

20-520

The Secretary presents his compliments to Their Excellencies and Messieurs and Mesdames the Chiefs of Mission and wishes to announce temporary changes in the manner with which the Department's Office of Foreign Missions (OFM) provides services and facilitates benefits for foreign missions and their members in the United States. These changes are necessary in response to the transition of a significant percentage of OFM's staff performing their duties remotely via telework arrangements as a mitigation response to the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19).

As detailed below, OFM anticipates that it will continue to provide most services to foreign missions and their members without interruption; however, OFM's Customer Service Center and regional offices will be closed to the public until further notice. Given that a significant percentage of OFM's staff are teleworking, during this time electronic mail will be the best means for foreign missions and their members to contact OFM and receive efficient service. Foreign missions and their members are strongly discouraged from attempting to contact

OFM by telephone. Points of contact for electronic mail inquiries, as well as changes to specific services and procedures are described below.

Contacting OFM

The following chart provides the electronic mail addresses that should be used for corresponding with OFM based on the topic of the inquiry/request:

Inquiry Topic	Contact Information
General Inquiry	OFM-Info@state.gov
Diplomatic Notes and Correspondence	OFMAssistants@state.gov
Meeting (Washington, DC)	OFMAssistants@state.gov
Meeting (Chicago)	OFMCGCustomerService@state.gov
Meeting (Houston)	OFMHOCustomerService@state.gov
Meeting (Los Angeles)	OFMLACustomerService@state.gov
Meeting (Miami)	OFMMICustomerService@state.gov
Meeting (New York)	OFMNYCustomerService@state.gov
Meeting (San Francisco)	OFMSFCustomerService@state.gov
Accreditation Inquiry	OFM-Accreditation@state.gov
Bonded Warehouse/Customs Inquiry	OFMTaxCustoms@state.gov
Dependent Work Authorization Inquiry	OFM-EAD@state.gov
e-Gov System Inquiry	OFMeGovHelpDesk@state.gov
Emergency Management & Response Inquiry, including COVID-19	OFM-EmergencyMgt@state.gov
Establishment of New Consular Post Inquiry	OFMProperty@state.gov

Motor Vehicle Inquiry	OFMDMVInfo@state.gov (or applicable regional office)
Radio Frequency Inquiry	OFMTravelServices@state.gov
Travel Notification or Approval Inquiry	OFMTravelServices@state.gov
Tax Exemption Inquiry	OFMTaxCustoms@state.gov

As indicated above, foreign missions are encouraged to continue transmitting inquiries and requests for assistance related to COVID-19 response impacts via electronic mail to OFM-EmergencyMgt@state.gov.

Meetings

Until further notice, OFM will generally limit meetings with foreign missions to those that can be conducted telephonically. Requests for such meetings in Washington, DC, shall be submitted via electronic mail to OFMAssistants@state.gov.

Instructions for requesting meetings with OFM’s regional offices are provided in the chart above.

Customer Service Centers

Effective immediately and until further notice, OFM’s Customer Service Center, located at 3507 International Drive, NW Washington, DC, will be closed. Similarly, OFM’s Regional Offices, located in Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, and San Francisco will not be open to the public.

Accreditation

OFM's adjudication of requests associated with the accreditation of members of foreign mission members will continue to function normally. However, beginning March 23, 2020, identification cards (new and renewals) will be mailed directly to the cardholder's residential address.

- ***Return of identification cards***

Foreign missions are asked to hold expired identification cards until OFM provides further instructions.

- ***Surcharge payments***

Foreign missions should mail, via the U.S. Postal Service, checks or money orders required for the completion of an accreditation request to:

OFM
P.O. Box 58041
Washington, DC 20037

Please provide information with such payments that indicates the applicable transaction information and associated mission or mission member.

Service	Impact of Operational Changes
Notifications of Appointment	No Anticipated Delays
Notifications of Change	No Anticipated Delays
Notifications of Termination	No Anticipated Delays
Identification Cards	No Anticipated Delays

Bonded Warehouse Purchases

OFM’s authorization of requests from foreign missions and their members for authorization to purchase tax and duty-free merchandise from bonded warehouse facilities will continue to function normally.

Service	Impact of Operational Changes
Bonded Warehouse Purchase Authorization	No Anticipated Delays

Customs Clearances

OFM’s certification of requests from foreign missions and their members for clearance of the importation of goods and materials will continue to function normally.

Service	Impact of Operational Changes
Customs Clearance	No Anticipated Delays

Dependent Work Authorizations

Effective immediately and until further notice, foreign mission members seeking authorization for their eligible dependents to work in the United States, **must ensure that such requests are delivered by *Federal Express, DHL, or UPS* to the following address:**

OFM-Accreditation
3507 International Place, NW
Washington, DC 20008

Service	Impact of Operational Changes
Dependent Work Authorizations	No Anticipated Delays

e-Gov System Support

OFM's e-Government system and associated account management functions will continue to function normally.

