DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Office of the Secretary

Office of International Affairs
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TO: Heads of Operating Divisions
Heads of Staff Divisions

FROM: William R. Steiger, Ph.D. WRS
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SUBJECT: Clarified Guidance on Use of Official Passports

This memo is to clarify any confusion that might have resulted from my memo of March 19, 2003, about the required use of official passports for HHS international travel. We have received many questions about HHS employees who travel on official business but are not eligible for official passports, such as postdoctoral fellows and employees who are not U.S. citizens. Since these employees cannot obtain an official passport, they are indeed permitted to travel with their personal passport on official business, provided they first obtain State Department country clearance and HHS travel approval. Such employees are still responsible for obtaining the relevant visas required for their destinations.

In addition, we have also received many questions from employees who have expressed security concerns about carrying official passports. While official passports must always be used for official functions such as border crossings, employees are permitted to carry their personal passport in addition to their official passports if they wish. However, official passports are for official use only and must never be used for personal travel.