



Guidance for

COMMUNICATING CHANGES TO TRAVEL DOCUMENTS



ICAO SECURITY AND FACILITATION

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Introduction

1.0 Introduction

To facilitate change awareness and international acceptance of Member State travel documents, Issuing States or organisations are encouraged to distribute, as widely as is possible, guidance and/or specimens of travel documents that for example, comprise:

- A new or updated graphical design.
- A revised suite of security features and/or security technologies.
- A visible change to part of a current document design related to quality control, manufacturing processes, or materials.
- A change to the security structure of the integrated circuit chip.

The nature of the materials to be distributed depends on the type of change that is being introduced and whether the change is categorised as one that is [major, or minor](#).

The recommended [communication approach](#) for Issuing States or organisations outlined in this guide is aimed at raising awareness of changes among Received States. All recommendations are intended to support the authentication of travel documents and encourage their acceptance by Receiving States to facilitate travellers.

This guide further describes with whom Issuing States or organisations should communicate when introducing travel document changes and the supporting materials, including the format of supporting materials, necessary to ensure an effective change communication campaign.

In this guidance the following verbal forms are used:

- “SHOULD” indicates a recommendation.
- “MAY” indicates a permission.
- “CAN” indicates a possibility or a capability.

Communicating and categorising change

2.0 Communicating and categorising change

2.1 Communicating change

Communicating travel document changes to appropriate audiences, including [certain service providers](#), and distributing supporting materials can, for many countries, be an expensive activity. The distribution of such materials however, and at an early point in time is critical to the success of any change awareness campaign.

Issuing States or organisations SHOULD ensure that the communication campaign is as broad as is practically possible and change introductory correspondence with [Diplomatic posts](#) or service providers occurs no less than 21 days prior to the change entering public circulation.

This is necessary to:

- Generate change awareness among Receiving State immigration and law enforcement communities.
- Afford Receiving States sufficient opportunity to gain prior knowledge of changes and implement any necessary change activity to support facilitation of citizens who are in possession of new or upgraded travel documents.
- Enable service providers to maintain relied upon virtual travel document platforms.

- Test automated systems, for example, e-gates.
- Facilitate easier detection of questioned travel documents and support decision-making by enabling comparison between questioned travel documents and:
 - a) [Travel document specimens](#).
 - b) [Documented information within distributed information packs](#) or officially communicated [change awareness letters](#).
 - c) Information that is hosted by [virtual travel document platforms](#) and/or [the law enforcement community](#).

2.2 Categorising change

Changes to travel documents CAN be categorised as either “major” or “minor”.

A major change might include the complete refreshing of a travel document’s graphical design or the introduction of a new ICAO defined electronic feature and/or visually obvious security technology for example, whereas Minor changes are limited and might concern amendments to:

- Text or information that is printed within the travel document.
- The upgrading of official insignia associated with the travel document's Issuing State or organisation for the purpose of complying with local policy.
- The electronic security of an existing travel document.
- Visual differences in an existing design resulting from quality control variation, changes to manufacturing or issuance technologies, or changes to materials.

Table 1, below, demonstrates which communication materials and communication approach SHOULD be adopted by Issuing States or organisations to support different change categories and types.

Change category	Change type	Supporting materials
Minor	Electronic security including changes to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Groups; • Cryptographic algorithms; • Active Authentication/Chip authentication; • Extended Access Control. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor change introductory letter to Diplomatic posts describing the change. • Provision of digital certificates to the ICAO PKD or the details for a central point of contact from which the correct CSCA public key certificate can be obtained.
Minor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text modification; • Insignia amendment; • Quality control; • Manufacturing process; • Materials. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor change introductory letter to Diplomatic posts describing the change, and/or a document alert. • Establishing a general arrangement with, and provision of specimen travel documents to organisations that host secure virtual databases of international travel documents (see 5.2 + 5.3)
Major	Travel document graphical design and/or security technologies including for example, deployment of any new electronic ICAO defined features or functionality i.e. transition to PACE only or introduction of LDS2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major change introductory letter to Diplomatic posts describing the change. • An information pack and if applicable, information leaflets describing the differences between the national and variant travel documents. • A specimen of the national travel document for the indefinite retention of the Receiving State.* • Establishing a general arrangement with, and provision of specimen travel documents to organisations that host secure virtual databases of international travel documents (see 5.2 + 5.3)

Table 1: Change categories and recommended supporting materials

Issuing States or organisations **SHOULD** determine which change category is most appropriate for the type of change that is introduced and the extent of communication material that is distributed to support of the change.

