

14 FAM 720 DIPLOMATIC POUCH

*(CT:LOG-93; 04-14-2011)
(Office of Origin: A/LM)*

14 FAM 721 DIPLOMATIC POUCH POLICY

(CT:LOG-81; 11-22-2010)

- a. Items are sent in the diplomatic pouch solely at the risk of the sender. The Department assumes no responsibility for loss of or damage to items sent via diplomatic pouch. Registry, insurance, and other special postal services are not permitted by the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) when mail is forwarded to a final destination by diplomatic pouch. See 14 FAM 723.2, paragraph c, for packaging standards.
- b. The Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and international law limit the use of diplomatic pouches to diplomatic documents and articles intended for official use. The Department permits authorized pouch users at some posts to use diplomatic pouches to transmit limited amounts of personal mail (see 14 FAM 724 and 14 FAM 740).
- c. The USPS recognizes the Department as the agent for addressees and considers mail “delivered” to addressee upon delivery to the Department, at which point the mail passes outside of USPS control and is no longer defined as mail. The USPS Domestic Mail Manual, Section 703, paragraph 3.1.2, recognizes that the Department has the authority to open and inspect all mail sent to it for transmission abroad to determine whether the items meet Department and all other standards. Mail that does not comply may be returned to the USPS for return to sender.

14 FAM 722 WHAT IS A DIPLOMATIC POUCH?

(CT:LOG-81; 11-22-2010)

- a. Diplomatic pouches are opaque, sealed bags or crates that transport official communications, documents, and articles of the U.S. Government across international frontiers.
- b. Article 27(4) of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (VCDR)

requires that “the diplomatic bag shall not be opened or detained.” This provision precludes the inspection of pouch contents, including by x-ray examination, whether pouches are entering or leaving the host country. With regard to outgoing pouches, the International Civil Aviation Organization guidance clearly states that its baggage screening requirements do not “require or authorize the screening of diplomatic bags by x-ray or any method inconsistent with the VCDR.” Posts should under no circumstances allow host-government officials to x-ray or otherwise inspect or open a diplomatic pouch (see 14 FAH-4 H-235 for procedures to be followed for unclassified pouches and 14 FAH-4 H-245 for procedures for classified pouches).

- c. The standard pouch colors and their limitations on use are:
 - (1) **Tangerine** canvas or nylon bags or plastic cases that are used for **classified pouches only**. Tangerine pouches must not be used for unclassified shipments;
 - (2) **White canvas or nylon** bags that are used for unclassified pouches; and
 - (3) **Gray/black plastic bags** that are used for **unclassified** pouches but are limited in the number of dispatches.
- d. U.S. Postal Service (USPS) mailbags must **not** be used for diplomatic pouch shipments.
- e. Specific pouch contents may not be discussed with or disclosed to any unauthorized person, either U.S. citizen or foreign national. Communications that discuss pouch contents must be marked at least “Sensitive But Unclassified (SBU).” Depending on the specific information provided pertinent to the item(s) discussed, communications may be marked “Confidential” or higher.
- f. See 14 FAH-4 H-214 for types of pouch containers and weight limitations.

14 FAM 723 ITEMS IN POUCHES

14 FAM 723.1 Items That May Be Transported in a Diplomatic Pouch

(CT:LOG-81; 11-22-2010)

- a. **Primary purpose:** The primary use of the diplomatic pouch is to

transport items between U.S. Government agencies for the official use of the U.S. Government. The Department transmits unclassified and sensitive but unclassified (SBU) items in unclassified pouches. The Department transmits Confidential, Secret, and Top Secret items in classified pouches. Unclassified items whose sensitivity warrants courier handling and SBU items may also be sent in classified pouches.

- b. **Official unclassified items:** Unclassified items are sent to posts from Department offices through the unclassified diplomatic pouch but items are limited in size and weight (see 14 FAH-4 H-214 for limitations by type of container).

NOTE: “Items” does not mean official purchases from vendors. Posts must use the U.S. Despatch Agencies for shipment of official unclassified supplies or equipment from a vendor. In urgent situations, posts may use the unclassified pouch for official supplies or equipment, but posts are requested to limit orders to 6 cubic foot per shipment (approximately the size of 5-copy paper boxes), no longer than 29 inches on the longest side, and weighing no more than 250 pounds per shipment. Should these parameters be exceeded, funding is required (see 14 FAM 723.3 regarding bulk shipments).

- c. **Official classified items:** While the Department places no size or weight limit on official items being sent through the classified diplomatic pouch, some posts have size or weight restrictions; these are listed on the Diplomatic Pouch and Mail Division (DPM) Web site. Other agency and some Department shipments will be billed by the Department’s Courier Division (DS/C/DC) for transportation. Please contact WRDCD-OPS@state.gov for questions pertaining to this topic. Classified material received in a sealed container (envelope, box, etc.) from any source must be controlled and accounted for by a registry number on a bar-coded Form OF-120, Diplomatic Pouch Mail Registration, or similar barcode-readable control number from point of origin to addressee/destination. The originator is responsible for affixing appropriate registry forms and indicating proper classification (see 12 FAM 539.4-2 and 14 FAH-4 H-222.1, paragraph c).
- d. **Personal mail:** Authorized personnel at Category B posts (see 14 FAH-4 H-113.2) have full use of the diplomatic pouch for personal mail. Eligible personal items for authorized personnel at Category B posts are letters, flats, and parcels that are limited in size, weight, and content (see: 14 FAH-4 H-214.1-4 for size and weight limitations; 14 FAM Exhibit 723.2 for content limitations; 14 FAM 724.1-3 for personal office and training materials; and 14 FAM 740 for regulations on personal mail).

