

5 FAM 200 CORRESPONDENCE

5 FAM 210 PREPARING OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE

(CT:IM-92; 08-01-2007)
(Office of Origin: IRM/BPC/PRG)

5 FAM 211 SCOPE AND AUTHORITY

(CT:IM-92; 08-01-2007)

- a. This chapter presents the policy-governing official correspondence prepared in the Department's offices, both domestic and abroad. It identifies the types of official correspondence; outlines the Department's policy for signing Congressional correspondence and for corresponding with foreign governments; and provides information security guidance. It also authorizes using official letterhead stationery; covers official informal letters and captions; and explains clearances and overall signing authority.
- b. The Office of Information Resources Management Policy and Regulations (IRM/BPC/PRG) coordinates 5 FAM, Information Resource Management, that discusses policies and procedures and ensures the accuracy and completion of 5 FAM chapters and handbooks. The Office of Directives Management (A/ISS/DIR) manages the Department's directives program that governs the Department operations (see 1 FAM 214.1).

5 FAM 212 GENERAL POLICY

(CT:IM-60; 04-25-2005)

- a. Prepare all correspondence in accordance with the guidelines in the Correspondence Handbook, 5 FAH-1. The various types of correspondence, i.e., telegrams, memorandums, letters, diplomatic notes, Department Notices, electronic messages, and invitations, are

authorized for Department members to use to conduct official business.

- b. The Executive Secretariat InfoLink Web site contains guidelines for preparing correspondence for the Secretary and other seventh-floor Principals. The Graphics Standards Handbook, 5 FAH-7, contains guidelines for the design and appearance of Department communications.
- c. Refer to 5 FAM 1200 for the policy regarding communications with the United Nations and International Organizations. See 7 FAM 500 for the policy for corresponding with consular offices or missions, other Federal agencies, Federal benefits, U.S. Treasury checks, selective service, and miscellaneous services to U.S. citizens residing abroad.
- d. See 5 FAM 500 (Telecommunications) for e-mail transmission policies; see 5 FAM 400 (Records Management Policy) for the policy governing records.
- e. All U.S. Government official correspondence, e.g., letters, diplomatic notes, memorandums, and invitations, addressed to a foreign government or foreign-government official is written in English. However, a courtesy translation in the host-country language may accompany the correspondence. The Office of Language Services (A/OPR/LS) is available, on request, to provide a courtesy translation of outgoing correspondence originating in Washington, DC. See 11 FAM 723.5 that contains language instructions for treaties.
- f. Congressional correspondence must be answered promptly. Unless the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs (H) delegates the authority to other Departmental Principals on a case-by-case basis, H signs:
 - (1) All correspondence to Congress and to the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) concerning the Department's legislative program or other legislative matters;
 - (2) All correspondence to Congress concerning the Department's appropriations or authorization legislation; and
 - (3) All correspondence to Congress concerning all matters relating to management of the Department or Foreign Service.
- g. Congressional inquiries concerning matters under the jurisdiction of the Inspector General are handled directly by the Office of the Inspector General (see the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended).
- h. Personnel at post may respond directly to Congressional correspondence under the signature of the chief or deputy chief of mission or a principal officer. See 9 FAM Appendix E 700 (Instructions Relating to

Congressional Correspondence) for instructions on replying to Congressional inquiries on visa and immigration matters.

- i. Use diplomatic notes for correspondence between the U.S. Government and a foreign government. Letters may be used at the discretion of the Secretary. Personnel at diplomatic missions may correspond directly with the central government of the country in which they are located.

5 FAM 213 THROUGH 219 UNASSIGNED