* The issuance of more than 1 x specimen travel document by Issuing States or organisation to Receiving States is discretionary and dependant on specimen travel document stock availability.

3

Handling and storage of communicated materials

3.0 Handling and storage of communicated materials

Issuing States or organisations **SHOULD** ensure that all distributed communication materials are assigned an appropriate security classification in accordance with local policy.

Where an Issuing State or organisations requires the distributed materials to be handled and stored in a specifically controlled way, the Issuing State or organisation **MAY** describe those expectations within any conveyed communication.

To safeguard sensitive information from unknowingly entering the public domain, Issuing States or organisations **MAY** request prior awareness and final approval from any receiving entity that has an intention to publicly release information concerning the received materials.

Communication materials

4.0 Communication materials

4.1 Introductory letter

Introductory letters are a critical aspect of the change communication campaign principally because the introduced change could require Receiving State immigration control authorities to adjust internal systems for the purposes of:

- Recognising new or upgraded travel documents; And,
- Supporting the facilitation of citizens who are in receipt of the new or upgraded travel document.

Before an Issuing State or organisation invokes a change of any nature to its travel documents, the Issuing State or organisation SHOULD notify Diplomatic posts so that respective Governments can be formally appraised of the change.

A letter, communicated via Diplomatic exchange, which introduces the change is appropriate for this purpose. Issuing States or organisations SHOULD use official letterheaded templates for this communication mode.

For major changes, the letter SHOULD describe the change and should include a list of any provided accompanying materials to support the change. For example, information packs and travel document specimens.

An example of an introductory letter for major travel document changes is provided at [Annex A, Introductory letter to Diplomatic Missions for Major travel document changes.](#)

For minor changes, the letter SHOULD introduce and describe the nature of the change only. Depending on the type of change being introduced however, it CAN be necessary to include within the communication, an image that demonstrates the change.

Issuing States or organisations SHOULD confirm if any additional supporting materials are provided and if not, the reason for not providing supporting materials.

An example of an introductory letter for minor travel document changes is provided at [Annex B, Introductory letter to Diplomatic Missions for Minor travel document changes.](#)

For either change category, Issuing States or organisations SHOULD additionally include the following information within the introductory letter:

- What it is that Diplomatic posts should convey to their Governments, immigration control authorities and national centres for identity document expertise.

- Confirmation of when the change will first enter public circulation and if the change will have a phased approach.
- If predecessor travel documents that are yet to expire, will remain valid.
- If applicable, whether the introduced change maintains compliance with current edition and revision of technical specifications for Machine Readable Travel Documents as prescribed within the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) document 9303, including the most current Technical Reports.
- If applicable, a detailed description of any known non-compliance with current ICAO document 9303 specifications.¹
- The details of a central contact hub for where enquiries can be submitted.

¹ To mitigate potential challenges related to interoperability, acceptance and facilitation, it is strongly advised against issuing non-compliant travel documents.

4.2 Information pack

For the reasons mentioned at section [2.0, Communicating and categorising change](#), the distribution of information packs to Diplomatic posts SHOULD take place no less than 21 days prior to the change entering public circulation.

Information packs are intended for use by immigration control authorities and/or the Receiving State authority responsible for deciding if a travel document is valid for entry to the country.

The information pack CAN be created in one of two formats:

- A one-page leaflet containing a basic description of the change accompanied by a limited quantity of key images that provide greater awareness and understanding of the change; Or,
- A detailed brochure that provides in-depth information about the change and contains visual guidance of key security features and/or technologies. Imagery SHOULD be accompanied by detailed, but easy to interpret descriptions.