14 FAM 723.2 Items That May Not Be Transported in a Diplomatic Pouch

(CT:LOG-81; 11-22-2010)

- a. **Prohibited items:** Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations require that all parcels boarding aircraft be x-rayed. The Department x-rays items for outgoing pouch transmission at DPM/U SA-32. Neither classified nor unclassified pouches may contain items that are illegal to import into the receiving country, export from the sending country, or items that are prohibited (see 14 FAM Exhibit 723.2 for a representative list of items prohibited for pouch dispatch).
- b. **Unclassified official supplies:** See 14 FAM 310 for regulations on shipping official supplies and equipment. Department policy is to ship official supplies through the U.S. Despatch Agency:
 - (1) The diplomatic pouch should not normally be used to transport unclassified items procured from vendors for official use, except in very limited circumstances (see 14 FAM 723.1, paragraph b). Diplomatic pouch is an expedited service and is consequently much more expensive than normal freight channels. If an office believes it has a justifiable emergency or other urgent need to use the diplomatic pouch to ship a bulk shipment, the ordering office must agree to fund the cost in advance in accordance with the procedures in 14 FAM 723.3; and
 - (2) The Department may not use the Military Postal Service (MPS) or Diplomatic Post Office (DPO) to transport official supplies. Official unclassified supplies for Category A or Category C posts should be transported through the Department's Despatch Agency system, through international mail, or through commercial courier or cargo services.
- c. **Packaging:** Items intended for pouch dispatch must be packaged to withstand transport and rough handling without content or package breakage, injury to handlers, or damage to other items in the pouch. Senders must follow these general standards for packaging:
 - (1) Cushion fragile items to withstand rough handling in processing, transportation, and delivery; e.g., to withstand a 10-foot drop without breakage;
 - (2) Seal powders and allowable liquids in plastic bags to prevent spillage and leakage;

- (3) Package contents so they do not shift within the mailing container;
- (4) The size of the box must be adequate to contain the items and provide enough space for the cushioning material; and
- (5) Use boxes with the appropriate strength for the weight of the contents:
 - (a) Paperboard boxes may be used for easy and average loads up to 10 lbs;
 - (b) Metal-stayed paperboard boxes may be used for easy and average loads up to 20 lbs;
 - (c) Solid and corrugated fiberboard boxes may be used as follows: box grade 125 up to 20 lbs; box grade 175 up to 40 lbs; box grade 200 up to 65 lbs; and box grade 275 up to 70 lbs; and
 - (d) Good, rigid, used boxes with all flaps intact are acceptable.

d. **Personal items:** The diplomatic pouch may not be used to transport items for the personal use of government employees, except in very limited circumstances (see regulations on personal mail in 14 FAM 740 and on personal office materials in 14 FAM 724.1-3). The prohibition against using the diplomatic pouch for personal items includes, for example:

- (1) Household effects (HHE) and unaccompanied baggage (UAB), including professional materials. See 14 FAM 610 for regulations on shipping HHE and UAB. Shipping HHE or UAB by diplomatic pouch to circumvent HHE or UAB weight limits is a serious abuse of pouch privileges and is subject to punitive action requiring the sender to reimburse the U.S. Government for transportation costs (see 14 FAM 742.4-1). (See 14 FAM 742.4-2 regarding consumables);
- (2) Items for personal businesses (such as hair-dressing products);
- (3) Items for charitable donation (such as school supplies for an orphanage); and
- (4) Items for resale (such as cookies).

e. **Hazmat:** Diplomatic pouches must not contain items that:

- (1) Are illegal to import into or export from the country of destination; and

- (2) Violate IATA Dangerous Goods Regulations; or
 - (3) Are harmful to human life or the environment. An attempt to transmit a prohibited item will result in loss of pouch privileges and disciplinary action (see 14 FAM 726).
- f. **Mass mailings:** Individuals, organizations, and businesses are not authorized to use the diplomatic pouch to send mass mailings (in any form) of unsolicited advertisements or like materials.
- g. **Special handling:** The Department does not accept from the USPS for transmission abroad in diplomatic pouch any item that requires special handling, such as COD, insured mail, registered mail, or restricted delivery. If a sender requests one of these services, USPS returns the item to the sender with the endorsement "Service Not Available."

14 FAM 723.3 Bulk Shipments Through the Diplomatic Pouch

(CT:LOG-81; 11-22-2010)

- a. Definition of bulk shipment:
- (1) **Shipment:** A combination of boxes sent from the same originator to the same addressee/household that arrives at DPM/U in a narrow time frame such that it is clear that the items are intended to be shipped together; and
 - (2) **Bulk:** Combined size of more than 6 cubic feet (about the size of 5 copy-paper boxes), or more than 250 pounds.
- b. Department official bulk shipments:
- (1) Avoid bulk shipments: Posts are requested to scrutinize all purchase orders with U.S. vendors for the correct shipping instructions. If the items ordered fit the definition of a bulk shipment above, the shipment should be sent to the appropriate U.S. Despatch Agency (either sea or air freight) instead of the pouch facility. If you need the items urgently, ask the Despatch Agency to send the items LCL ("Less than a Container Load") or air freight, or ask the vendor for commercial transportation company charges;
 - (2) Notify DPM/U about bulk shipments: If you err and ask a vendor to ship to your pouch address, and the items ordered will take up more space than 6 cubic feet (about 5 copy-paper boxes) or weigh

- more than 250 pounds, post must provide fiscal data to DPM/U in advance of shipment to pay for the transportation cost. Use the link on the DPM Web page to calculate an estimate and be sure to obligate the funds. Notify DPM-Answerperson@state.gov by e-mail that you have ordered a bulk shipment and give the vendor's name and approximate expected size or weight of the order; and
- (3) Pay for bulk shipments: You will be notified when the bulk shipment arrives at DPM/U. At that point, please send the transportation fiscal data (that you obligated when you ordered the supplies) by e-mail to DPM-Answerperson@state.gov, along with your name, e-mail address, and phone number in case DPM/U needs to contact you. After the fiscal data clears the Department's financial system, the shipment will be sent in the next available pouch.
- c. **Other-agency official bulk shipments:** Oversized or bulk shipments of unclassified items for other agencies may be sent via the unclassified pouch at the expense of the originating agency under the following conditions:
- (1) The originator must arrange to deliver the materials to the DPM/U facility (SA-32), 44132 Mercure Circle, Sterling, VA 20166 (located off Route 606, approximately 3 1/2 miles west from Route 28);
 - (2) The originator must notify DPM/U in advance of the delivery;
 - (3) Fiscal data must be provided to DPM/U in advance to pay for the shipment; and
 - (4) Prohibited items will not be accepted.
- d. **Personal bulk shipments:** The Department discourages personal bulk shipments by pouch. Personal bulk shipments can not be dropped off at SA-32 due to security regulations. In the event that a personal bulk shipment is delivered to SA-32 via an authorized mode of transport, DPM/U requires the employee to pay transportation costs and any other fees incurred in advance of shipment. No single item can exceed 29" x 29" x 29" even if the shipper agrees to pay transport fees, since items of this size will not fit inside a pouch bag.

