

12 FAM 120 COURIER DUTIES

12 FAM 121 PRIMARY DUTY

(TL:DS-39; 8-15-94)

A courier ensures that U.S. diplomatic pouches are transported securely across international borders.

12 FAM 122 ACQUIRING POUCH CUSTODY

(TL:DS-39; 8-15-94)

a. Each pouch must be prepared (i.e., invoiced, labeled, and sealed) according to the provisions of 5 FAH-10 (Pouch and Mail Handbook). Do not include personal items of any kind in the pouch.

b. The originating office prepares a receipt form (OF-253) listing all pouches to be delivered to the courier for secure carriage to the post or Department (12 FAM122 Exhibit 122).

c. After ensuring that each receipt form accurately documents each pouch in the shipment, the receiving courier signs and dates the Form OF-253, and uses it to obtain the signatures of the cleared U.S. citizen employees to whom the individual pouches are delivered.

d. Couriers should not accept improperly prepared or improperly documented pouches.

12 FAM 123 PROHIBITING INSPECTIONS

(TL:DS-39; 8-15-94)

a. The courier ensures that the rights and privileges set forth in the Vienna Conventions concerning pouches are not infringed. (See 12 FAM111 Exhibit 111.2 .) Chief among these is the stipulation that “the diplomatic bag shall not be opened or detained.”

b. If local officials insist on x-raying or opening a courier-accompanied pouch, then the courier should make every attempt to place a call to the respective post’s regional security officer, administrative counselor, deputy chief of mission, chief of mission, or the duty officer, and give an on-the-spot appraisal of the situation. If the local officials persist, then the courier must abort the scheduled stop or layover, and either continue to the next scheduled post or return to the originating post.

c. In addition, no RDCO, courier supervisor, nor courier has the authority to open and inspect sealed classified pouches. They may, however, recommend that the pouch control officer open and inspect pouches which are not properly prepared and documented. Couriers may also request that the pouch control officer open transient pouches, if there is reasonable cause for such a request.

12 FAM 124 MAINTAINING CONTROL

(TL:DS-39; 8-15-94)

a. Couriers must stay with their pouches until delivered (section 12 FAM 125). Maintaining control with courier escort assistance when pouches are transported in an aircraft cargo hold is addressed in section 12 FAM 126 .

b. DS/CIS/DC may require a second courier to any post for any shipment where deemed warranted to ensure the security of the pouches, e.g., where host government procedures may otherwise separate the shipment from cleared U.S. citizen control.

c. When classified pouches require overnight or other temporary storage en route to their destination, the courier takes them to a post with adequate, approved classified storage facilities in accordance with subchapter 12 FAM 1050 . If unable to obtain an individual signature for each pouch stored in accordance with section 12 FAM 125 , the courier must continue to maintain control of the pouches.

12 FAM 125 RELINQUISHING CUSTODY

12 FAM 125.1 General Procedure

(TL:DS-39; 8-15-94)

a. Couriers must deliver their pouches intact to an authorized individual at either a classified pouch room or secure transit point, e.g., at the airport convenient to the addressee post. Before executing a pouch transfer, each party must have examined acceptable identification documents presented by the other party. (See section 12 FAM 125.2 and subchapter 12 FAM 140 .)

b. The courier must obtain an individual signature for each pouch delivered or left in temporary secure storage regardless of the number of pouches. The courier then releases the material to that individual.

12 FAM 125.2 Authorized Personnel Identification

(TL:DS-39; 8-15-94)

a. Personnel exchanging courier pouches must identify as authorized personnel those to whom pouches are delivered or from whom pouches are received.

b. There are three forms of documents acceptable for identifying full-time, U.S. Government employees:

(1) A valid U.S. official or diplomatic passport indicating that the bearer is a U.S. Government employee. When checking the passport, the courier should refer to the section of the passport that would indicate employment status. Passports issued since 1986 have this section on the last page;

(2) An official identification card issued by the Department of State (including Department of State credentials of special agents and security officers), the Agency for International Development, or the United States Information Agency (USIA);

(3) DCS Form 9, Defense Courier Service Identification, issued by the Department of Defense (see 12 FAM 125 Exhibit 125.2).

c. PIT/contract employees, including a dependent employed as courier escort, may exchange pouches with a courier provided they have been cleared for Top Secret. In addition to their diplomatic/official passport, such employees must also identify themselves to the courier with an escort letter that confirms their Top Secret clearance. (See section 12 FAM 152.2 .)

12 FAM 125.3 Custody After Delivery

(TL:DS-39; 8-15-94)

a. U.S. citizen employees of a post or the Department are responsible for the custody of courier pouches after they are received from diplomatic or other couriers acceptable to the Diplomatic Courier Service.

b. Post employees must ensure that classified pouches for which they have accepted custody are stored in approved classified storage facilities. Residences are not approved facilities (see section 12 FAM 1055.1).

c. When DS/CIS/DC notifies post of the arrival of a pouch load that is too large for the capacity of the routinely-used courier vehicle, the post arranges for appropriate transportation and adequate storage for the large shipment.

