

- Parcels from nominees may be opened for inspection if suspected to contain prohibited items. Also, when necessary, SBG will repackage in order to reduce the size.
- As a result of Canada Customs regulations, under no circumstances are departmental facilities to be used to send personal packages or parcels from any mission. This is considered to be an abuse of the system. Improper transmission of personal items may result in disciplinary action. Incidents of abuse will be brought to the attention of responsible officials, for example, the RCMP, Revenue Canada, Customs and Excise and the Head of Mission.

Employees Posted to Countries where Special Security Measures Apply

Employees posted to, or cross-posted from countries where special security measures apply (see ISSN memorandum 002 of 11 March, 1992) are entitled to forward a maximum of 2 kg of personal documents to their next assignment by using the classified diplomatic bag. These packages should be self-addressed and marked "Personal and Protected" and would normally contain their most recent appraisal report and current financial statements.

Note — As a result of the many "carriers" or "handlers" involved in a shipment, the Department is unable to assume any responsibility for delays in handling, misdirection, loss or damage of personal mail. Also, because of the extensive volume of departmental mail, it is only possible to maintain records of personal parcels and registered mail.

2.4 Diplomatic Privileges and Immunities

History

The practice of maintaining diplomatic relations and sending representatives to other states goes far back in history. Rules of protocol varied from one country to another — they still do — but diplomatic representatives were always accorded certain privileges and immunities. It has been a generally accepted principle that diplomatic representatives needed security of their persons, homes and official papers in order to carry out the functions that both the sending State and the receiving State had agreed they should perform.

Diplomatic functions traditionally consisted mainly in observing and reporting on the conditions and developments in the receiving State; and protecting in the receiving State the interests of the sending State, for example, defending its policies, negotiating with the Government of the receiving State etc. Given that governments in the course of history frequently did not appreciate these activities even though they were quite normal, it is easy to see why some form of protection was needed for the persons carrying out diplomatic functions. Over time, the same privileges and immunities were also extended to the families of diplomats. Eventually, these principles were standardized throughout the world and given the force of law in the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations which was concluded in Vienna on April 18, 1961. It was signed by Canada in February 1962 and entered into force in Canada on June 25, 1966.

Consular representatives were traditionally considered as quite different from diplomats. Historically, consular functions consisted of assisting in the resolution of problems involving the consul's own citizens present in the receiving State for business or other reasons, issuing travel documents etc. These were held to be activities not warranting special privileges or immunities. As consular functions became more complex, sending States came to realize that at least a limited degree of protection was necessary for their consuls. Beginning with bilateral agreements between countries, the privileges and immunities accorded to consular representatives were also eventually standardized throughout the world. The Vienna Convention on Consular Relations was concluded in Vienna on April 24, 1963 and signed by Canada on July 18, 1974. It entered into force for Canada on August 17, 1974.