must include the expired or expiring official passport with their renewal package. Renewal of a passport takes approximately four weeks to process, depending on the time of year.

11. OFFICIAL PASSPORT AGENT ACCEPTANCE (OPAA) TRAINING. Commandant (CG-DCO-I) is responsible for arranging, announcing, and hosting annual OPAA training. The training curriculum is provided by DOS SIA, as DOS SIA is the only agency that can certify U.S. Coast Guard personnel to execute a DS-11 Form.

- a. Commands are encouraged, although not required, to send personnel to OPAA training. Commands are responsible for travel and lodging expenses and other fees that may be designated by DOS SIA should they elect to send a member(s) of their command.
- b. Commands are permitted to designate active duty, reserve, or civilian personnel to attend the passport agent training, and are encouraged to send personnel that have at least two years remaining on their current assignment.

12. OFFICIAL VISAS.

a. Visa Application Requirements. Entrance requirements vary by country according to whether travel is for official, diplomatic, or personal reasons. Dependent travel and length of stay are also important factors in the visa issuance process. Commandant (CG-DCO-I) is responsible for reviewing and processing all visa applications for any member of the Coast Guard conducting foreign travel, and provides assistance only with visas that are official or diplomatic in nature.

- (1) Foreign visa requirements change frequently. Applicants shall review reference (b) when planning foreign travel, as reference (b) is the official guidance for Coast Guard personnel regarding country entrance and visa requirements.
- (2) Commandant (CG-DCO-I) does not stock or provide visa application forms for each country. Foreign embassies often update, change, or revise visa application forms, making it unfeasible to maintain a visa forms library. Most foreign embassy websites contain a link to their respective visa application. Applicants are directed to visit the pertinent foreign embassy websites, or, in certain circumstances the DOS website, to obtain the appropriate visa application form. In the event that an applicant cannot find an application, they should contact Commandant (CG-DCO-I) for assistance.
- (3) In the event that an applicant is unable to send their visa application through Commandant (CG-DCO-I) given time, operational mission, or mail courier restraints, then the applicants may use an alternate means in order to obtain a visa. Applicants may courier their application packages to the nearest embassy or consulate on their own accord; or, they may use a commercial courier service. Applicants shall notify Commandant (CG-DCO-I) immediately if they need to use an alternate means to obtain a visa, as Commandant (CG-DCO-I) must provide the applicant an agency authorization letter. Alternate means to obtain a visa shall only be used in extreme

cases in which the applicant is unable to send their visa application through Commandant (CG-DCO-I) due to exigent circumstances.

- b. Agency Authorization Letter. Every visa application must be accompanied by an agency letter from the DOS authorizing the applicant to apply for the visa. This is mandatory, as most, if not all embassies will deny an official visa to an applicant without specific authorization from the United States Government. This letter also ensures that the visa is given at no cost to the member. Commandant (CG-DCO-I) will typically obtain the required visas for no-fee passports, and has a standard copy of this letter on file. If a unit or an applicant needs to obtain the required visas on their own accord or through a commercial courier service due to exigent circumstances they shall contact Commandant (CG-DCO-I) to obtain the appropriate agency letter.
- c. Visa Application Procedures.
  - (1) Processing. There are three ways in which a member can obtain a visa. Enclosure (2) provides a comprehensive checklist for compiling a visa application package.
    - (a) Submit an application package to Commandant (CG-DCO-I);
    - (b) Use a commercial courier service, also commonly referred to as a visa expeditor service; or,
    - (c) Deliver their application package to their nearest embassy or consular office authorized to issue the visa.
  - (2) Submitting an application to Commandant (CG-DCO-I).
    - (a) Once Commandant (CG-DCO-I) verifies the visa application package is complete, the proper correspondence is drafted requesting a visa be issued in the applicant's passport. Visa processing is prioritized according to the estimated date of travel.
    - (b) Visa application packages are delivered to the foreign embassy for processing and issuance.
    - (c) Visas cannot be processed any faster than allowed by the foreign embassies. The processing time for a single visa can vary from three business days to one month depending on the foreign embassy or consulate. Applicants must also factor in mailing and courier days. Applicants who require one or more visas are highly encouraged to submit their required documents and official, diplomatic, or dependent passport to Commandant (CG-DCO-I) a minimum of 30-45 business days prior to their foreign travel.
    - (d) Because foreign embassies or consulates issue the visas, expedite memorandums are unnecessary. Visas cannot be expedited.