Where the change impacts multiple variant travel documents, for example Diplomatic, Official or Alien passports, the Issuing State or organisations SHOULD additionally include:

- **Minimum recommendation** - A list of each impacted travel document. This approach is recommended only if one-page information leaflets are created; Or,
- **Best practice** - A separate one-page leaflet for each impacted travel document that:
 - a. Reflects the introduced changes.

- b. Describes the introduction timeframe for each variant travel document.
- c. Explains the differences between the described variant travel document and the national travel document.
- d. Clarifies to which group of persons each specific variant travel document is issued to.

For either format, the Issuing State or organisation SHOULD further:

- Provide the details of a central contact hub where enquiries from Receiving States or Receiving State authorities can be directed.
- Retain an electronic copy of any produced information pack to facilitate electronic transmission to non-Receiving States or other official bodies, on request.

4.3 Specimen travel documents

Generally, specimen travel documents are produced for the purpose of supporting an Issuing State's or organisation's communication campaign when a major change to a travel document is introduced.

To support change awareness of major travel document change types, including travel document acceptance by Receiving States, Issuing States or organisations SHOULD produce and include within each distributed information pack, a physical specimen of the new or upgraded national travel document. At the discretion of the Issuing State or organisations, specimen variant travel documents CAN be included.

Officially issued new or upgraded travel documents, SHOULD be of the same graphical design and functional layout as that, which is demonstrated within the distributed specimen travel documents. The Issuing State or organisation SHOULD additionally ensure that the personalisation technique² is no different between officially issued travel documents and the distributed specimen travel documents. Generic values such as data formats, field string character lengths, issuing authority name etc, SHOULD also be consistent with the Issuing State's or organisation's implemented personalisation practice.

For traceability purposes and to prevent unauthorised use in the event of loss or theft, distributed travel document specimens SHOULD contain unique serial numbers. Serial numbers MAY be either from a live or test serial numbering range and the physical travel document specimen SHOULD be imprinted with the word 'SPECIMEN' or 'CANCELLED'.

To further facilitate easy identification of specimen travel documents, the primary

identifying data SHOULD be obviously fictitious, for example, 'UTO SPECIMEN'.

Where provided specimens are electronic machine readable travel documents (eMRTD), the contactless integrated circuit SHOULD be appropriately encoded and:

- At least contain the same information and primary portrait image as is printed within the eMRTD visual inspection zone.
- Comprise the correct Logical Data Structure as is prescribed in the ICAO 9303 technical specification, part 10, "*Logical Data Structure (LDS) for Storage of Biometrics and Other Data in the Contactless Integrated Circuit (IC)*".

Specimen travel documents SHOULD be digitally signed using an appropriate Country Signing Certificate Authority (CSCA). The Issuing State's or organisation's live CSCA SHOULD be used for this purpose, but a test CSCA MAY be used.

² If the new or upgraded travel document is personalised at multiple issuance sites and the personalisation method is not forensically similar between issuance sites, Issuing States or organisations SHOULD describe within the information pack, any personalisation method differences.

Communication approach

While the communication exchange approach will vary between Member States, travel document changes are generally communicated via Diplomatic exchange.

An online database of contact information for embassies, consulates, and other Diplomatic missions of 190+ countries can be obtained from www.embassies.net

It is the responsibility of the Issuing State or organisation to request that Diplomatic posts inform their respective Governments about the change, as well as to forward any provided supporting communication materials.

5.2 Virtual upload to secure travel document reference databases

To supplement the Diplomatic exchange approach, Issuing States or organisations SHOULD provide travel document specimens to organisations³ responsible for hosting secure virtual reference databases of international travel documents.

These virtual platforms are typically targeted at bona fide bodies and often contain detailed imagery and descriptions of some key security features. Such virtual platforms further:

- Generate rapid change awareness among broad audiences that have genuine needs to authenticate travel documents.
- Provide a comparison capability for travel document inspectors.

