

U. S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

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China

Response to Information Request Number:	CHN02003.ZLA
Date:	August 19, 2002
Subject:	China: Information on Procedures for Applying for and Traveling on Passports, Including Documentation, Bank Guaranties, Bearers' Signatures, and Exit Stamps
From:	INS Resource Information Center
Keywords:	China / Freedom of movement / Police custody / Right to a passport / Travel documents

Query:

- 1) What documents must Chinese nationals present to the issuing agency in order to receive passports?
- 2) Describe the guaranties that Chinese must post in order to travel to the United States.
- 3) Describe the roles in the passport application process of local party committees and Government agencies.
- 4) Must a Chinese passport have the bearer's signature in order to be valid?
- 5) Describe the process for receiving exit stamps at airports
- 6) Could Chinese who have been released on bail and ordered by their arresting agencies to report regularly to their local police stations obtain passports and travel abroad?

Response:

- 1) WHAT DOCUMENTS MUST CHINESE NATIONALS PRESENT TO THE ISSUING

Reasonable Fear
Screenings

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Resource
Information Center

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Refugees

Humanitarian Parole

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Program)

AGENCY IN ORDER TO RECEIVE PASSPORTS?

Chinese citizens applying for passports must present their official household registration books and an invitation from abroad (Consular Officer 14 Aug 2002).

While passport applicants must present household registration books, they do not have to show their national identification cards, which all Chinese possess. Of the two types of documents, identity cards are considered less authoritative because they are only one of several papers that Chinese must show in order to get household registration books. Each household has one registration book that covers all family members (Consular Officer 14 Aug 2002).

2) DESCRIBE THE GUARANTIES THAT CHINESE MUST POST IN ORDER TO TRAVEL TO THE UNITED STATES. WHO POSTS THEM, WHO ACTS AS GUARANTOR, ARE THERE ANY GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES INVOLVED, AND WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF BANK GUARANTIES?

Guaranties are required only from applicants who lack foreign invitations. They essentially are documents issued by banks certifying that passport applicants possess enough hard foreign currency assets to meet a Government-set minimum requirement for international travelers. The banks' certifications are sufficient; no third-party guarantors are required (Consular Officer 14 Aug 2002).

The purpose of the bank guaranties is to make sure that Chinese planning to go abroad have enough funds to make their trips and return home, according to a consular official at the Embassy of China in Washington (14 Aug 2002). The official was unable to provide the current minimum asset level needed to obtain passports (14 Aug 2002).

3) DESCRIBE THE ROLES IN THE PASSPORT APPLICATION PROCESS OF LOCAL COMMUNIST PARTY COMMITTEES AND GOVERNMENT AGENCIES. ON PASSPORT APPLICATIONS, ARE THERE PARTS FOR LOCAL PARTY COMMITTEES AND POLICE TO COMPLETE?

The consular official said that the only Governmental entities involved in the passport application process are county-level Bureau of Public Order offices, which process applications, and banks, which provide the asset-level guaranties (14 Aug 2002). The official said that local Communist Party committees are not involved in the process (14 Aug 2002).

However, a prominent Chinese dissident who now lives in the U.S. said that local party committees decide at the outset whether applicants can receive passports (Executive director 19 Aug 2002). The dissident, who is Executive Director of the Washington DC-

based Laogai Institute, said in a telephone interview that applicants who work in factories and other state firms must get approval from their work units, which are run by party officials (19 Aug 2002). Peasants must get consent from local party offices. Candidates who are approved receive documents from party officials that they submit along with their formal passport applications at Bureau of Public Order offices (Executive Director 19 Aug 2002).

4) MUST A CHINESE PASSPORT HAVE THE BEARER'S SIGNATURE IN ORDER TO BE VALID?

A Chinese passport must have the bearer's signature in order to be valid (Consular Officer 14 Aug 2002).

5) WHAT CHECKS ARE DONE BY CHINESE AUTHORITIES AT AIRPORTS BEFORE THEY PLACE EXIT STAMPS IN PASSPORTS? WHO PLACES THE STAMPS IN PASSPORTS? IS AN EXIT STAMP A TYPE OF CUSTOMS STAMP?

Exit stamps are given to Chinese boarding international flights by immigration officers, who first confirm that the passengers' passports and visas are valid. The main purpose of the stamps is to mark in the passports the date that passengers left China, according to the consular official (14 Aug 2002). The exit stamps are not part of the customs process (Consular Officer 14 Aug 2002).

6) COULD CHINESE WHO HAVE BEEN RELEASED ON BAIL AND ORDERED BY THEIR ARRESTING AGENCIES TO REPORT REGULARLY TO THEIR LOCAL POLICE SUBSTATIONS OBTAIN PASSPORTS FROM THEIR LOCAL SECURITY BUREAUS AND LEAVE THE COUNTRY WITHOUT THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE POLICE STATIONS?

The consular official was unable to say for sure whether Chinese nationals who have been released on bail and ordered to report regularly to their local police stations could receive passports and travel abroad, but stated that this probably would not be possible (14 Aug 2002).

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the RIC within time constraints. This response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum.

References:

Consular Officer. Embassy of China, Consular Section. Telephone interview (Washington, DC: 14 Aug 2002).

Executive Director. Laogai Institute. Telephone interview (Washington, DC: 19 Aug 2002).

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