Service	Impact of Operational Changes
e-Gov System Support	No Anticipated Delays

Emergency Management/Response

OFM remains ready to assist foreign missions with matters related to emergencies and natural disasters, to include the impacts of COVID-19. Foreign missions are strongly encouraged to transmit requests for such assistance or related inquiries to OFM-EmergencyMgt@state.gov.

Establishment of New Consular Posts

OFM's authorization of requests for the establishment of a new consular post in the United States will continue to function normally. All such requests shall be submitted via electronic mail to OFMProperty@state.gov.

Service	Impact of Operational Changes
New Consular Post Authorization	No Anticipated Delays

Motor Vehicle Requests

Requests for driver's licenses and non-driver identification cards (new or renewal), driver history reports, letters denoting a mission member's ineligibility for an OFM-issued driver's license, and liability insurance updates will all continue to function normally.

However, until at least April 3, 2020, OFM will not be able to facilitate motor vehicle registration applications (new or renewal) or applications for titles for Washington, DC, based foreign missions and their members. This is also currently the case for foreign missions and their members located in states covered by OFM's New York Regional Office. OFM will reassess this service suspension and provide updated guidance to foreign missions on or about April 6, 2020.

At this time, such services will remain available to the foreign missions and their members that are supported by OFM's Regional Offices in Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, and San Francisco. All original documents required for new vehicle registrations must be mailed to the appropriate regional office. A listing of each office's mailing address is enclosed.

OFM also will continue to process monthly registration renewals near the beginning of every month and will send renewals via U.S. Postal Service to each mission. Should missions experience delays in obtaining the above services due to the current situation, missions and their members may print the notice for law

enforcement found at <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/2020-03-17-OFM-Glove-Box-Letter-for-Law-Enforcement.pdf>. A copy of this letter should be kept in vehicles with expired registrations. The purpose of this letter is to explain to law enforcement the reason why the vehicle's registration expired and requests that they refrain from issuing notifications of infraction.

- ***Return of license plates and driver's licenses***

Foreign missions are asked to hold the products described above until OFM provides further instructions.

- ***Surcharge payments***

Foreign missions should mail, via the United States Postal Service, checks or money orders required for the completion of a motor vehicle-related request to:

OFM
P.O. Box 58041
Washington, DC 20037

Please provide information with such payments that indicates the applicable transaction information and associated mission or mission member.

Service	Impact of Operational Changes
Vehicle Registration (First time Registration)	Temporarily Suspended (DC & NY)
Vehicle Registration (Renewal)	Temporarily Suspended (DC & NY)
Vehicle Title	Temporarily Suspended (DC & NY)
Insurance Updates	No Anticipated Delays
Driver's License & Non-Driver IDs	No Anticipated Delays
<i>Eye Exams (Driver's License Application)</i>	<i>OFM is currently unable to conduct eye exams; however, they can be obtained privately</i>
Non-Eligibility for OFM Driver's License Letter	No Anticipated Delays
Driver History Reports	No Anticipated Delays

Real Property Acquisitions/Dispositions

OFM's approval of requests from foreign missions for authorization to purchase, lease, use, or dispose of real property in the United States will continue to function normally. All such requests shall be submitted via electronic mail to OFMProperty@state.gov.

Service	Impact of Operational Changes
Real Property Acquisition & Disposition Approvals	No Anticipated Delays

Radio Frequency Assignments

OFM's facilitation of requests from foreign missions for temporary assignment of radio frequencies will continue to function normally.

Service	Impact of Operational Changes
Radio Frequency	No Anticipated Delays

Tax Exemption Requests

OFM's authorization of tax exemption benefits will continue to function normally.

- ***Return of tax exemption cards***

Foreign missions are asked to hold expired tax exemption cards until OFM provides further instructions.

- ***Surcharge payments***

Foreign missions should mail, via the U.S. Postal Service, checks or money orders required for the completion of a tax-exemption request to:

OFM
P.O. Box 58041
Washington, DC 20037

Please provide information with such payments that indicates the applicable transaction information and associated mission or mission member.

Travel Notifications and Authorizations

Foreign mission members that are required to provide OFM with prior notification or obtain prior approval of their domestic travel within the United States will continue to transmit such information normally. However, all such notifications or requests for authorizations shall only be transmitted via electronic mail at OFMTravelServices@state.gov.

Service	Impact of Operational Changes
Travel Notifications/Approvals	No Anticipated Delays

The Department appreciates the cooperation and patience of the foreign mission community as we collectively combat the global spread of COVID-19.

Enclosure:

As stated.

Department of State,

March 18, 2020.

OFM Regional Office Mailing Addresses

OFM Chicago: 77 W. Jackson Blvd, Suite 2122
Chicago, IL 60604

OFM Houston: 8701 S. Gessner, Suite 906
Houston, TX 77074

OFM Los Angeles: 10940 Wilshire Blvd, Suite 1550
Los Angeles, CA 90024

OFM Miami: 95 Merrick Way, Suite 505
Coral Gables, FL 33134

OFM San Francisco: 235 Pine Street, Suite 1600
San Francisco, CA 94104