



PHILIPPINE CONSULATE GENERAL
P R E S S R E L A S E

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FIRST RECIPIENTS OF THE MACHINE READABLE PASSPORT AT NY PCG

From 14 July 2008, applications for emergency passports for foreseeable circumstances no longer accepted for processing

NEW YORK – The pilot batch of Machine Readable Philippine Passports applied for at the Philippine Consulate General New York were received by the first batch of satisfied applicants on 20 June 2008.

On 2 June 2008, the Philippine Foreign Service Posts in the US simultaneously launched the MRP, following initial launch in the DFA Main Office in Pasay and in the Philippine Consulate General Hong Kong SAR. About half of the Philippine Foreign Service Posts have since transitioned from the scripted “green” passport to the MRP.

Despite some early concerns regarding the strict photo requirement, response from the community has been generally positive. Several applicants have even come to renew passports that are still valid because, like their friends who already have the MRP, they wanted to be able to use the quick check-in kiosks at international airports.

However, many have expressed concern at the long processing time. While the DFA in Manila continues to work on speeding up the procedure, the six-weeks transit and processing time for the US Posts remains. Consul General Cecilia B. Rebong assures the public that *“should the passports arrive at our office ahead of schedule, we will exert every effort to inform the applicants so that they can pick them up as soon as possible.”*

She added that while the change from same-day processing time to six-weeks requires adjustment, *“a passport is like a driver’s license. It allows the bearer to travel, and it is the responsibility solely of the bearer to make sure that it remains valid.”*

During the first month (June), emergency applications for the old “green” passport could still be processed. However, supply of the booklets have run out. **Starting Monday, 14 July 2008, emergency green passports for foreseeable circumstances** (i.e. those who neglected to check the validity of their passports before purchasing airline tickets or scheduling appearances with government agencies) **will not be entertained**. Filipino citizens are advised to renew their passports at least two months before they need to use it for travel or for other purposes.

The Philippine Consulate General New York requests the community’s assistance in informing Filipinos throughout the United States about the requirements of the new Machine Readable Philippine Passport. For more information, please visit our website at: <http://pcgny.net>. END