To support this approach, Issuing States or organisations MAY wish to establish a general arrangement with chosen service providers. Such arrangements SHOULD be written, and can include:

- The details of what will be received.
- The purpose of providing the travel document specimen.
- Any specific requirements for example, instructions concerning when the change can be first shown on the virtual platform.
- Handling and storage requirements.

³ Referred to organisations are commercial business. It is not within the remit of this guidance to name such organisations.

An example of a general arrangement between an Issuing States or organisations and a virtual platform service provider is provided at [Annex 'C', General arrangement between the Issuing State or organisation and virtual reference database hosts](#).

5.3 Global law enforcement and immigration communities

The International Criminal Police Organisation (INTERPOL) is a global data sharing institution which, in conjunction with Frontex (European Border and Coast Guard Agency), hosts and maintains a web-based directory of travel documents.

The Frontex INTERPOL Electronic Library Document System (FIELDS) is a secure and free to use platform, available to persons within the law enforcement and immigration communities and who are required to authenticate travel documents and facilitate travel.

Issuing States or organisations seeking to contribute to the up-to-date maintenance of FIELDS by providing information of their new travel document or changes to their travel documents, should contact fields@interpol.int

When corresponding with FIELDS, Issuing States or organisations SHOULD as a minimum, include:

- The date from when the travel document change will become effective.
- The travel document validity period.
- Identifying characteristics of the communicated travel document to permit ease of identification from previous travel document versions.
- A specimen travel document, or high-resolution photographic images of the travel document.

5.4 Digital certificates

To reliably verify and validate the electronic content and digital security of any eMRTD, it is necessary for Receiving States to have access to an Issuing State's or organisation's live CSCA public key certificate.

The ICAO's Public Key Directory (PKD), a central repository for the secure exchange of digital certificates, is the most trusted, practical and convenient way for Issuing States or organisations to securely distribute live CSCA public key certificates, as well as obtain that of other Issuing States or organisations.

Issuing states or organisations who do not currently enjoy ICAO PKD privileges are strongly encouraged to apply for ICAO PKD membership.

Information on how to participate, as well as become an ICAO PKD member, including membership requirements and administrative documentation, can be obtained from www.icao.int/Security/FAL/PKD/Pages/How-to-Participate.aspx

When corresponding with Diplomatic posts to announce travel document changes, Issuing States or organisations who are already members of the ICAO PKD, SHOULD confirm that the live CSCA public key certificates are available for downloading through ICAO's secure distribution channel.

Issuing States or organisations that are not members of the ICAO PKD, as a minimum, when corresponding with Diplomatic posts to announce any travel document changes, SHOULD provide the details of a central point of contact from which the live CSCA public key certificates can be obtained.

Annex A

Introductory letter to Diplomatic Missions for Major travel document changes

Note No 01/2024

The **Passport Office of the Government of Utopia** presents its compliments to all **Diplomatic Missions** and has the honour to provide notice of a change to the **graphical design of the Utopia e-Passport including the refreshed suite of security technologies which this new generation of e-Passport comprises.**

This change will be introduced from **01/01/2025**.

The new **series 2 e-Passport** will be subject to a phased implementation which means that for a period of up to **6 months** the **Passport Office** will continue to issue **the series 1 passport** in some locations and the **new series 2 e-Passport** in others.

All **passports** issued by the **Passport Office of the Government of Utopia** will remain valid until the expiry date shown in the **passport**.

The new **series 2 e-Passport** is a highly secure document and has many new security features. The design as well as its construction complies with the technical specifications for Machine Readable Travel Documents as prescribed by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO). ICAO document 9303 refers.

The **Passport Office** is honoured to enclose an information pack that describes **the graphical design of the series 2 e-Passport and which also explains some of its associated security features and technologies**. The content of the information pack is sensitive and is protectively marked. It is solely intended for the internal use of your Government.

