

We have a continuing responsibility to review our practices and procedures and to ensure in the light of changing situations abroad that they fully reflect the government's policy on commercial propriety. This objective and the development of further guidance to posts can best be achieved through close consultation with posts on actual problem cases and situations in which posts may in future find themselves involved. Where existing guidelines do not adequately cover a particular problem situation or where there may be uncertainty in interpreting the application of the guidelines posts should seek assistance from Headquarters.

PRIVILEGES

Under international law and custom, diplomatic and consular agents and representatives to certain international organizations are exempt from the payment of any direct taxes or duties. These exemptions and most other benefits offered by host governments to foreign representatives are based on the premise that one Head of State should not tax another Head of State and thus, by analogy, the government or employees of another state. Their purpose, according to the preamble of both Vienna Conventions on Diplomatic Relations and Consular Relations is not to benefit individuals but to ensure the efficient performance of the functions of diplomatic missions and consular posts.

The Head of Post is responsible for monitoring privileges and ensuring that they are not misused. For their part, employees must themselves guard against making excessive or illegal use or abuse of any privilege. In particular, employees shall not abuse their import privileges (automobile, tobaccos, wines, spirits and other personal goods).

DIPLOMATIC BAG AND RELATED DEPARTMENTAL MAIL FACILITIES

There are strict regulations governing the conditions under which personnel are authorized use of the diplomatic bag and related