- (e) Applicants should prepare a visa application package as directed by the foreign embassy. Each embassy has different application procedures, and may require a variety of documents and photos from applicants. When sending a visa application package to Commandant (CG-DCO-I) for processing, applicants shall provide the following documentation:
  - 1. Coast Guard Form 4650A, "Request for No-Fee Visa Form". This form can be typed or completed in pen and can be found online per section 16 (Forms/Reports);
  - 2. Official Passport;
  - 3. Visa application form. Visa applications can typically be found on the foreign embassy's website or on the website of a commercial courier service; and
  - 4. Any other documentation specific to the country of travel. This may include photos or vaccination reports.
- (g) Applicants must sign their passport before including it in a visa application package. Typically, foreign embassies will not issue a visa in an unsigned passport.
- (h) Once the foreign embassy or consulate has issued the visa, the passport will be retrieved by Commandant (CG-DCO-I) and sent via overnight commercial express carrier to the local Official Passport Acceptance Agent (OPAA) or to the applicant directly.
- (i) If an applicant has an official, diplomatic and/or dependent passport with less than six months validity remaining (after departure date), then Commandant (CG-DCO-I) will deny the application and will direct the applicant to renew the passport before obtaining a visa. Foreign embassies will typically not issue a visa in a passport with six months or less validity.
- (j) Applicants should submit their request for a visa via their local OPAA. This allows the OPAA to check the paperwork and ensure it is in order so as to mitigate any application errors prior to submission. Following issuance, the passport & visa will then be returned to the applicant via the same OPAA. If the unit does not have an assigned OPAA at the unit or in the near vicinity, the passport will be returned to the applicant directly.
- (k) Allow 30 days for visa processing. If both a passport and visa are required, allow 60 days minimum for processing. Multiple visas may increase processing time. Applicants must allow for mail delays, weather delays, federal holidays, etc.

d. Visa Denials.

- (1) Visas can be denied by a foreign embassy or consulate for numerous reasons. If a request for a visa has been denied, Commandant (CG-DCO-I) cannot obtain the visa

for the applicant. The applicant's documents and passport will be retrieved from the foreign embassy or consulate and returned to local OPAA or the applicant directly.

(2) If a visa request is denied by the foreign embassy or consulate, the applicant will be contacted by Commandant (CG-DCO-I).

e. Fees. Visas obtained for official travel are generally issued at no-cost by foreign embassies, and therefore are at no cost to the applicant. However, there are some embassies or consulates that charge a fee for an official and/or diplomatic visa. Applicants should be prepared to send a completed money order with their visa application documents. In addition, commercial courier services charge a fee for their service. These fees are reimbursable in connection with official travel per references (e) and (f).

### 13. SECURITY AND HANDLING PASSPORTS.

a. Operations Security (OPSEC). All personnel designated to handle passports, visas, and any associated forms, documents, and applications shall ensure strict adherence to the Coast Guard OPSEC Program in accordance with reference (h) and exercise extreme caution when utilizing and disseminating foreign travel information. Specific dates, times, and location of travel, mission details, and name and reference information for all official passport and visa applicants shall be safeguarded at all times.

b. Personally Identifiable Information (PII). Passports, visas, and the forms associated with this Instruction contain Sensitive Personally Identifiable Information, which is defined as "personally identifiable information, which if lost, compromised, or disclosed without authorization, could result in substantial harm, embarrassment, inconvenience, or unfairness to an individual" (ref i). Therefore, all personnel designated to handle Sensitive PII shall exercise due care at all times to preserve its integrity and shall do so only for official purposes in accordance with reference (i).

14. RESPONSIBILITIES. Records created by compliance with the requirements of this Instruction, such as a log of passports held by unit personnel, or reports of the loss of passports to the issuing passport agency, will be maintained in accordance with reference (j).

a. Commandant (CG-DCO-I). Commandant (CG-DCO-I) is responsible for:

(1) Reviewing and processing all official no-fee passport and visa applications for all Coast Guard personnel.

(2) Forwarding all official passport applications to DOS SIA.

(3) Couriers all visa applications to the applicable embassy or consulate.

(4) Informing an applicant when their application has been suspended for any reason, and provide feedback on why the application was suspended.