14 FAM 724 USE OF THE DIPLOMATIC POUCH

14 FAM 724.1 Official Items in the Pouch

14 FAM 724.1-1 U.S. Government Agencies

(CT:LOG-59; 05-06-2009)

Any office of a U.S. Government agency that participates in International Cooperative Administrative Support Services (ICASS) may use the diplomatic pouch to send official items from Washington to posts abroad. For items in diplomatic pouches originating abroad, the sending agency must be a participating ICASS agency that has signed up for pouching services.

14 FAM 724.1-2 Institutional Contractors, Grantees, Fellows, Awardees, and Recipients of Cooperative Agreements

(CT:LOG-59; 05-06-2009)

- a. Institutional contractors, such as commercial firms, nonprofit organizations, and educational institutions with a contract, grant, or cooperative agreement with the U.S. Government, have limited pouch use for mail only when:
 - (1) The other agency agrees to reimburse the Department for the cost of transporting the contractor's mail;
 - (2) The other agency agrees to receive, sort, and bundle mail for the final destination, then deliver it to the Department for pouching; and
 - (3) The other agency agrees to receive mail of its contractors from the pouch and distribute it.
- b. Correspondence from domestic locations to post must be given to the U.S. Government agency for pouch transmission to post. All correspondence must originate in the U.S. Government agency's domestic office, have the return address of the U.S. Government agency, and be addressed to the U.S. Government agency's office at a post abroad.

NOTE: For USAID, official mail should be addressed as follows:

- Name of Individual or Organization
- (followed by C for contractor or G for grant)
- Name of Post
- Agency for International Development (AID)

- Washington, DC 20523
- c. Correspondence from the contractor's location abroad to the U.S. Government agency's domestic location must be given to the U.S. Government agency's office at post for pouch transmission to Washington. All correspondence must originate from the U.S. Government agency's office at post abroad, have the return address of the U.S. Government agency, and be addressed to the U.S. Government agency's domestic office, or to any domestic address if appropriate postage is affixed.
- d. Official mail of institutional contractors is limited to letters and flats with a maximum weight of two (2) pounds. Agencies may authorize personal letters and flats up to a maximum weight of two (2) pounds. Institutional contractors are not authorized to receive merchandise, parcels, magazines, or newspapers in the pouch channel.
- NOTE:** For USAID, personal mail of institutional contractors is limited to letters and flats with a maximum weight of one (1) pound.
- e. Local-hire contractors are not authorized pouch usage.

14 FAM 724.1-3 Personal Office and Training Materials

(CT:LOG-81; 11-22-2010)

- a. Employees are authorized to send a one-time shipment of personal office material to their assigned post via pouch. The weight limit per box is 70 pounds. Users of the pouch must ensure that all pouch size and weight limitations are met. Bulk shipment limitations described in 14 FAM 723.3 must not be exceeded. All items must have a valid official return address or the items will be rejected.
- b. Employees and locally employed staff attending training away from their post of record are authorized to send official training materials to their assigned post via pouch. The weight limit per box is 70 pounds. Users of the pouch must ensure that all pouch size and weight limitations are met. Bulk shipment limitations described in 14 FAM 723.3 must not be exceeded:
- (1) From training in Washington, employees and LE staff are authorized to send training material through the Internal Mail and Messenger Service (IMMS), with no postage affixed, for forwarding to post. All items must have a valid Department office return address or the items will be rejected;

- (2) From training at a post abroad or domestic location with pouch capabilities, employees and LE staff are authorized to send training material to their assigned post via pouch with no postage affixed. All items must have the return address of the training facility, with the student's name clearly marked; and
- (3) From training at a domestic location without pouch capabilities, employees and LE staff are authorized to send training material via USPS, with postage affixed, to their post's Washington, DC pouch address (see 14 FAH-4 H-311.4, paragraph c). All items must have a valid Department office return address.

14 FAM 724.2 Personal Mail in the Pouch

(CT:LOG-81; 11-22-2010)

- a. Persons eligible to send or receive personal items through the diplomatic pouch must meet the criteria in 14 FAM 724.2, paragraph b, and 14 FAM 724.2, paragraph c, and be assigned to posts abroad that do not have United States Postal Service (USPS), Military Postal Service (MPS), or Diplomatic Post Office (DPO) support (see 14 FAM 740 for regulations on transmission of personal items).

NOTE regarding MPS and DPO: Diplomatic pouch may be used if a vendor will not ship to an MPS/DPO address.

- b. Authorized users:

- (1) Must have duty-free privileges, usually associated with accreditation to the host government as diplomatic, A&T, or consular staff; and
- (2) Must be included in the International Cooperative Administrative Support Services (ICASS) Basic Package headcount, and their sponsoring agency must subscribe to ICASS pouching services at post (**NOTE:** Although interns are not counted in Basic Package, they are authorized full use of the pouch if their sponsoring agency subscribes to ICASS pouching services at post); and
- (3) Are usually under chief-of-mission authority.

- c. Authorized users of the diplomatic pouch include the following individuals and their eligible family members:

- (1) U.S. citizen and non-U.S. citizen assigned personnel of the U.S. Government (as described in 6 FAH-5 H-352.1);

- (2) Interns of the Federal government (as described in 6 FAH-5 H-352.8); and
- (3) Offshore U.S. citizen and non-U.S. citizen Personal Services Contractors (PSCs) whose contract creates an employer/employee relationship with the parent U.S. Government agency (as described in 6 FAH-5 H-352.3-1).

NOTE: Eligible family members are entitled to pouch privileges only at the post of their sponsor's assignment.

- d. Users pay domestic postage rates and must address mail as described in 14 FAM 742.2-1, subparagraph b(2). Mail transmitted in diplomatic pouches is not subject to foreign customs clearance standards.

