

Security

While the Passport Office is constantly trying to address the needs of the client, it must also ensure the protection of both the traveller and our country through secure inspection and review procedures. Service efficiency rests upon security requirements being met with care and consideration to our global mandate. The Passport Office is constantly and consistently reviewing and improving systems, procedures, policies and technology to ensure that integrity continues to be an intrinsic part of our client services. This year provided a base for many achievements. New technologies were reviewed and tested to secure information from tampering and to verify that electronic information met passport security procedures and specifications. As well, Research and Development continued with a renewed vigour working toward introducing the next passport generation. Several fora and working groups with national and international law enforcement and other agencies addressed cross-border crime, forgeries, counterfeiting and other passport-related crimes.

Cost Effectiveness

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The Passport Office is a highly motivated service-oriented organization that achieves its high standards while operating in a fiscally-responsible manner. With fluctuating client demands for passport and travel services, the increased need for efficient travel into the United States, and an increase in overall travel worldwide, the Passport Office always strives to provide cost-effective services. New technologies demonstrate clear financial benefits, especially pilot credit/debit card projects and automated telephone services, which respond to client needs while reducing the strain on financial and human resources. Organizational and administrative streamlining improved efficiency and brought decision-making authorities closer to our clients.

Interdepartmental and Intergovernmental Co-operation

The Passport Office provides effective services in conjunction with a wide body of federal, provincial and foreign government organizations...the more effective the communication, the more effective the passport services. As well, we have great impact on the operations and concerns of the RCMP, Interpol, Citizenship and Immigration (CIC), and Revenue

Canada. CIC is a key partner in improving cross-border activities and deterring fraudulent and counterfeit documents; domestic and international police communities are consistently providing input into security planning and strategies; and overall information sharing helps improve cross-border activities and reduce Canada's susceptibility to crime: smuggling and illegal immigration being two key issues. The Passport Office's contribution to government-wide planning and organization helps us function in a more cost-effective manner, while still respecting the regulations and policies of Canada.

The Importance of our People

The key factor to our success is our people. Their dedication to service, courteous customer relations, and their input into program development has helped the Passport Office become a successful self-funded Special Operating Agency (SOA) model. The SOA was set up by the Government of Canada to improve services to Canadians, and places great emphasis on the use of sound business practices in the delivery of services. The Passport Office has recognized that the development of skills, training and talent expand business opportunities and open doors for new services. As the skills that we will need for the future are rapidly changing, at all levels in the organization, we must ensure that our people are equipped to perform. Recent success has been the empowerment of front line examiners, which requires enhanced ability to analyse and solve problems, and to be able to respond to all levels of enquiries, thereby improving our quality of service. Continuous learning concepts, information technology training, awards programs and cross-functional development have continued to have measurable results on our effectiveness and quality of services.

Our travel document services

Most Canadians are familiar with the blue 24-page passport. It is currently issued to over six million Canadian citizens and is used for occasional travel, such as vacations and business trips. It accounts for 98 percent of all travel documents issued. The passport is valid for five years. Children under 16 may be added to a parent's passport or they may have their own.

The 48-page passport very closely resembles the 24-page passport, but its extra pages make it more convenient for frequent travellers, such as business people.