

CHAPTER 1 – PASSPORT SERVICES

ROLE AND OBJECTIVES

The Passport Office is responsible for delivering passport services in Canada and supporting Canadian missions in delivering passport services abroad. It provides procedural guidance relating to the issuance, withholding, recovery and use of Canadian passports in accordance with the Canadian Passport Order (P.C. 1981-1472 4 June, 1981) (see Appendix A).

Acting under the royal prerogative, the Passport Office issues regular (24 and 48 page) passports, diplomatic and special passports, emergency passports, certificates of identity and refugee travel documents.

As a Special Operating Agency (SOA), the Passport Office has identified the following key objectives:

- maintain the international reputation of Canadian passports through improved passport design and appropriate security measures;
- provide convenient and prompt service to the travelling public;
- charge a reasonable fee for service provided; and
- cooperate with other government programs relating to travel and other programs of External Affairs and International Trade Canada.

QUALITY OF SERVICE

The focus of Passport Office initiatives has been influenced by one overriding objective: to put the client first. This has had a far-reaching and positive impact on Passport Office operations. For example, hours of service were reviewed in all offices in 1990. As a result, public counters across Canada

were open for up to an additional 7 1/2 hours per week without overtime. Sections at Headquarters providing service to other sections or to the regions also changed operating hours to improve service within the Passport Office.

Changes were made to signage to better indicate the services offered and to make it easier for passport applicants to locate the office within the building.

The Passport Office expanded its telephone information systems to inform callers of the procedures for obtaining a passport. Callers have access to this information 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Such systems have been particularly effective in the small- and medium-sized passport offices, which cannot dedicate an employee to respond only to telephone enquiries.

The majority of offices now have a “take-a-number” system — first come, first served. To provide faster service during busy periods, a counter is reserved for passport pick-up in medium-sized and certain smaller offices, as is the case in large passport offices at all times.

