



POLICY ON THE ISSUANCE AND USE OF DIPLOMATIC AND OFFICIAL PASSPORTS

1. **PURPOSE:** **This Policy sets out the guidelines on The issuance and use of Diplomatic and Official Passports**
2. **MANDATE:** Samoa Passport Act 2008 & Cabinet Directive
3. **EFFECTIVE DATE:** When approved by Cabinet.
4. **APPLICATION :** This policy applies to all people conducting diplomatic and official government business and should be restricted people in specific categories and roles.

5. **BACKGROUND :**

The Samoa Passport Act 2008 does not specifically state any provisions pertaining to the issuance of Diplomatic and Official Passports for Official Government business hence the development of this Policy, however under Section 32 of the Passports Act 2008 it states “Travel documents are property of Samoan Government – (1) All Samoan travel documents issued by or on behalf of the Government under this Act, whether before or after the commencement of this Act, are the property of the Government”. Similarly the Passport Act 2008 does not specify who the authority is, to issue a **diplomatic and official passport** to a person traveling for diplomatic and official purposes. As with the issuance of ordinary passports, by the Ministry of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, the same has been applied for Diplomatic and Official Passports. However, proper Policies must be in place to guide and facilitate travel for the holders of Diplomatic and Official Passports who are acting on behalf of the Government of Samoa. Other jurisdictions authorize the Minister for Foreign Affairs to issue Diplomatic and Official Passports; the Minister can then delegate these powers to official of the Ministry of the PM and Cabinet. The objective of the Policy is to formalize the framework for issuance and handling of Diplomatic and Official Passports, the monitoring and sound management by the issuing authority and the responsibilities of those who are considered entitled to these passports.

6. **DEFINITION**

6.1. Diplomats

For the purpose of this policy, Diplomats are government appointed officials that represent Samoa’s interests and conduct of foreign relations abroad as well as those from other nations that are accorded diplomatic recognition in Samoa.

6.2. Diplomatic Passports:

Diplomatic passports are issued to facilitate the travel and residence of people who are employed by or acting on behalf of the Government of **Samoa** as outlined in schedule 1.



6.3. Official Passports:

An official passport is issued to people to facilitate their travel for official Government business as outlined in Schedule 2.

6.4. Ordinary Passports:

Ordinary passport are issued to all citizens of Samoa to facilitate their travel.

Diplomatic and Official passports do not confer on the holder any special privileges or rights.

7. RULES AND POLICIES:

7.1. Entitlement:

Diplomatic and Official Samoan Passports are issued to Samoan citizens listed on Schedules 1 and 2 upon fulfilment of requirements outlined in the schedules 1 and 2 below. All applications are to be accompanied by a letter from the sponsoring authority/ministry.

Schedule 1 – Bearers of Diplomatic Passports

Item	Applicant/Bearer	Passport Type	Purpose	Validity	Issuance of Diplomatic passport to Spouse	Issuance of Diplomatic passport to Children
	Head of State of Samoa	Diplomatic	All Travel	10 Years	√	
	Members of the Council of Deputies	Diplomatic	All Travel	10 Years	√	
	Prime Minister of Samoa	Diplomatic	All Travel	10 Years	√	
	Speaker of Parliament	Diplomatic	All Travel	10 Years	√	
	Cabinet Ministers	Diplomatic	All Travel	10 Years	√	
	Chief Justice	Diplomatic	All Travel	10 Years	√	
	Members of Parliament	Diplomatic	All Travel	10 Years		
	Missions, Ambassadors	Diplomatic	All Travel	10 Years	√	√
	Missions, Consular	Diplomatic	All Travel	10 Years	√	√
	CEO, MPMC	Diplomatic	Official Government Business Only	10 Years		
	CEO, MFAT	Diplomatic	Official Government Business Only	10Years		
	MFAT, Mission Staff Overseas	Diplomatic	Official Government Business Only	10 Years	√	√

Schedule 2 – Bearers of Official Passports

Item	Applicant/Bearer	Passport Type	Validity
1.	Judges	Official	Official Government Business Only 10 Years
2.	All other, Chief Executive Officers	Official	Official Government Business Only 10 Years
3.	All other, Government Officials (Capped at Principal Level)	Official	Official Government Business Only 10 Years

7.2 Inappropriate Use:



All bearers of official passports are subject to requirements of the Passport Act 2008 under section 8 on Offences and Penalties.