14 FAM 724.3 Balloting Materials in the Pouch

(CT:LOG-59; 05-06-2009)

Any U.S. citizen may use Military Postal Service facilities (MPS), Diplomatic Post Office (DPO), or diplomatic pouch for sending balloting material to the United States. This includes post card applications, ballots, voting instructions, and envelopes.

14 FAM 724.4 Congressional Mail in the Pouch

(CT:LOG-59; 05-06-2009)

- a. Congressional mail may be sent and received through the diplomatic pouch only where the U.S. Postal System (USPS), the Military Postal Service (MPS), the Diplomatic Post Office (DPO), or the international postal system service is inappropriate.
- b. If enclosed in official Congressional franked envelopes, Congressional mail requires no postage. Other Congressional communications in unofficial envelopes sent from posts and addressed to an addressee in the United States require domestic postage at the official rate for the type of service desired from Washington, DC to the addressee.
- c. The Department forwards parcels for Members of Congress from posts to U.S. Customs in Washington, DC and informs the office of the Member so that prompt customs clearance can be arranged.
- d. Congressional parcels must be registered and comply with pouch requirements for size and weight limitations.

- e. Posts must e-mail the DPM-Answerperson@state.gov, with the registry number, pouch invoice number, date of dispatch, routing, and air waybill number for pouches containing Congressional mail.

14 FAM 724.5 Reserved

14 FAM 724.6 Use of Pouch by Individual Non-Personal Services Contractors

(CT:LOG-59; 05-06-2009)

- a. For institutional contractors grantees, fellows, and individuals under cooperative agreements, (see 14 FAM 724.1-2).
- b. Individual non-personal services contractors (as described in 6 FAH-5 H-352.4) are not automatically granted use of the diplomatic pouch for personal mail. To use the diplomatic pouch, individual non-personal services contractors must be hired in the United States to perform official U.S. Government work at a post abroad for a specific period of time, traveling on a diplomatic or official passport, and their contract must specifically include the provision of International Cooperative Administrative Support Services (ICASS) services including Basic Package and Pouching Services. Contact DPM-Answerperson@state.gov, for a case-by-case decision.

14 FAM 724.7 Use of Pouch by Locally Employed Staff (LE Staff)

(CT:LOG-81; 11-22-2010)

- a. Locally employed staff (LE staff), as described in 6 FAH-5 H-352.2, may use the diplomatic pouch to send and receive items relating to official U.S. Government business.
- b. LE staff may not use the pouch for personal mail. Contact DPM-Answerperson@state.gov, for exceptions for LE staff on extended TDY to a post other than their post of hire or residence.

14 FAM 724.8 Use of Pouch by Fulbright Scholars

(CT:LOG-81; 11-22-2010)

- a. Fulbright Scholars, as described in 6 FAH-5 H-352.7, are authorized to

make a one-time shipment of educational materials to the American embassy or consulate in the country of assignment. This shipment cannot exceed four copy-paper-size boxes, none of which may weigh more than 50 pounds. These materials cannot be sent back to the United States by pouch. Address these packages to:

Cultural Affairs Officer
Post-specific street address
Department of State
Washington, DC 20521-xxxx (Post +4 ZIP)

The Fulbright Scholar's name must appear in the return address.

- b. Fulbright Scholars assigned to a country with a Category A, Category B, or Category C post may use the pouch for letter mail up to 2 pounds to and from the United States. Letters must be addressed as follows:

Name of Grantee
Post-specific street address
Dulles, VA 20189-xxxx (Post +4 ZIP)

Fulbright Scholars must also use this address as the return address on all mail from abroad.

- c. Do not include any mention of the U.S. embassy, the Department, Fulbright, or any other official title references in addresses using the 20189 ZIP code. The 20189 ZIP can only be used for letter mail up to the 2-pound limit and cannot be used for mailing of the one-time shipment of educational materials.

14 FAM 724.9 International Organization Detailees

(CT:LOG-59; 05-06-2009)

U.S. Government employees assigned to international organizations under a formal detail agreement between the employing agency and the international organization are authorized use of the pouch for official mail. They may or may not be authorized use of the diplomatic pouch for personal mail. For guidance on establishing International Cooperative Administrative Support Services (ICASS) services, see 6 FAH-5 H-352.5. DPM must be informed when such agreements are established.

14 FAM 724.10 Peace Corps

(CT:LOG-59; 05-06-2009)

- a. Peace Corps administrative staff members are authorized use of the

pouch for personal mail as long as they are included in the International Cooperative Administrative Support Services (ICASS) Basic Package headcount and subscribe to ICASS pouching services at post for outgoing mail. Peace Corps administrative staff who are not included in the ICASS Basic Package headcount are not authorized use of the diplomatic pouch.

- b. Peace Corps volunteers (as described in 6 FAH-5 H-352.9) are not authorized use of the diplomatic pouch for personal mail.
- c. Administrative staff not included in the International Cooperative Administrative Support Services (ICASS) headcount and Peace Corps volunteers may receive through the pouch, in emergencies, items vital for health such as prescription medicines and eyeglasses, and legal or financial documents.

14 FAM 724.11 U.S. Government-Sponsored Schools

(CT:LOG-81; 11-22-2010)

- a. Schools assisted by the Office of Overseas Schools (A/OPR/OS), as described in 6 FAH-5 H-352.10, are authorized to use the diplomatic pouch for first-class official letter mail, i.e., invoices, testing materials, correspondence, etc. For this purpose, use this address format:
Management Officer for [name of school]
Post-specific street address
Department of State
Washington, DC 20521-xxxx (Post + 4 ZIP)
- b. Emergency orders, short falls, testing materials, educational pamphlets and periodicals, video cassettes, CDs, transcripts, correspondence, and similar materials other than bulk orders, may be sent via the diplomatic pouch. Every attempt must be made to use the Despatch Agency before using the diplomatic pouch. Emergency orders for books and educational materials being sent via the diplomatic pouch must be approved by A/OPR/OS and A/LM/PMP/DPM.
- c. Schools abroad are not authorized to use the diplomatic pouch for shipment of supplies such as books and equipment. Established procedures for shipping books and other educational materials through the U.S. Despatch Agencies are in 14 FAM 315.1. Post management officers and school representatives must implement these procedures to realize the benefits of timely shipments and reduced costs.
- d. Employees of U.S. Government-sponsored schools are not authorized to

use the diplomatic pouch for personal mail.