(5) Tracking the status of all passport and visa applications.

- (6) Forwarding expired or unused passports to the DOS SIA for cancellation and/or destruction.
  - (7) Assisting Coast Guard personnel and their dependents with any questions pertaining to the passport and visa application process.
  - (8) Soliciting for OPAA's in the field; and organizing annual Passport Acceptance Agent training.
- b. Commanding Officer. Commanding Officers are responsible for:
- (1) Ensuring only authorized members at their unit hold official passports.
  - (2) Ensuring passports are stored in a locked storage container if unit members are not authorized to retain their own passports.
  - (3) Funding all travel and expenses for any unit members attending OPAA training.
  - (4) Ensuring official passports are forwarded to a transferring member's new unit immediately upon transfer.
  - (5) Returning all expired passports to Commandant (CG-DCO-I); or immediately upon a unit member's retirement or separation from the service.
- c. OPAA. Official Passport Acceptance Agents are responsible for:
- (1) Assisting all travelers and their dependents with questions regarding the official passport and visa application process.
  - (2) Assisting travelers and their dependents with preparing official passport and visa application packages.
  - (3) Executing the DOS Form DS-11, "Application for a U.S. Passport."
  - (4) Sending all application packages to Commandant (CG-DCO-I) for processing.
  - (5) Tracking all application packages sent to Commandant (CG-DCO-I).
  - (6) Issuing the newly processed passport and/or passport with visa stamp to the traveler and/or dependents.
  - (7) Ensuring traveler and/or dependent signs the newly issued passport.
  - (8) Ensuring the newly issued passport data is entered in Direct Access. This can be done by the OPAA, or any member of the traveler's administrative staff.
- d. Traveler. The traveler is responsible for:

- (1) Verifying the need for an official passport and/or visa per reference (b) for themselves and/or their dependents.
- (2) Contacting an OPAA to obtain assistance with the passport and/or visa application package. If an OPAA is not immediately available to them, they shall contact Commandant (CG-DCO-I) for further guidance.
- (3) Completing the official passport and/or visa application.
- (4) Ensuring the application package is sent to Commandant (CG-DCO-I) in a timely manner for processing.
- (5) Immediately notifying their Commanding Officer and Commandant (CG-DCO-I) if the official passport is stolen or lost.
- (6) Ensuring the official passport is stored securely, either at their unit or at their place of residence (pending unit policy).
- (7) Ensuring the official passport is used only for official travel.
- (8) Signing the official passport immediately upon receipt.

15. ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECT AND IMPACT CONSIDERATIONS. Environmental aspects and impacts were examined in developing this instruction and were determined not to be applicable.

16. FORMS/REPORTS. The Coast Guard forms referenced in this Instruction are available in USCG Electronic Forms on the Standard Workstation or at:  
Internet: <http://www.uscg.mil/forms/>  
Intranet: <http://cgweb2.comdt.uscg.mil/CGFORMS/Welcome.htm> and CG Portal: <https://cgportal.uscg.mil/delivery/Satellite/CG611/FORMS>. The DOS forms can be found at the following website: ([www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov)).

KIRSTEN D. MADISON /s/  
Director of International Affairs and Foreign  
Policy

Encl: (1) No-Fee Official Passport Checklist  
(2) Official Visa Application Checklist

## No-Fee Official Passport Application Checklist

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This checklist is a job aid to assist the traveler in completing all necessary tasks required for a no-fee official passport (official, diplomatic, and dependent).

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Follow these steps when applying for a no-fee official passport .

STEP	ACTION	DATE
1	<p>Determine need for official passport. Check the Department of Defense Foreign Clearance Guide (DoD FCG). <a href="https://www.fcg.pentagon.mil/">https://www.fcg.pentagon.mil/</a></p> <p>a. No-Fee Official Passport Needed? (See step 2)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">---or---</p> <p>b. Military ID Card and TDY or NATO Orders (Format for NATO orders can be found in the DoD FCG or Chapter 2 of the Personnel and Pay Procedures Manual, PPCINST M1000.2 (series). This can be found at: <a href="http://www.uscg.mil/ppc/3pm.asp">http://www.uscg.mil/ppc/3pm.asp</a></p>	
2	<p>If a No-Fee Official Passport required, determine which no-fee official passport application to complete (DS-11 or DS-82) by going to the State Department website: <a href="http://www.travel.state.gov">www.travel.state.gov</a> Applications can be found on this website.</p> <p>a. DS-11 Passport Application (application must be signed by a certified passport agent)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">---or---</p> <p>b. DS-82 Passport Application</p> <p><i>*Applications can be typed or handwritten. Ensure consistency of ink &amp; handwriting if completing by hand.</i></p>	
3	<p>Complete a CG-4650 form. This form can be found at: <a href="https://cgportal.uscg.mil/lotus/myquickr/foreign-travel/approved-foreign-travel-library">https://cgportal.uscg.mil/lotus/myquickr/foreign-travel/approved-foreign-travel-library</a></p>	

