

# MS 214 Volunteer/Trainee Baggage

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**Responsible Office:** Transportation (M/AS/T)

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Table of Contents

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## Table of Contents

- 1.0 Purpose
- 2.0 Authority
- 3.0 Policy
  - 3.1 Trainee Baggage
  - 3.2 Baggage Allowance (04/15/99)
    - 3.2.1 Checked Baggage
    - 3.2.2 Carry-on Baggage
    - 3.2.3 Miscellaneous Baggage
  - 3.3 Excess Baggage
  - 3.4 Clearance Through Customs
  - 3.5 Transportation of Baggage in Country of Assignment
  - 3.6 Unaccompanied Baggage
- 4.0 Baggage Allowances From Overseas Assignments to the U.S.
  - 4.1 Checking Baggage Directly to the U.S.
  - 4.2 Excess Baggage
  - 4.3 Exceptions to Direct and Immediate Return
- 5.0 Special Baggage Allowances
  - 5.1 Request Procedures
- 6.0 Unaccompanied Baggage
  - 6.1 Extraordinary Situations
  - 6.2 Shipment of Unaccompanied Baggage
  - 6.3 Packing Procedures for Unaccompanied Baggage
  - 6.4 Personal Shipments
- 7.0 Insurance and Baggage Claims on Personal Effects
  - 7.1 Purchasing Insurance
  - 7.2 Insurance Claims

## **1.0 Purpose**

This Manual Section establishes the regulations and procedures for transportation of Volunteer and Trainee (V/T) Baggage.

## **2.0 Authority**

The Transportation Branch of Administrative Services (M/AS/T) administers the transport of Trainee baggage within the U. S. and to overseas assignments. The Post administers transport of V/T baggage from the overseas assignment back to the home-of-record.

## **3.0 Policy**

V/Ts are given baggage allowances for the transport of personal effects from their authorized points of departure to countries of assignment and return. Airline baggage regulations vary greatly on a worldwide basis. Peace Corps' authorized allowances are restricted to a total of 100 pounds in two checked pieces of accompanied baggage.

There are two methods used by airlines to determine baggage allowance. The airlines restrict baggage by weight and/or piece, depending upon the airline and the origin and/or destination points of travel. V/Ts traveling between two points that allow more than two checked pieces of baggage free of charge may take advantage of this allowance provided there is no additional charge to Peace Corps.

**NOTE:** V/Ts are not permitted to take pets, weapons, explosives, radio transmitters, automobiles, motorcycles, or motor scooters. Additionally, flammable material or liquid such as lighter fluid, cleaning solvents, aerosol containers, gases, guns, oxidants, peroxides, corrosive items, and other miscellaneous materials are not permitted. When returning home after service, to the extent feasible, Volunteers may transport pets home at their own expense.

### **3.1 Trainee Baggage**

Trainees are authorized to bring accompanied baggage, subject to the size and weight restrictions below, from their authorized point of departure to staging and training sites in the country of assignment.

Trainees are responsible for packing, marking, insuring, safeguarding, and handling their accompanied baggage (see paragraph 7.0).

Accompanied baggage that exceeds either the size or weight restrictions described below, i. e., excess baggage, shall be carried at personal expense unless authorized as a special baggage allowance in accordance with paragraph 5.0.

## **3.2 Baggage Allowance**

### **3.2.1 Checked Baggage**

V/Ts are authorized two pieces of checked baggage, with a combined weight of up to 100 pounds; neither bag can weigh more than 50 pounds. The combined dimensions (length plus width plus height) of the pieces when added together may not exceed 107 inches. The largest piece may not exceed 62 inches.

A Miscellaneous Charge Order (MCO) will be issued in conjunction with a Trainee's international ticket to cover the charge for a second piece of checked baggage when the airline only allows only one checked bag free of charge.

Trainees will be reimbursed at post for any domestic baggage charges from their HOR to the staging site. With proper receipts they may check two bags totaling no more than 100 pounds; neither bag can weigh more than 50 pounds.

### **3.2.2 Carry-on Baggage**

One carry-on bag and one personal item are allowed. The sum of the dimensions for the carry-on bag when added together shall not exceed 45 inches. Weight allowance varies by carrier.

### **3.2.3 Miscellaneous Baggage**

All airlines have special rules for musical instruments, sports equipment, backpacks and other unusual items. These items may be checked by Volunteers and Trainees as one piece of their baggage allowance as long as they meet the guidelines (62 inches and no more than 50 pounds). Any excess charge for overweight or oversize baggage will be the responsibility of the Volunteer or Trainee.

## **3.3 Excess Baggage**

Accompanied baggage in excess of 100 pounds in two bags (with neither bag weighing more than 50 pounds) shall be carried at personal expense unless authorized as a special baggage allowance in accordance with paragraph 5.0.

### **3.4 Clearance through Customs**

The Country Director shall arrange for clearance of V/T baggage through the local customs agency.

### **3.5 Transportation of Baggage in Country of Assignment**

V/Ts are expected to transport their own baggage in country of assignment. Post will provide V/Ts an appropriate amount to cover the costs of transporting their baggage within the country of assignment.

### **3.6 Unaccompanied Baggage**

Trainees are not authorized unaccompanied baggage from authorized point of departure to staging (pre-departure orientation) or training site to country of assignment. V/Ts are authorized unaccompanied baggage at Peace Corps expense only under the conditions described in paragraph 6.0.

## **4.0 Baggage Allowances from Overseas Assignments to the U.S.**

V/Ts returning directly to the U. S. are subject to the baggage policy described in paragraph 3.0.