14 FAM 724.12 Use of Pouch by Employee Associations Abroad

(CT:LOG-59; 05-06-2009)

Employee associations (American, locally employed staff, and/or Foreign Service national (FSN) associations) are not authorized use of the diplomatic pouch, except that American employee associations at Category B posts that are also 15 percent or greater hardship differential may use the pouch to receive not more than ten videocassettes or DVDs per month for video club rental (but not for resale).

14 FAM 724.13 Use of Pouch by Foreign Students Traveling to the United States for Educational Purposes

(CT:LOG-59; 05-06-2009)

- a. Department of Defense (DOD) military assistance programs involving foreign student travel to the United States for educational purposes is the responsibility of the Defense representative at post.
- b. Students should be advised to hand carry course materials when they return. However, if this is impracticable, foreign students may use the diplomatic pouch if MPS is not available only to return course material from the United States to post. Bulk shipment limitations must not be exceeded.
- c. The Defense representative is responsible for ensuring that the course material is addressed properly (to his or her office) and forwarded to the student, and for ensuring students do not include goods or merchandise within a course material container. The Defense representative is responsible for obtaining and providing fiscal data to DPM/U when appropriate.
- d. The post pouch control officer is authorized to inspect incoming material if necessary.

14 FAM 724.14 U.S. Firms and Private Organizations

(CT:LOG-59; 05-06-2009)

- a. Diplomatic pouches transport official items of the U.S. Government. Overseas entities of U.S. commercial firms and private organizations may not use the Department's diplomatic pouch for business or personal mail.
- b. In extreme emergencies, the chief of mission may authorize U.S. firms, individuals, charitable institutions, and similar organizations to transmit business correspondence through the diplomatic pouch on a temporary basis. Immediately thereafter, the circumstances must be reported to the Assistant Secretary for Administration.
- c. In nonemergency cases, the chief of mission must request advance approval from the Assistant Secretary for Administration for a U.S. firm or private organization to use the diplomatic pouch. The request must include full justification for the exception.

14 FAM 724.15 Diplomatic Correspondence of Foreign Governments and International Organizations

(CT:LOG-59; 05-06-2009)

- a. Diplomatic pouches transport official items of the U.S. Government. Foreign governments and international organizations may not use the Department's diplomatic pouch.
- b. In isolated instances, the chief of mission may request authorization to send official correspondence of a foreign government or an international organization by diplomatic pouch if it is clearly in the interest of the U.S. Government. In all cases, transmitting such correspondence must be approved in advance by the Assistant Secretary for Administration. Requests must include justification for departure from established policy. The Department will not normally approve requests for exceptions when the same commercial services used by the Department are available to the foreign government or international organization.
- c. When the Department authorizes this exception, the correspondence must be processed and distributed the same way U.S. Government official correspondence is dispatched.

14 FAM 724.16 Members of Household, U.S. Citizens Living Abroad, and Locally Hired U.S.

Citizens

(CT:LOG-81; 11-22-2010)

- a. Members of household (MOH; see 3 FAM 4180) may not use the diplomatic pouch.
- b. A U.S. citizen living abroad who is not assigned to post for a tour of duty, is not an eligible family member, does not possess an official or diplomatic passport, or is not on temporary duty status, may not use the diplomatic pouch, except:
 - (1) MED may send dietary supplements to post for U.S. citizens incarcerated abroad (see 7 FAM 445.4); and
 - (2) Post may ship the personal effects of a deceased U.S. citizen to the next of kin where the effects are under the bulk shipment limitation. For more than 6 cubic feet or 250 pounds of personal effects, a freight forwarding company must be used (see 7 FAM 296.4).
- c. U.S. citizen employees hired locally (as described in 6 FAH-5 H-352.3-2) may not use the diplomatic pouch for personal mail unless that employee is an eligible family member of an authorized pouch user.
- d. All of the categories of persons in this section, if U.S. citizens, may use the pouch for balloting materials (see 14 FAM 724.3).

14 FAM 725 TRANSPORTATION OF DIPLOMATIC POUCHES

14 FAM 725.1 Conveyance of Diplomatic Pouches

(CT:LOG-59; 05-06-2009)

- a. Diplomatic pouches are most often transported by commercial airlines including regularly scheduled passenger flights, chartered flights, U.S. Government aircraft, and special support flights.
- b. Diplomatic pouches may also be transported by truck, car, ferry, or any other means of conveyance.
- c. Unclassified diplomatic pouches are transported as unaccompanied cargo. Classified diplomatic pouches are transported as accompanied cargo, escorted by Top Secret-cleared U.S. citizen employees, most often

members of the Diplomatic Courier Service of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security.

14 FAM 725.2 Defense Courier Service (DCS)

(CT:LOG-59; 05-06-2009)

For procedures on using the Defense Courier Service to transport classified material for the Department, see 14 FAH-4 H-260.

14 FAM 725.3 Post Restrictions

(CT:LOG-81; 11-22-2010)

- a. In certain circumstances, there can be restrictions on the size, weight, number, or physical characteristics of the diplomatic pouch. At times, these restrictions are set by the host country; for example, where a country does not recognize a crate as a diplomatic pouch. At times, these restrictions are set by the airline servicing the post; for example, where post is serviced by small size aircraft.
- b. A complete and current list of post restrictions is listed on the DPM Web site. For unclassified pouches, click on the "Unclassified Pouch Restrictions" link. For classified pouches, click on the "Frequency and Restrictions" link.
- c. Post's pouch control officer must notify DPM through e-mail to the DPM-Answerperson@state.gov, if new restrictions are imposed or current restrictions are changed or lifted.

