

**TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUP ON
MACHINE READABLE TRAVEL DOCUMENTS**

Fifteenth Meeting

(Montreal, 17 to 21 May 2004)

Agenda Item 2: Report of the Document Content and Format Working Group

Agenda Item 2.2: Document format and durability issues

EMERGENCY/SHORT-TERM PASSPORT GUIDELINES

(Presented by the Document Content and Format Working Group (DCFWG))

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 In 1980, ICAO published the first edition of Doc 9303, titled "A Passport with Machine Readable Capability." This document became the basis for the initial issuance of machine readable passports.

1.2 In 2003, ICAO published the fifth edition of Doc 9303, Part 1 –*Machine Readable Passports*. This is the most up-to-date statement of the physical and operational features of the modern passport.

1.3 Current standards work is concentrating on the methods to add biometric features to travel documents, and in particular the passport, in such a way that the biometric features can be globally interoperable, thus improving the security of the passports and increasing the security and facilitation of travellers worldwide.

1.4 The assumption is made that these top-of-the-line national passports are made domestically at a centralized facility or at select locations distributed throughout the country. Access to issuance technology, uniformity of security features and a host of other assets is maximized by this method.

1.5 At the same time, there is a continued need to document citizens under issuance conditions that may be less than optimal. This has led to the issuance of documents ranging from Travel Letters to Emergency Issue, Short-Term, Temporary, Embassy, Consular or Foreign Post Passports, hereinafter called "short-term passports".

1.6 The purpose of this working paper is to review the existing ICAO Doc 9303, Part 1 specification with an eye to identifying the differences in document structure and issuance, and to make recommendations on the best methods for issuance of such passports.

2. REVIEW OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN STANDARD & EMERGENCY ISSUANCE

2.1 First, it is not the aim, nor should it be the effect, to establish a lesser standard for security for short-term passports. Ideally, the same methods of personalization would be used wherever the passport was personalized, but this is not usually the case. Thus short-term passports issued in less than ideal conditions may not have all the features afforded by passports issued at the issuing State's domestic facilities.

2.2 As a general principle for short-term passports, all operating standards describing the data placement and content in both the visual information zone (VIZ) and the machine readable zone (MRZ) shall remain as specified in Part 1, Doc 9303, to ensure global interoperability.

2.3 Listed below are features that may differ between a full validity, domestically issued passport and a short-term passport issued under less than standard conditions.

2.3.1 *Cover color.* Although a State may wish to use the same color cover as for a normal passport, many States have chosen a color to draw attention to the passport. This attention may be viewed by some States as causing their citizens undue hindrance, while other States may use the color difference to encourage the holder to get a full validity passport. A different color than normal is also a hint to the border control that the passport was issued under less than optimal conditions. Garish colors should be avoided, in deference to the importance of the passport document.

2.3.2 *Period of validity.* Passports issued under less than ideal conditions should have a limited term of validity. Because many nations will not visa a passport with less than six months validity, a seven-month minimum validity should be considered for most cases. Consular discretion or citizen needs may indicate a shorter term, and direct repatriation issuances may be valid for only one flight. Under no circumstances should a short-term passport have a term of validity longer than one year.

2.3.3 *Book size.* The dimensions as specified in Paragraph 2 of Section IV of Part 1 Machine Readable Passport specification are to be met, including the thickness of the data page. The number of pages may be fewer, reflecting the reduced term of validity. While book personalization and book manufacturing constraints must be honoured, no short-term passport should have fewer than eight (8) pages, including the data page.

2.3.4 *Book designation.* States may choose to add a modifier to the term "passport" stamped on the cover, such as "Provisional", "Short-Term", "Temporary" or "Emergency Issue", or they may not. In Part 1, paragraph 5.4, field 03/I Document Code specifies the use of the letter "P" and a second optional letter at the discretion of the issuing State of organization. No recommendation is made at this time as to the potential use of this second letter as a designator of short-term passports.

2.3.5 *Passport number.* The book control number assigned to the book by the security passport manufacturer should be used as the passport number. This practice is especially important for internal controls purposes, and accounting for books should they become missing, lost or stolen, which is unfortunately more likely in distributed locations.

2.3.6 *Security features.* Short-term passports will not likely have the same suite of security features as passports issued domestically in the regular way. To compensate, the personalization process should have two or more security features from among the features listed in Paragraph A.5.4.3 and A.5.4.4 in the Security Standards Annex to Section III of Doc 9303 Part 1 Machine Readable Passports.

2.3.7 *Training* States must provide educational brochures and other training aids to publicize the security features of the short-term passport. This is important to prevent the short-term passport from being attacked as the "weak link" in the security chain.

3. **ACTION BY THE TAG/MRTD**

3.1 The DCFWG invites the TAG/MRTD to:

- a) endorse the guidelines proposed on short-term passport issuance;
- b) recommend that this recommendation, suitably formatted, be posted on the ICAO web site as guidance for States; and
- c) recommend that these guidelines be considered for inclusion as additional paragraph(s) to the next revision of Doc 9303, Part 1 – *Machine Readable Passports*.

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