



Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

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RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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23 March 2005

GTM43455.FE

Guatemala: The body that issues passports and government control over the issuance of passports; the possibility of this body being a private enterprise and, if so, the requirements for obtaining a passport; documents required for obtaining a passport; the time required to obtain a passport (2005)
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa

According to article 4 of Guatemala's Migration Law (*Ley de Migración*), one of the duties of the Migration Branch (*Dirección General de Migración*) of the Guatemalan Ministry of the Interior (*Ministerio de Gobernación*) is to control the issuance of passports (Guatemala 26 Nov. 1998).

The first secretary and consul at the Embassy of Guatemala in Canada said that a private Guatemalan company called La Luz is responsible for the production of Guatemalan passports (23 Mar. 2005). This private enterprise has a [translation] "technical" role and verifies the passports issued by the Guatemalan Migration Branch (Embassy of Guatemala in Canada 23 March 2005).

A 7 April 2004 article from the *Prensa Libre* newspaper indicated that the Migration Branch is responsible for issuing and collecting diplomatic passports. The article specified that only 52 of the 777 diplomatic passports issued under the former government regime had been returned to the Migration Branch (*Prensa Libre* 7 Apr. 2004).

Passports issued by Guatemalan consulates are printed in Louisiana by La Luz once the consulates have sent the applicants' information to the Guatemalan Migration Branch (Embassy of Guatemala in Canada 23 Mar. 2005). The Embassy of Guatemala to the United States indicated that the data collected electronically by the consulates is sent to a passport processing centre (*Centro de Procesamiento de Pasaportes*) in Louisiana (2002).

In Guatemala, there are approximately five or six offices, staffed by employees from both the private company and the Migration Branch, that issue passports (Embassy of Guatemala in Canada 23 Mar. 2005).

Passport applicants must be at least 18 years of age and submit a Guatemalan identity card (*cédula*), as well as an expired passport, if applicable (*ibid.*). In the case of minors, a birth certificate and authorization from the parents are required (*ibid.*).

If a person does not have an identity card, he or she must produce a declaration signed by both parents or by the municipality where the person was born indicating that such a card was never issued to the person (*ibid.*).

No information on the time required to issue a passport could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate. However, the Embassy of Guatemala to the United States indicated that the consular section generally requires two business days to issue a passport, whether it is mailed to or picked up by the applicant (2002).

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

Embassy of Guatemala in Canada. 23 March 2005. Telephone interview with the first secretary and consul.

Embassy of Guatemala to the United States. 2002. "Pasaportes: Información General."
<<http://www.guatemala-embassy.org/pasaportes.php>> [Accessed 22 Mar. 2005]

Guatemala. 26 November 1998. Dirección General de Migración, Ministerio de Gobernación. "Ley de Migración."
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Prensa Libre [Guatemala]. 7 April 2004. Claudia Munaíz. "Se Quedan con los Pasaportes."
<<http://www.prensalibre.com/pl/2004/abril/07/85609.html>> [Accessed 17 Mar. 2005]

Additional Sources Consulted

Internet sites, including: Dirección General de Migración, *El Periódico*, Embassy of Guatemala to the United States, Ministerio de Gobernación, Visa Reciprocity and Country Documents Finder (United States Department of State), World News Connection.


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