14 FAM 726 ABUSE OF DIPLOMATIC POUCH PRIVILEGES

(CT:LOG-81; 11-22-2010)

- a. Abuse of the diplomatic pouch is generally one of three kinds:
 - (1) An authorized sender has sent a prohibited item;
 - (2) An item has been sent by an unauthorized user; or
 - (3) An authorized user has sent an item through an improper channel.
- b. Suspected abuse of the diplomatic pouch must be reported to the pouch

control officer (PCO). When abuse does occur, the PCO must take action to correct the problem. Examples of corrective action are listed below; post management must develop, implement, and publish post-specific remedies for pouch abuse:

- (1) **For a first offense:** Oral reprimand with reminder of pouch policies and restrictions, and possible reimbursement of transportation costs (see 31 U.S.C. 9701) after consulting with A/LM/PMP/DPM. The PCO must document all circumstances surrounding the incident;
 - (2) **For a second offense:** Written reprimand with reminder of pouch policies and restrictions; and possible reimbursement of transportation costs (see 31 U.S.C. 9701) after consulting with A/LM/PMP/DPM. The PCO must document all circumstances surrounding the incident;
 - (3) **For a third offense:** Suspension and restriction of pouch privileges for a limited amount of time as determined by post management, and possible reimbursement of transportation costs IAW 31 U.S.C. 9701 after consulting with A/LM/PMP/DPM. The PCO must document all circumstances surrounding the suspension;
 - (4) **For a fourth offense and/or flagrant offense:** Extended suspension of pouch privileges and possible reimbursement of transportation costs (see 31 U.S.C. 9701) after consulting with A/LM/PMP/DPM. The PCO must document all circumstances surrounding the suspension; and
 - (5) **For on-going abuse with no attempt or intent to abide by pouch regulations:** Permanent suspension of pouch privileges, imposed by the Director of A/LM/PMP/DPM and possible reimbursement of transportation costs (see 31 U.S.C. 9701) after consulting with A/LM/PMP/DPM. The PCO must document all circumstances surrounding the suspension.
- c. Pouch control officers must advise A/LM/PMP/DPM by e-mail to DPM-Answerperson@state.gov, of pouch violations when they occur. Include the name of individual, organization, parent organization in Washington, registry numbers, classification, and a description of the item(s).
- d. The Director of A/LM/PMP/DPM will assist post management in interpreting rules and regulations and making decisions if requested to do so. Abuse or misuse of the diplomatic pouch may be investigated further by appropriate law enforcement officials depending on the seriousness of the incident.

- e. Employees and authorized users should report suspected or known abuse of the diplomatic pouch or mail services to the Office of Inspector General (see 1 FAM 053.2 for reporting instructions and provisions for confidentiality when reporting).

14 FAM 727 FUNDING FOR DIPLOMATIC POUCHES

(CT:LOG-81; 11-22-2010)

- a. Other agencies must reimburse the Department either through direct billing or through the International Cooperative Administrative Support Services (ICASS) agreement for the cost of processing and/or transporting their material.
- b. Washington origin unclassified:
 - (1) A/LM/PMP/DPM receives ICASS funding for processing and transportation of unclassified diplomatic pouches from the Department to posts abroad, which includes all materials and manpower for pouching and unpouching. Bulk shipments are not funded through A/LM/PMP/DPM's ICASS budget; and
 - (2) The receiving post pays for all local delivery charges and any other local fees for pouches arriving at post.
- c. Washington origin classified:
 - (1) A/LM/PMP/DPM receives ICASS funding for the cost of processing classified diplomatic pouches from the Department to posts abroad, which includes all materials and manpower for pouching and unpouching;
 - (2) DS/C/DC receives program funds for courier services and transportation of routine Department classified pouches measuring 29" x 29" x 29" or 14 cubic feet or smaller. DS/C/DC charges Department customers for the transportation of nonroutine shipments to include Deadline Delivery Date (DDD) material. Department programs and projects that have ongoing classified shipping requirements are also charged for shipping material via classified pouch. Department programs for reimbursement purposes include, but are not limited to, programs whose mission is to replace and/or upgrade post. Department projects for reimbursement purposes are generally temporary and include but are not limited to capital improvements, i.e., Overseas Building

Operations (OBO). DS/C/DC charges other agencies for the transportation of all classified items/pouches; and

- (3) The receiving post pays for all local delivery charges and any other local fees for pouches arriving at post, to include travel between the mission and the airport.
- d. Post origin unclassified: Originating posts fund personnel and pouch transportation costs through post funds (either through ICASS or a direct charge to the agency sending the pouch). The post also pays extraneous charges (e.g., surcharges, fees, handling charges) for dispatching all outgoing unaccompanied pouches.
- e. Post origin classified: The costs associated with moving material to/from the airport are covered by the originating post, to include locally employed staff and extraneous charges (e.g., surcharges, fees, handling charges, overtime charges). Transportation charges on airway bills of post origin routine classified pouches are paid by DS/C/DC using the 4-part Form FS-452, Official Courier Accompanied Pouch Charges, that has the Courier Service fiscal strip on it.
- f. Bulk shipment: A bulk shipment is defined as a shipment that either exceeds 6 cubic feet in volume or weighs more than 250 pounds, that is destined to one addressee. The post, office, agency, or individual sending an unclassified bulk shipment from Washington to post must pay the cost of pouch transportation in advance of shipment by providing fiscal data to A/LM/PMP/DPM (see 14 FAM 723.3).
- g. A/LM/PMP/DPM has authority from 31 U.S.C. 9701, "Fees and Charges for Government Services and Things of Value," to obtain reimbursement for the transportation costs of unauthorized shipments of material via diplomatic pouch, including unauthorized personal shipments. Pouch control officers must document each incident, describing circumstances and providing weights to determine the transportation costs between point of origin and destination.

14 FAM 728 RESPONSIBILITY FOR DIPLOMATIC POUCHES

14 FAM 728.1 Pouch Control Officer (PCO)

(CT:LOG-81; 11-22-2010)

- a. The pouch control officer (PCO) for the Department is the Director of

A/LM/PMP/DPM. Each post or domestic facility where diplomatic pouches are processed must appoint a Top Secret-cleared U.S. citizen direct-hire employee as a local PCO (usually the IPO and/or GSO).