**No-Fee Official Passport Checklist, continued**

STEP	ACTION	DATE
4	<p>Complete the Passport Application Package</p> <p><u>DS-11 Passport Application Package</u> must contain the following items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Completed DS-11 application executed (signed) by certified passport agent.</li> <li>b. Two passport size photos (2" x 2") in a collared shirt (no uniform, no CG gear, no sunglasses, etc)</li> <li>c. Proper citizenship evidence (birth certificate, etc.)</li> <li>d. Completed CG-4650 form</li> <li>e. Copy of Military Common Access Card Front and Back (<b>required</b> for military, military dependents, and government civilians); or, drivers license (non-military)</li> </ul>	
4 (cont.)	<p><u>DS-82 Passport Application Package</u> must contain the following items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Completed DS-82 application</li> <li>b. Two passport size photos (2" x 2") in a collared shirt (no uniform, no CG gear, no sunglasses, etc)</li> <li>c. Expired passport (if applicable)</li> <li>d. Completed CG-4650 form</li> </ul>	
5	<p>Mail or hand-carry passport application to:</p> <p>COMMANDANT (CG-DCO-I)            ATTN: PASSPORT DIVISION (T)            2100 2<sup>ND</sup> STREET SW STOP 7471            WASHINGTON DC 20593-7471</p> <p>*Use of a DHS-approved commercial express carrier (ex: FedEx/UPS) is the preferred method of shipping.</p> <p><b>Note: Passport applications take 4-6 weeks to process.</b></p>	

## Official Visa Application Checklist

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**This checklist is a job aid to assist the traveler in completing all necessary tasks to obtain a visa.**

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**Follow these steps when applying for a visa.**

STEP	ACTION	DATE
1	Determine need for visa.  Check the Department of Defense Foreign Clearance Guide (DoD FCG). <a href="https://www.fcg.pentagon.mil/">https://www.fcg.pentagon.mil/</a>	
2	Verify your official passport has at least 6 months of validity remaining.  <i>*If passport will expire in 6 months or less, you must apply for a new no-fee official passport before applying for a visa</i>	
3	If a visa is required:  Complete CG-4650A “Request for No-Fee Visa Form”. Form can be found at: <a href="https://cgportal.uscg.mil/lotus/myquickr/foreign-travel/approved-foreign-travel-library">https://cgportal.uscg.mil/lotus/myquickr/foreign-travel/approved-foreign-travel-library</a>	
4	Visit the appropriate Country’s Embassy website. Read and complete the requirements for obtaining a visa. In addition, there may be other pertinent entrance requirements listed.  Download the appropriate visa application form, and include in the visa application package.  <i>If you have any questions about the visa process and applicability, contact the passport and visa division.</i>	
5	Visa application shall include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. CG-4650A, “Request for No-Fee Visa” Form</li> <li>b. Country visa application</li> <li>c. Official Passport (Signed)</li> <li>d. Any other documents required by that country. (This may include photos and immunization records)</li> </ol>	

STEP	ACTION	DATE
6	<p>Mail or hand carry visa application package to:</p> <p>COMMANDANT (CG-DCO-I)            ATTN: PASSPORT DIVISION (T)            2100 2<sup>ND</sup> STREET SW STOP 7471            WASHINGTON DC 20593-7471</p> <p><i>*Use of DHS approved commercial express carrier (FedEx/UPS) is the preferred method of shipping.</i></p>	
<p><b>Note: Travelers must provide Commandant (CG-DCO-I) a minimum of 30 days to process a single visa. If travelers require multiple visas, a minimum of 60 days is needed.</b></p>		