



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

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**PHILIPPINE CONSULATE NEW YORK SET TO LAUNCH THE E-PASSPORT
ON 1 JULY 2010**

NEW YORK – The Philippine Consulate General New York is glad to announce the launch of the Philippine ePassport process in the northeast US on 1 July 2010.

It may be recalled that it was only two years ago the Machine Readable Passport (MRP) was launched in compliance with agreements with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). While the MRP remains compliant with international standards set by the ICAO, the ePassport is the next step forward in secure travel document technology, using a more stable and secure chip-based system, launched more than two years ahead of schedule.

What is an ePassport?

An ePassport is a passport which features microchip technology, using an integrated circuit containing data essential in verifying the identity of the passport holder. These include the personal information found on the data-page of the passport, the biometrics (fingerprints) of the passport holder, the unique chip identification number, and a digital signature to verify the authenticity of the data stored on the chip.

What are the special features of the Philippine ePassport?

Once a chip is rendered, it can no longer be changed, so the reliability of the information is intact. The information on the chip can also be cross-checked and verified against the data-page of the passport, which contains an integrated photograph of the passport holder, a digitized secondary photo, and an electronic print of the holder's signature, covered by an ultrathin holographic laminate, among other security features.

The chip, embedded in the booklet itself, is more resilient than the machine-readable zone on which the MRP is relies. Information can be read through a "contactless" scanner, reducing the likelihood of tearing during the scanning process. Hence, the security and durability provided by the ePassport is superior to the machine readable passport (MRP).

What are biometrics?

Biometrics are the unique and measurable physical characteristics of an individual, such as fingerprints and facial features, that can be captured and read digitally. The Philippine ePassport requires the following biometrics to be captured:

- digital image of the passport photograph that can be used with face recognition technology to verify the identity of the passport holder
- digital fingerprints for registration with Automated Fingerprint Verification System (AFIS)

The signature of the applicant is also captured digitally.

What advantage does the Philippine ePassport offer?

The ePassport booklet itself is highly secure document, backstopped by the ePassport database, be enhanced by the Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) database, which will be able to safeguard against fraudulent passport activity, such as the use of multiple identities. Those who have already been issued Philippine passports anywhere in the world can no longer assume the identity of others, as their prints will now be checked against the AFIS database and flagged.

Such security measures will assure foreign governments that the Philippines takes its documents seriously, thus facilitating faster clearance of travelers at border controls.

Will there be additional requirements needed for the processing of ePassports?

The requirements for applying for an ePassport is the same as those for the MRP, except that now, ***only one Passport photo will be required*** for the applicant's file, as a digital image of the applicant will be captured during the application process. Please check our website www.pcgny.net for documentary requirements of Passport application and renewal.

Personal Appearance will be required for all applicants, without exceptions.

How much does an ePassport cost?

The schedule of fees for the ePassport in the Philippine Foreign Service is as follows:

- New passport / regular renewal – USD \$ 60.00
- Irregular / Replacement of Lost Passport – USD \$ 150.00 (in addition to fees for the clearance and the service for legalization of sworn affidavits of explanation)

Why is the ePassport more expensive than the current passport?

The added security features of the ePassport are factored into the production cost. Comparative prices of ePassports from different countries, however, show that the cost of the Philippine ePassport is still among the lowest in the world.

What is the turn-around-time for the ePassport?

Processing time at the Consulate is on a ***first-come-first-served basis***, and can be as short as one-hour, except on heavy traffic days such as Monday and Friday.

Like the MRP, the printing of the passport will take place in Manila. In view of the transit time for the passport booklets from Manila to the Foreign Service Posts, the new ePassport can be expected to be ***available for release six (6) weeks from the date of application***.

I still have a valid Philippine Passport (green booklet or maroon machine readable booklet). Can I use it for travel?

While it is advised that holders of non-machine readable passports replace their passports to avoid inconvenience at ports of entry, this is not mandatory. Previously issued passports (green Machine-Readable Ready or maroon MRP) are valid until they expire. It is, however, advised that travelers make sure that their passports will be valid for at least six months beyond their intended travel, to avoid difficulty at international borders.

Because it takes six (6) weeks for the Philippine Foreign Service Posts in the US to process a passport, we advise all Filipinos to keep their documents in order and check the validity of their passports before booking any travels. END

Labanan ang Kahirapan

Ramdam ang Kaunlaran

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