

MS 213 Volunteer No-Fee Regular Passports

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Responsible Offices: Management/Administrative Services (M/AS) and Office of Global Operations (OGO)

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1.0 Purpose

This Manual Section describes the assignment and use of No-Fee Regular Passports (No-Fee Passports) for Peace Corps Volunteers and Trainees (collectively referred to as Volunteers).

2.0 Authority and Implementation

Section 5(i) of the Peace Corps Act provides that Volunteers, although not considered employees of the United States, will be issued No-Fee Passports in order for them to fulfill their responsibilities as Volunteers.

3.0 Policy

3.1 Duration

- (a) No-Fee Passports are valid for five years, minus one day, from the date of issue. Post staff must ensure that the No-Fee Passport and accompanying visas are current and up-to-

date for each Volunteer. No-Fee Passports will be cancelled by the Department of State at the end of a Volunteer's service.

3.2 Use of No-Fee Passports

3.2.1 Authorized Use of No-Fee Passports

Volunteers are permitted to use their No-Fee Passports for the following purposes:

- (a) official travel during their Peace Corps service, including, but not limited to, medical evacuation, special leave, and emergency leave;
- (b) direct travel between the Volunteer's home of record or other destination as instructed by the Peace Corps and the Volunteer's country of service at the beginning and end of service;
- (c) during personal travel for the *sole* purpose of exiting from and returning to the Volunteer's country of service due to the host government's immigration and visa processes;
- (d) exiting the country of service at the end of service; and
- (e) in order to obtain a visa in the Volunteer's personal passport in the case of Field Termination (see MS 284, Section 9).

Limited use of the No-Fee Passports in emergency situations may be permitted.

Unless permitted as specified above, Volunteers may not use a No-Fee Passport. Volunteers must use a Personal Passport for all personal travel during Peace Corps service and for all personal travel following early termination per MS 284 or completion of service. Although Volunteers are permitted to use their No-Fee Passports to exit and enter their country of service while on personal leave per subsection 3.2(c) above, they shall use their Personal Passport to enter and exit all other countries while on personal leave. Volunteers should consult post staff on the use of the No-Fee Passport to exit and enter the country of service.

3.2.2 Personal Passport for Travel During and After Service

Volunteers on personal international travel must carry both a Personal Passport and a No-Fee Passport in order to avoid any potential travel disruptions and misuse of the No-Fee Passport. Using a No-Fee Passport for personal travel simply because one does not have a Personal Passport does not constitute emergency use and is not permissible under State Department policy. As such, Volunteers planning personal international travel during service or immediately after their service, are strongly encouraged to obtain a Personal Passport while in the U.S. prior to departure for service.

3.3 Custody of No-Fee Passports

Volunteers are responsible for ensuring that the No-Fee Passports issued to them are safeguarded at all times. When not in the personal possession of the Volunteers, the passports must be

retained by the Volunteers in a safe and easily accessible place at their sites. However, the Country Director has the authority to hold and secure No-Fee Passports of some or all of the Volunteers at the post for safekeeping taking into account relevant factors, including but not limited to, host country legal and immigration requirements, security issues, geographic dispersion of the Volunteers, and the planned evacuation routes from the host country. The authority of the Country Director to retain No-Fee Passports may not be used to restrict the travel of Volunteers if the use of the No-Fee Passport is permitted under subsection 3.2.

If the Country Director makes the decision to safeguard No-Fee Passports, the Country Director must designate a custodian for the No-Fee Passports. The passport custodian must retain the passports in a secure locked cabinet or safe. However they may not be retained in the cashier's safe. The custodian must maintain an accurate sign-in/sign-out logbook for all passports. It is also the responsibility of the Country Director to include a distribution plan of No-Fee Passports in the Emergency Action Plan for the post.

3.4 Loss of No-Fee Passport

If a No-Fee Passport and/or visa becomes lost, stolen or damaged, the Volunteer must notify post staff. The US Embassy or Consulate and Transportation Division will be notified by post staff, and the Volunteer will immediately apply for a new No-Fee Passport with Peace Corps staff assistance. The US Embassy or Consulate will request authorization for the issuance of the new No-Fee Passport from the Passport Office in Washington, D.C. In order to expedite requests for a replacement of a lost or stolen No-Fee Passport or visa, the Country Director must keep photocopies of all the No-Fee Passports and visas issued to Volunteers, and Volunteers must keep copies of their own individual No-Fee Passports and visas.

3.5 Cancellation of No-Fee Passports Following End of Service

A Volunteer's No-Fee Passport shall be cancelled by the Transportation Division (M/AS/T) within 45 days of the Volunteer's end of service. For Volunteers transferring to Peace Corps Response, Peace Corps Response staff shall notify M/AS/T 30 days prior to the date on which the Volunteer's current assignment is scheduled to conclude. The Transportation Division shall coordinate with the Department of State to ensure the cancellation of Volunteers' No-Fee Passports.

4.0 Effective Date

This Manual Section shall take effect on the date of issuance.