Additionally enclosed herewith and for reference and indefinite retention by your Government are **two (2) specimen series 2 passports**. The associated serial numbers are:

- **123456789**
- **987654321**

The **Utopia** live Country Signing Certificate Authority (CSCA) public key certificate, which is necessary to validate the **series 2 e-Passport's** digital certificate chain, has been uploaded to the ICAO Public Key Directory.

The **Passport Office** respectfully requests that this change is urgently conveyed to your Government, your immigration control authorities, and your national centre for identity document expertise. The **Passport Office** further requests that the enclosed supporting materials are forwarded to your Government before the effective date of this change and any necessary adjustment to support verification and acceptance of the **series 2 e-Passport** by your immigration control authority is prepared.

For further information concerning the **protective or digital security of the Government of Utopia series 2 e-Passport**, or for any other general enquiry including any intention to publicly release information relating to the **Government of Utopia series 2 e-Passport** please contact Sharedmailbox@utopia.gov.ut or call us directly by dialling **(+123) 456 789**

The **Passport Office** avails itself of this opportunity to renew to all Diplomatic Missions the assurances of its highest consideration.

Annex B

Introductory letter to Diplomatic Missions for Minor travel document changes

Note No 01/2024

The **Passport Office of the Government of Utopia** presents its compliments to **all Diplomatic Missions** and has the honour to provide notice of a change to the **Logical Data Structure (LDS)** of the Utopia series **2 e-Passport**.

From **01/01/2025**, the current **LDS, version 1.7, will be replaced with LDS, version 1.8**.

This change will not be subject to a phased implementation however, all **passports** issued by the **Passport Office of the Government of Utopia** before **01/01/2025** that have an expiry date that is yet to surpass, will remain valid until the expiry date shown in the **passport**.

The **Utopia** live Country Signing Certificate Authority (CSCA) public key certificate, which is necessary to validate the **series 2 e-Passport's** digital certificate chain, has been uploaded to the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) Public Key Directory.

All passports issued by the **Passport Office of the Government of Utopia** are manufactured and personalised according to the technical specifications for Machine Readable Travel Documents as prescribed within the ICAO document series 9303.

The **graphical design of the Utopia series 2 e-Passport including its security features**, remain unchanged. No new specimen passports will therefore be distributed, in line with ICAO guidance.

The **Passport Office** respectfully requests that this change is urgently conveyed to your Government, your immigration control authorities, and your national centre for identity document expertise.

For further information concerning the **protective or digital security of the Government of Utopia series 2 e-Passport**, or for any other general enquiry including any intention to publicly release information relating to **the Government of Utopia series 2 e-Passport** please contact Sharedmailbox@utopia.gov.ut or call us directly by dialling **(+123) 456 789**

The **Passport Office** avails itself of this opportunity to renew to all Diplomatic Missions the assurances of its highest consideration.

Annex C

General arrangement between an Issuing State or organisation and virtual reference database hosts

Utopia Passport Office
Utopia House
Utopia
UTOP 1AA

Michael Smith
Fantasia Reference Systems
Fantasia
F4NT 4SI

Dear Mr. Smith,

Re: The Utopia series 2 e-Passport and variants thereof – Not for public disclosure until officially instructed by the Utopia Passport Office.

Enclosed are the following **passports**:

012345678 (National travel document)	098765432 (Variant A travel document)	100000000 (Variant B travel document)
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These **passports** are provided to you for the purpose of maintaining the **Fantasia reference database** virtual platform only.

The **Utopia series 2 e-Passport** will be first issued from **01/01/2025**. Its design and security features are presently not public knowledge and yet to be communicated formally. You are requested to quarantine any uploading of images or sharing of information concerning the **series 2 e-Passport** until an official instruction from **Utopia Passport Office** is received, for you to do so.

The specimen **passports** that are provided to you are for your indefinite retention. Please therefore ensure that they are not left unattended and are stored securely when not in use.

Should you have any questions or require any clarification whatsoever, please contact Sharedmailbox@utopia.gov.ut or call us directly by dialling **(+123) 456 789**.

Yours sincerely,

Adam Norman Other
Head of Passport Security
Utopia Passport Office

— END —