12 FAM 126 TRANSPORTING POUCHES IN AN AIRCRAFT CARGO HOLD

(TL:DS-39; 8-15-94)

a. When pouches are loaded into the hold of an aircraft, the courier must personally supervise the placing of the pouches into the hold and must remain outside the aircraft observing the hatch until it is closed and departure imminent. When the courier must go through airport security procedures after the pouches are loaded, the courier leaves the security watch of the aircraft hold in the care of the escort (see 12 FAM 155). Standard pouch security procedure requires the courier to be the last passenger to board and the first passenger to deplane, to the maximum extent possible.

b. The courier must arrange to disembark first at each transit stop and go directly to the cargo hold and identify the courier escort of the post who is required to be present. (See 12 FAM 154 .) The courier must stand beneath the aircraft to observe the hold during all stops.

c. At the final destination, the courier will meet planeside and identify the courier escort of the post who is required to be present. (See 12 FAM 151 .) In their presence, the courier must personally take possession of the pouches as they are unloaded from the aircraft hold and accompany them through immigration, customs, and other airport security procedures.

12 FAM 127 THROUGH 129 UNASSIGNED

12 FAM 122 Exhibit 122 FORM OF-253, DIPLOMATIC COURIER CERTIFICATION AND POUCH RECEIPT

EXHIBIT 122 FORM OF-253, DIPLOMATIC COURIER CERTIFICATION AND POUCH RECEIPT

		DIPLOMATIC POUCH CERTIFICATION AND RECEIPT				POST	
						COURIER ROUTE NO.	
NO.	POUCH NO.	FROM	TO	* CODE	WT. KGS.	MISC.	RECEIPT SIGNATURE
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							
11							
12							
13							
14							
15							
16							
17							
18							
19							
20							
DISPATCHER [NAME AND SIGNATURE]1		DATE	TIME	TOTAL WEIGHT (KGS.)		*C, CX, AX, A (See 5 FAM 300)	
[SEAL]2		_____, Diplomatic Courier of the United States (Name) of America, is in the possession of the above _____ sealed pouches which contain (Number) only diplomatic documents or articles intended for official use.					
		COURIER		DATE	TIME		

50253-103 NSN 7540-00-149-0948 OPTIONAL FORM 253 (Rev. 7-88
DEPT. OF STATE)

¹NOTE: The dispatcher must both print/type his or her name AND sign in this block.

²NOTE: Copies printed for use in the Department have the Department seal overprinted in the seal space in the lower left corner. Post versions do not have the seal, as shown, and must stamp the post seal in the space provided.

12 FAM 125 Exhibit 125.2 DCS FORM 9, DEFENSE COURIER SERVICE IDENTIFICATION

EXHIBIT 125.2 DCS FORM 9, DEFENSE COURIER SERVICE IDENTIFICATION

EXPIRATION DATE:		DEFENSE COURIER SERVICE FORT MEADE, MD 20755	
PHOTO	NOT A PASS		FOR IDENTIFICATION ONLY
	<small>DEFENSE COURIER SERVICE IDENTIFICATION CARD (DCS IC) IS ISSUED TO THAT INDIVIDUAL WHOSE NAME AND SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER APPEAR ON THE DCS IC. THE BEARER OF THIS CARD IS AUTHORIZED TO TRANSPORT DEFENSE AND OTHER QUALIFIED MATERIAL FOR TRANSPORTATION IN CONNECTION WITH THE DEFENSE COURIER SERVICE.</small>		1 MAY 88
SSN	NAME OF BEARER		
CARD NUMBER	SIGNATURE OF BEARER		
C 0001	COMMANDER, DEFENSE COURIER SERVICE		

BUREAU OF ENGRAVING AND PRINTING

PROPERTY OF UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT				
HEIGHT	WEIGHT	COLOR HAIR	COLOR EYES	DATE OF BIRTH
IN THE EVENT OF INCAPACITATION OF THE HOLDER OF THIS CARD: A. NOTIFY THE NEAREST DEFENSE COURIER SERVICE STATION OF THIS MILITARY OR US GOVERNMENT ACTIVITY TO IMMEDIATELY PLACE THE CARD IN THE CUSTODY OF ANY MATERIAL, AND, B. NOTIFY THE COMMANDER, DEFENSE COURIER SERVICE, FT MEADE, MD 20755				
NAME/GRADE/POSITION OF COURIER			DATE ISSUED	
WARNING: THIS CREDENTIAL IS THE PROPERTY OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT. ITS COUNTERFEITING, ALTERATION, OR MISUSE IS A VIOLATION OF 18 U.S.C. 499, 506, AND 701.			POSTMASTER: RETURN TO THE COMMANDER, DEFENSE COURIER SERVICE, FT MEADE, MD 20755	
IF FOUND, DROP IN NEAREST UNITED STATES MAIL BOX				

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