- b. The PCO is responsible for:
- (1) Enforcing the regulations set forth in this chapter and implementing the procedures set forth in 14 FAH-4 relating to the diplomatic pouch;
 - (2) Informing all users of the diplomatic pouch of the policies in this chapter and the procedures in 14 FAH-4 to ensure that pouch abuse does not occur; and
 - (3) Monitoring use of the diplomatic pouch for suspected pouch abuse, and receiving and acting on reports of suspected pouch abuse from others (see 14 FAM 726 for policy and procedures on reporting pouch abuse).
- c. If the PCO has reason to believe that any material may not qualify for diplomatic pouch service, the PCO is authorized to open and inspect, in the presence of one witness, any item submitted for pouch dispatch. This inspection specifically includes compliance with the IATA Dangerous Goods Regulations. Originators who refuse to allow inspection may not dispatch the item in question by either classified or unclassified diplomatic pouch. Actions to be taken on prohibited items are delineated in 14 FAH-4 H-227.
- d. Classified pouches must be opened, closed, or inspected only in the classified pouch facility and only by Top Secret-cleared U.S. citizens. The PCO or appropriate authority must authorize the Top Secret-cleared U.S. citizens in writing by name; the authorization list must be visibly posted in the classified pouch facility.
- e. Unclassified pouches must be opened, closed, or inspected in the unclassified mail facility only by authorized personnel assigned to the mail facility. The PCO must authorize the personnel in writing by name; the authorization list must be visibly posted in the mail facility. A cleared U.S. citizen does not need to be present during the opening of unclassified pouches that do not require special handling but must be present during the opening of Unclassified Controlled Air Pouch (UCAP) pouches (see 14 FAH-4 H-252.1). UCAP pouches must be delivered directly to the classified pouch room upon arrival (see 14 FAH-4 H-213.1-5, paragraph b).

14 FAM 728.2 Department Managers

(CT:LOG-59; 05-06-2009)

- a. Department managers, supervisors, and employees are responsible for ensuring efficient use of the diplomatic pouch based on the policies set forth in this chapter.
- b. Department managers must ensure that all pouch users are aware of the policies in this chapter and procedures in 14 FAH-4 governing the use of the diplomatic pouch by authorized employees and U.S. Government agencies to ensure that pouch abuse does not occur. When abuse does occur, Department managers must take action to correct the problem.
- c. A/LM/PMP/DPM will interpret rules and regulations and make decisions if requested to do so.

14 FAM 728.3 Post Management

(CT:LOG-59; 05-06-2009)

- a. Post management must develop, implement, and publish post-specific procedures based on 14 FAM 700 and 14 FAH-4 to control employee use of the pouch to send and receive personal mail. The Director of A/LM/PMP/DPM will interpret rules and regulations and make decisions if requested to do so.
- b. Post management must develop, implement, and publish post-specific policies based on 14 FAM 700 and 14 FAH-4 to ensure all authorized pouch users understand pouch limitations and the consequences of abusing pouch privileges.
- c. Post management must develop, implement, and publish post-specific criteria based on 14 FAM 700 and 14 FAH-4 for what constitutes pouch abuse at post, including and over and above the prohibitions listed in 14 FAM 723.2. The management notice setting forth the criteria must also list post-specific consequences for pouch abuse. The Director of A/LM/PMP/DPM will interpret rules and regulations and make decisions if requested to do so.

14 FAM 728.4 Other Agencies

(CT:LOG-59; 05-06-2009)

Other U.S. Government agencies are responsible for items shipped via the pouch for or by their personnel.

14 FAM 728.5 Diplomatic Couriers and Courier Escorts

(CT:LOG-81; 11-22-2010)

- a. Diplomatic couriers are Foreign Service specialists who are responsible for transporting classified pouches between Washington and posts abroad.
- b. Classified pouch assistants are local-hire, Top Secret-cleared American citizen employees who are responsible for the following:
 - (1) Processing and preparing classified pouches for dispatch;
 - (2) Receiving classified pouches from and delivering classified pouches to diplomatic couriers;
 - (3) Opening and processing classified pouches; and
 - (4) Making further arrangements for pick up or delivery of classified contents to an addressee's designated cleared American citizen employee.

All pouch processing activity will be conducted utilizing the ILMS DPM database software.

- c. Courier escorts are Top Secret-cleared American citizen employees from all agencies at post that use the classified pouch, and escort duty is shared among those agencies. See 12 FAM 151.1, paragraph a. For posts that have a classified pouch assistant, courier escort duty is shared among agencies at post that use the classified pouch during the absence of the classified pouch assistant.
- d. See 12 FAM 100 for courier regulations and duties.

14 FAM 729 GENERAL PROCEDURES FOR DIPLOMATIC POUCHES

(CT:LOG-81; 11-22-2010)

- a. Detailed procedures for processing classified and unclassified diplomatic pouches are described in 14 FAH-4 H-200. In general:
 - (1) All individual items must show a complete return address. Items without a valid return address will not be accepted;

- (2) All containers used as diplomatic pouches must show the Department, post abroad, or the Secretary of State as the addressor and as the addressee on the pouch tag even if the entire contents are for another agency; and
 - (3) Every diplomatic pouch dispatched must contain a Form DS-3082, Pouch Invoice, for manual and ILMS DPM posts, listing the registered items in the pouch. This invoice must be placed on top of all other items, not inside an envelope.
- b. Most domestic and overseas facilities use the Diplomatic Pouch and Mail (DPM) module of the Integrated Logistics Management System (ILMS) to enter and track accountable items and to receive, dispatch, and track pouches. Some posts still use manual systems. Where ILMS DPM has been deployed to a post or facility, the Department expects the post or facility to continue to use ILMS DPM to effectuate:
- (1) Web-based worldwide visibility of items and pouches;
 - (2) Real-time tracking of items and pouches;
 - (3) Automated generation of bar-coded invoices and tags; and
 - (4) Automated generation of shipping documents for carriers.

Procedures for using ILMS DPM to process diplomatic pouches are described throughout 14 FAH-4 H-200.

