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McDOUGALL ANNOUNCES CHANGES TO PASSPORT OFFICE OPERATIONS

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Barbara McDougall, today announced a package of security enhancement measures to the operations of the Passport Office. The amendments will strengthen the security and quality control of Canadian passports while maintaining the quality of service currently provided to Canadians.

The measures will be implemented over a two year period to allow for ongoing assessments of the effectiveness of new security measures and the overall impact on service to the public. Highlights of the package include: amendments to the list of persons eligible to sign applications as guarantors, increased personal appearance of applicants for passports, the opening of additional passport offices, retention of documentary evidence of citizenship while the applications are being processed, and a fee increase for Canadian passports and travel documents.

"The Passport Office continues to stress security as its highest priority. I am confident that the measures outlined today will protect the Canadian passport from possible fraudulent activities," Mrs. McDougall said. "The package balances security and service to the public while sustaining the international reputation of the Canadian passport."

Effective January 1, 1992 the cost of Canadian passports and Refugee Travel Documents will increase from \$25.00 to \$35.00, and Certificates of Identity for permanent residents wishing to travel abroad will rise from \$25.00 to \$75.00. A fee increase is necessary to offset the costs of Canadian passport services and these enhanced security measures. The last passport fee increase was January 1, 1988.

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