### FOREIGN SERVICE ASSIGNMENT NOTEBOOK:

#### WHAT DO I DO NOW?



Foreign Service Institute Transition Center George P. Shultz National Foreign Affairs Training Center United States Department of State Washington, D.C.

> 2003 Updated 2007

# Table of **CONTENTS**

PREFACE
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
<i>Chapter 1</i> PREPARATION CHECKLIST
Chapter 2 MAIL and DIPLOMATIC POUCH SERVICES
<i>Chapter 3</i> ALLOWANCES and BENEFITS23
<i>Chapter 4</i> TRAVEL and LEAVE BENEFITS
Chapter 5 MEDICAL INFORMATION and ISSUES42
Chapter 6 INSURANCE
Chapter 7 INCOME TAXES
Chapter 8 AUTOMOBILES
<i>Chapter 9</i> TRAVELING with PETS73
<i>Chapter 10</i> ELECTRICITY, TELEVISION, DVDS and PHONES77
Chapter 11 PACKING to GO

Chapter 12 POST MORALE	
Chapter 13 SPOUSES and MEMBERS of HOUSEHOLD	
Chapter 14 FAMILY MEMBER EMPLOYMENT	
Chapter 15 CHILDREN in the FOREIGN SERVICE	117
Chapter 16 EDUCATION for FOREIGN SERVICE CHILDREN	
Chapter 17 ELDERCARE ISSUES	
Chapter 18 HOUSEHOLD EMPLOYEES	
<i>Chapter 19</i> OVERVIEW of a U.S. MISSION	143
Chapter 20 CONTINGENCY PLANNING	146
Chapter 21 PRIVILEGES and IMMUNITIES	
Chapter 22 LEGAL ISSUES	
Chapter 23 FINANCES	
Chapter 24 TRANSITION CENTER RESOURCES	
Chapter 25 UNACCOMPANIED ASSIGNMENTS	
Chapter 26 GLOSSARY of TERMS and ACRONYMS	201
<i>Chapter 27</i> WORLD TIME ZONE MAP	216

## PREFACE

The Foreign Service Assignment Notebook offers an overview of preparations for an official overseas move. It guides U.S. Government foreign affairs employees and their family members through an otherwise confusing process.

The Notebook begins by breaking down initial steps, then offers information on topics ranging from acronyms to wills. Its sections address issues to take care of before traveling to post and once you have arrived. The Notebook also explains the organization of a United States diplomatic mission and provides lists of helpful resources.

This publication provides an overview of the moving process. It should not be construed as legal, tax, or investment advice; consult a professional when needed. Some chapters contain information that changes rapidly and could be time sensitive. Always double check regulations before taking actions that could have legal or financial consequences.

The U.S. Government does not endorse any commercial products or services. Any listings found in this publication are for informational or reference purposes only.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Overseas Briefing Center wishes to express its appreciation to everyone who reviewed, researched, updated, and cleared relevant sections of this publication.

We acknowledge our sincere gratitude and appreciation to our contributors for their input and unflagging interest in this project.

Subject matter experts for the 2002 edition included:

Ted Boyd and Carl Giampietro (Mail and Diplomatic Pouch Services), Anne Weiss (Employee Consultation Services), James York (American Foreign Service Association), Cynthia Johnson (Human Resources, Retirement), Rebecca N. Grappo, Judy Ikels, Catherine Salvaterra, John Reddy, and Sarah Genton (Family Liaison Office), Nellie E. Clemons-Green and Joe P. Bryan, MD (Office of Medical Services), Kumiko K. Cross (Medical Clearances), Rebecca G. Reynolds (Health Promotion, FSHP), Raymond De Castro, MD, and Steven Feinstein (Mental Health Services), Anita Brown, Teresa A. Poyner, and Sydnee Tyson (Employee Relations), Betty A. Stewart (Allowances), Virginia Boncy and Kendall Montgomery (Office of Casualty Assistance), Mette O. Beecroft (Transportation), Carol Sutherland (Office of Overseas Schools), Danny Corsbie (Office of Logistics Operations),and Susan Benda (Office of the Legal Adviser)

Consultants Jon Clements (Insurance), John Giusti (Finances), and Paul Good (Legal Issues) also contributed to the 2002 edition.

2006 updates were made by the Diplomatic Pouch and Mail Division, Family Liaison Office, Fire Protection Division, Office of Allowances, Office of Casualty Assistance, Office of Employee Relations, Office of Medical Services, Office of Overseas Schools, Transition Center, and Transportation and Travel Management.

2007 updates were made by the Office of Allowances. Editorial changes were made by Kate Goggin, writer/ editor for the Transition Center.