Diplomatic and Official passports are Government Properties and must be treated with proper care

7.3 Responsibilities of the Holder:

Diplomatic Passports Holders.

The following applies to all other groups of Diplomatic Passport holders

Diplomatic passport holders must use the passport for official travel only with the exception of those outlined in schedule 1.

- All Holders of Diplomatic passports must surrender the Passport upon completion of Term in Office or Post or upon termination from the service.
- Upon loss, damage or stolen of diplomatic passport, the holder must report it immediately to the Immigration Office together with the following;
 - i. Written statement to explain the reason
 - ii. Police report if stolen
 - iii. Report from the Fire Department if passport was damaged/loss as a result of a fire.
- All holders of diplomatic passports must use them for official travel particularly if they are representing Samoa at meetings and conferences.

If the Police or Fire Report indicates that the Holder is responsible for the damage or loss of the diplomatic passport, the holder is responsible for payment of replacing the passport.

Official Passport Holders.

The following applies to all holders of Official Passports;

- Official passport holders must use the passport for official travel ONLY.
- Return the Official Passport upon arrival to the Immigration Officer at the Border.
- Surrender the Passport to the Ministry of the Prime Minister and Cabinet upon completion of Term in Office or Post or terminated from the service.
- Upon loss, damage or stolen of passport, the holder must report it immediately to the Immigration Office together with the following;
 - iv. Written statement to explain the reason
 - v. Police report if stolen
 - vi. Report from the Fire Department if passport was damaged/loss as a result of a fire.

If the Police or Fire Report indicates that the Holder is responsible for the damage or loss of the official passport, the holder is responsible for payment of replacement of the passport.



Termination of Holder's Official Appointment/Posting:

If the appointment of the holder of a Diplomatic or Official passport is terminated, the passport will be cancelled immediately and should be surrendered to MPMC.

Completion of an Overseas Post

At the completion of an overseas posting, the Diplomatic Passport is cancelled and should be surrendered to the Chief Executive Officer of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade in Charge for referral to the Immigration Office.

7.4 Applying for a Diplomatic or Official Passport

People applying for a Diplomatic or Official passport must fill the application form and provide a letter requesting the purpose and capacity to obtain such to the Chief Executive Officer of the Ministry of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

Note: Applications forms and Letter of Request for a Diplomatic or Official passport overseas can be lodged at one of the overseas missions for processing in Apia for at least ten (10) working days.

7.5 Validity of Passport Document:

Diplomatic and Official passports are valid for a period of ten (10) years and can be renewed subject to approval by the Chief Executive Officer of the Ministry of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

7.6 Issuing Office:

All Diplomatic and Official Passports are issued in Samoa only through the Immigration Services Division of the Ministry of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

7.7 Spouse and Dependents

A Diplomatic Passport may be issued upon request to the spouse and dependents of the bearer of a Diplomatic passport (outlined in schedule 1).

7.8 Ordinary Passport in Addition to Diplomatic and Official Passport

The holder of a Diplomatic or Official passport is permitted to hold another valid Ordinary Passport while holding a Diplomatic or Official Passport.

7.9 Fees for Diplomatic and Official Passports

Current Fees and charges are payable to the Ministry of the Prime Minister and Cabinet when applying for a Diplomatic or Official Passport. The cost of a diplomatic or official passport will be determined by the Ministry of the Prime Minister and Cabinet from time to time.

7.10 Roles of Immigration Office

Immigration Officers of the Ministry of the Prime Minister and Cabinet must:

- Update data on all movements of Diplomatic and Official Passports and monitor system for any inappropriate use, and ensure security of storage to



prevent loss

- Ensure that all Official Passports are uplifted from bearers at any port of arrival.
- Release official passports upon request from government Ministries and State Owned Enterprise's to facilitate official travel. This will ensure appropriate use of Government properties and to enforce proper controls.

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Note: The use of Official Passports is to be requested from the CEO of MPMC

The Ministry of the Prime Minister and Cabinet can be contacted should further information or clarification be needed.