

Seasonal variations also complicate the delivery of timely quality consular services and assistance. Concerns about the variations in levels of quality and range of services was expressed by the Auditor General in his recent report. However, the mission surveys and industry surveys indicate that overall quality has been maintained. Variations in demand for passport issuance range from a low of 3% to a high of 160%: i.e at one post the seasonal variation in demand for passports, between regular and peak seasons, is 3%, while at another post the seasonal variation is 160%. The average variation in demand for passport issuance at the surveyed missions is 50%.

Variations in demand for services also vary greatly from regular to peak seasons, with a high of 114% and a low of 5%. The average variation in demand between regular and peak seasons was 49.4%. Variation in demand for services had a high of 300%, and a low of 13%. The average was 75%.

Such variations in demands between regular and peak seasons may explain to some degree the differences in time required to produce a passport from mission to mission, a concern noted in the Auditor General's Chapter on the Consular Program. Obviously peak season in the Bahamas is not necessarily the same as the peak season in the Middle East, and a doubling or tripling in demand in a particular season must inevitably result in differing turnaround times for a particular service between regular and peak seasons. Table 3.4 indicates the variations in demand between regular and peak seasons at 14 of the missions surveyed.