14 FAM EXHIBIT 723.2

ITEMS PROHIBITED FOR POUCH DISPATCH

(CT:LOG-93; 04-14-2011)

Pouches in both the unclassified and classified channels may not contain items that are *classified as "dangerous goods"* or require any outside container marking or labeling as required in the International Air Transport Association (IATA) Dangerous Goods Regulations. *At the time of ordering, customers are encouraged to ask vendor if a Hazard label is required on the outside of the package for international air shipments. If a Hazard label is required, the parcel cannot go in the pouch as it is considered a Dangerous Good as defined by IATA. Additionally, pouches may not contain items that are illegal to import into the receiving country or export from the sending country.*

Questions regarding potentially prohibited items should be sent to DPM-

Answerperson@state.gov for final decision. Known items prohibited for dispatch by diplomatic pouch *either from the United States to overseas, or from overseas to the United States, or from post to post*, include, but are not limited to:

Alcoholic beverages (e.g., beer, wine, liquor);

Ammunition (e.g., blanks, caps, shells, simulated ammo);

Animals, endangered species products;

Any device that cannot be completely disabled from emitting any noise, signal, or vibration while in transit. Batteries must be removed or *the* item must be completely unwound and locked in this position (such as clocks, watches, timers, alarms, radios, etc.);

Any items for resale;

Batteries, Lithium metal or ion or polymer and sealed lead acid, excluding single-button cells installed in watches or computer motherboard-like desktops. Examples include the following: Laptops, iPads®, Kindles®, iPhones®, MP3 players, cell phones, cameras, some types of toys shipped with lithium batteries shipped alone, and uninterruptible power supply (UPS);

NOTE: *Only the following batteries are permitted: Alkaline, NiCad, NiMH, and the small flat coin "button" watch-type batteries. A desktop computer with a motherboard containing a button battery is permitted;*

Bulk shipments *are permitted in the pouch but transportation is funded by the customer (personal or official). Definition of bulk shipment: Shipment that equals or exceeds 6 cubic feet (meets or exceeds 5 single-copy paper boxes) and is destined to the same addressee/household between pouch shipments;*

NOTE: *6 cubic feet is equal to 10,368 cubic inches and 1 cubic foot is equal to 1728 cubic inches. To determine the volume of a box in cubic feet, multiply the width times the length times the depth (all in inches) and divide the sum by 1728. For example, a box that measures 24" x 24" x 18" has a volume of 6 cubic feet;*

All automotive tires (single or multiple) are considered bulk—see tires below for details. Funding for official shipments must be provided to A/LM/PMP/DPM in advance to pay pouch transportation costs (see 14 FAM 723.3) or for personal shipments, credit card information must be provided to the freight forwarder. Tires can be

shipped via DPO depending on size and location restrictions if a personal shipment. Official shipments cannot go via the DPO. Questions should be directed to DPO-Answerperson@state.gov. Tires should be shipped in household effects (HHE). Official: Tires can be shipped directly from vendor to appropriate US Despatch Agency;

Charitable donations of goods (e.g., school supplies for orphanage);

Compressed gases and aerosols (e.g., hairspray);

Controlled or illegal substances to be used without a prescription (e.g., narcotics);

Corrosives (e.g., car batteries);

Currency (cash);

Dry ice;

Explosives;

Firearms and nonfirearm items, such as air rifles, water pistols, and objects resembling weapons or dangerous objects (including video game controllers that resemble weapons);

Flammable liquids (e.g., nail polish and remover, *hand sanitizer, lens wipes, medication containing alcohol, perfume, or cologne*);

Flammable solids (e.g., safety matches);

Fragile items that are broken and/or improperly packaged so as to have the potential to cause personal injury or damage to pouch contents (see 14 FAM 723.2, paragraph c, for packaging standards);

Gel packs;

Hand sanitizer any size that contains alcohol and is flammable;

Human remains (e.g., cremains, organs);

Incendiary materials such as road flares, cigarette lighters, self-starting charcoal, etc.;

Infectious substances (IATA Category A), toxins, contaminated medical equipment, and medical specimens requiring outside markings under IATA regulations;

Inhalers for asthma are "under pressure" and cannot go in the pouch; consult the Office of Medical Services (MED);

Light bulbs containing hazardous material, such as compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs);

Liquids *in excess of 16 oz. in as single parcel in any type of container (glass or nonglass)* defined as anything that flows *like* any viscous substance and can ruin the contents of a pouch (includes lotions and peanut butter, for example);

NOTE: *Liquids less than 16 oz., in a single parcel are permitted to be shipped via pouch (e.g. makeup, lotions, peanut butter, pet food, containers with foil top lids, etc);*

Lithium batteries metal, *polymer*, or ion *and sealed lead acid, excluding single-button cells installed in watches or computer motherboard-like desktops. Examples include the following: Laptops, iPads®, Kindles®, iPhones®, MP3 players, cell phones, cameras, some types of toys shipped with Lithium batteries, or Lithium batteries shipped alone, and uninterruptible power supply (USP);*

Magnetic materials such as powerful magnets that can damage computer software and other electrical equipment (e.g. speakers);

Oxidizers;

Perishable goods – items liable to perish, decay or spoil rapidly, such as fresh meat, seafood, ripe fruits and certain temperature-sensitive medical products (i.e., blood diagnostics, etc);

Pressurized containers (e.g., "contents under pressure");

Private business books, goods, and materials;

Professional materials of a personal nature, except that limited personal office and training materials are allowed (see [14 FAM 724.1-3](#));

Plants, seeds, bulbs, soil, fertilizer, plant food;

Poisons;

Radioactive substances;

Temperature-sensitive items that could spoil or become ineffective if the temperature is not maintained within certain parameters (certain medications, perishable goods, etc.). In general, items that cannot

withstand large temperature swings;

Tires, automotive (single or multiple) are permitted to be shipped in the pouch but transportation costs are the responsibility of the customer and are considered bulk shipments (see bulk shipments);

Toys containing Lithium batteries (see Batteries or Lithium);

Uninterruptible power supply (UPS) contains nonspillable lead-acid batteries; and

Weapons or items that resemble weapons (e.g., any spring-loaded knife (switchblade), tactical knives, fixed-bladed fighting/hunting knives, firearms, or components thereof, sling shots, bows, arrows, BB guns and pellet guns, firearms, throwing stars/spikes, ceremonial swords, toys resembling weapons, water pistols, etc.).