### **4.1 Checking Baggage Directly to the U.S.**

V/Ts who can be routed directly (without more than a ten-hour stopover) should check their baggage all the way through from post to the United States.

### **4.2 Excess Baggage**

Baggage over the authorized baggage allowance will be transported at the V/T's personal expense. V/Ts returning to the United States are not entitled to an allowance for excess baggage charges except when required for any segments of international travel to permit the V/T to transport 100 pounds in two checked bags (with neither bag weighing more than 50 pounds).

In extraordinary situations, the Country Director may authorize up to an additional 50 pounds of excess baggage.

### **4.3 Exceptions to Direct and Immediate Return**

Completion of Service (COS) Volunteers and Early Terminating Volunteers who are granted exceptions to the "direct and immediate return" (see MS 284 *Early Termination of Service*, paragraph 8.1.3) may receive, on request, an allowance for baggage. This allowance shall be equivalent, in local currency, to the cost of checking two bags weighing no more than 100 pounds total with neither bag weighing more than 50 pounds. Payment shall be made in local currency, unless the baggage is to be sent on an airline that requires payment in U. S. dollars.

Volunteers receiving cash-in-lieu of a return ticket, in accordance with MS 218, are not entitled to receive baggage allowance, en route allowance or other travel allowances.

**NOTE:** The post should become familiar with relevant local airline regulations regarding baggage allowances.

## **5.0 Special Baggage Allowances**

Trainees may be provided a special baggage allowance on such items as job-related books, supplies or equipment. At present, the total allowance is 100 pounds in two checked bags (with neither bag weighing more than 50 pounds). Trainees who receive this allowance will be notified by mail. Under special circumstances, a Country Director may request a special baggage allowance.

### **5.1 Request Procedures**

Requests for special baggage allowances should indicate the number of additional pieces and additional weight. If the request is approved, the Country Desk Officer will forward the original and one copy to M/AS/T, and one copy to the Country Director.

Requests for special baggage allowances must specify whether:

- Materials involved are to be purchased by the Peace Corps or by the Trainee.
- Peace Corps or the Volunteer will retain possession of the materials upon completion of service.
- Peace Corps will pay return shipment costs if the Volunteer retains possession.

The Country Director and the Country Desk Officer will maintain a record of all special baggage allowances to determine whether Peace Corps will pay the cost for return shipment of the materials, if the V/T is to retain possession of the materials upon termination of service.

## **6.0 Unaccompanied Baggage**

### **6.1 Extraordinary Situations**

In extraordinary situations where V/Ts are required to leave a Post without the opportunity to carry all their personal possessions as accompanied baggage, such as when V/Ts separate for medical reasons while on medevac travel or resign while on emergency leave, the Country Director may authorize up to 100 pounds of unaccompanied baggage. If unaccompanied baggage is authorized, the Regional Director or the Country Desk Unit will notify M/AS/T.

### **6.2 Shipment of Unaccompanied Baggage**

The costs for shipment of unaccompanied baggage shall be charged to Post. In-country staff must send authorized unaccompanied baggage shipments through the nearest U. S. Despatch Agency (U. S. gateway city) for customs clearance and forwarding to the home-of-record (HOR).

U. S. Despatch Agents responsible for clearing and forwarding unaccompanied baggage are located in Miami, Seattle, Washington, DC and New York. Shipments of unaccompanied baggage are to be marked, consigned, and prepaid directly to the appropriate U. S. Despatch Agent at the gateway city. The air shipment must terminate at the gateway point. The U. S. Despatch Agent will arrange for customs clearance and will arrange for forwarding to the home-of-record.

#### **DESPATCH ADDRESSES:**

U.S. Despatch Agency	U. S. Despatch Agency	U. S. Despatch Agency	U. S. Despatch Agency
OPR/ST	PO Box 522396	Airports Place Building	JFK Airport
Washington Dulles International Airport	General Mail Facility	Suite 108	New York, NY
Chantilly, VA 20166	Miami, FL 33152	2800 South 192nd Street	
		Seattle, WA 98188	

The container and the Air Waybill must show the V/T's name, Peace Corps, the destination address, and the telephone number. The Air Waybill must also indicate "upon arrival at (gateway city), notify U. S. Despatch Agency for customs clearance and forwarding."

### **6.3 Packing Procedures for Unaccompanied Baggage**

The containers used for unaccompanied air freight should be made of light-weight material but be substantial enough to withstand handling and weather conditions. Trunks, footlockers, etc. should be locked. All containers should be banded or strapped; steel-banded containers are preferred. Containers should not exceed dimensions of 80 inches by 40 inches by 40 inches. The person responsible for packing the materials should keep a detailed inventory of the container(s) contents.

### **6.4 Personal Shipments**

COS Volunteers who elect to ship personal effects back to the United States must do so at their own expense. Peace Corps will assume no responsibility for handling, customs clearance, forwarding to residence, or other costs incurred in connection with the shipment.

## **7.0 Insurance and Baggage Claims on Personal Effects**

The Peace Corps assumes no responsibility for accompanied or unaccompanied baggage that is damaged or lost. Refer to MS 235 *Volunteer/Trainee Losses of Property and Cash*, for additional guidance.

### **7.1 Purchasing Insurance**

V/Ts are encouraged to insure their personal effects. Brochures describing a private insurance plan will be distributed to Trainees prior to overseas departure; however, Trainees may purchase any policy they wish. Withdrawals may be made from the readjustment allowance account to cover the cost of this insurance.

### **7.2 Insurance Claims**

V/Ts are personally responsible for submitting claims to the carrier or to their insurance companies.

## **8.0 Effective Date**

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