



Home Office

Identity & Passport Service

Xxxxx Xxxxxx

Reference: FOICR 18863/11

Date: 29 June 2011

Dear Xxxxxx

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

Thank you for your e-mail of 2 June, in which you ask for information about the British Embassy in Mexico. Your request has been handled as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

I am able to disclose the information set out in the enclosed Annex.

Your questions and the Identity and Passport Service (IPS) responses are set out below:-

In keeping with the Freedom of Information Act, we assume that all information can be released to the public unless it is exempt. In line with normal practice we are therefore releasing the information which you requested via the Home Office website.

I hope that this information meets your requirements. I would like to assure you that we have provided you with all relevant information that IPS holds.

If you are dissatisfied with this response you may request an independent internal review of our handling of your request by submitting a complaint within two months to the address below, quoting reference FOICR 18863/11. If you ask for an internal review, it would be helpful if you could say why you are dissatisfied with the response.

Information Access Team
Home Office
Ground Floor, Seacole Building
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF
e-mail: FOIRequests@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

Headquarters
Identity and Passport Service
Parliamentary & Correspondence
Management Team
4th Floor, Peel Building, SE
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Tel (020) 7035 8889
Fax (0870) 336 9175
Email hqenquiries@ips.gsi.gov.uk
Web www.homeoffice.gov.uk/ips

As part of any internal review the Department's handling of your information request will be reassessed by staff who were not involved in providing you with this response. If you remain dissatisfied after this internal review, you would have a right of complaint to the Information Commissioner as established by section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act.

Yours sincerely

X Xxxxx
Parliamentary & correspondence Management Team



Freedom of Information request from Xxxxx Xxxxxx (reference 18863/11)**1. Does the British Embassy in Mexico still issue British (UK) passports?**

No. The British Embassy in Mexico City no longer issue full validity British passports. In an emergency, where there is a need for urgent travel, they can issue Emergency Travel Documents (ETD's).

2. Does the British Embassy in Mexico still process applications for British (UK) passports?

No, the British Embassy in Mexico City no longer process full validity British passports.

3. If the answer to (1) above is "No," when did the British Embassy in Mexico, stop issuing passports?

31 December 2009

4. If the answer to (2) above is "No," when did the British Embassy in Mexico, stop processing passports?

31 December 2009

5. If the British Embassy in Mexico stopped issuing passports, what is the reasoning behind the decision?**6. If the British Embassy in Mexico stopped processing passports, what is the reasoning behind the decision?**

All British passports are issued under the Royal Prerogative. However, until recently, all applications made in the United Kingdom were handled by the Home Office and those made overseas were handled by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. We have, in effect, two systems delivering the same product. That means additional cost to the customer, duplication and unnecessary bureaucracy.

For overseas customers, the maintenance of a separate and secure passport operation into the future would have placed a very significant cost burden over a much lower number of applicants (ca 400,000 versus ca 5 million in the UK) and no economies of scale with the UK operation could have been realised. The overseas passport fee is already higher than the fee charged in the UK and this gap would have increased significantly if we were to continue to offer passport processing services in every country, including Mexico.

We must ensure that the passport, whether issued in the UK or abroad, is available to British nationals at the most economic fee possible. That is why the passport

process is to come under the single authority of the Home Office as part of a 4 stage process which is already underway:

a) The first part of that process was to rationalise a large number of small passport issuing posts around the world into regional hubs. This has occurred already and, as noted above, the hub for Mexico is Washington DC.

b) From the 1 April 2011, all policy responsibility for overseas passports transferred to the Home Office and its executive agency, the Identity & Passport Service (IPS). There will be a transitional period of two years in which existing FCO staff overseas in regional hubs will continue to process and consider applications for British passports made by British nationals overseas.

c) Later this year the printing of all passports will transfer to the UK. This means that IPS will be able to maximise the benefits of economies of scale by having a centralised facility for all printing requirements. Overseas customers will have their passport application processed overseas and then printed and despatched from the central print facility in the UK - enabling them to be issued with the latest version of the British passport. This will occur within existing service levels.

d) This should result in efficiencies and will provide benefits as IPS move into the fourth stage by 2013. Applications from British nationals overseas will then be submitted to, and considered in the United Kingdom. This will help consolidate the benefits from previous stages and enhance the security of the passport application process. It will bring consistency and improve the quality of customer service by applying the same high level and quality of service across all our passport operation. Cost savings are estimated to be approximately £20m per annum.

7. If the British Embassy in Mexico has stopped issuing or processing passports, how are lost passports replaced or passports now issued?

All passport applications are now handled by the Regional Passport Processing Centre (RPPC) in Washington. Application process detailed on websites:

<http://ukinmexico.fco.gov.uk/en/help-for-british-nationals/passports>

<http://ukinusa.fco.gov.uk/en/help-for-british-nationals/passports/how-to-apply/mexico>

Emergency Travel Documents (ETD's) can be issued to those who have a genuine, urgent or essential need for emergency travel and who can not wait for a passport to be returned from the UK as per the normal process .ETD's can still be issued in Mexico: <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/passports1/passports-a-to-z/e-topics/emergency-travel>

8. If the British Embassy in Mexico no longer produces passports, what was the procedure a British citizen would have to have adopted if they wished to obtain a replacement/new passport, if at the time, they were resident or travelling in Mexico and the British Embassy was still issuing passports?

Prior to the operation being rationalised and moved to Washington, applicants would have completed the appropriate application form and sent this, together with supporting documents and fee, to the local Consular Office. All applications would have then been forwarded to the Embassy in Mexico City for processing and passport issue.

9. If the British Embassy no longer issues passports, as at today's date, what is the procedure a British citizen would have to adopt if they wished to obtain a replacement/new passport, if at the time, they were resident or travelling in Mexico?

As for 7 above, information is contained on the websites detailed above.

10. If a Commonwealth country was not represented in Mexico, did the British Embassy in Mexico ever process Commonwealth passports on behalf of that country?

Unrepresented Commonwealth nationals could be issued with a Look-a-Like passport in certain circumstances. Mexico would have to manually research their registers to confirm if/when any such passports have been issued.