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# News Release



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## **GPO ACQUIRES NEW U.S. PASSPORT BINDING LINE**

The U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO) is acquiring a new binding line for the production of U.S. passports. The new system, scheduled to be delivered in April 1999, will replace equipment which has been in place since 1986. The GPO produces all U.S. passports for the State Department.

Public Printer Michael F. DiMario stated, "The new passport binding line will give us the needed capability to keep up with the increased demand for U.S. passports. It is part of our long-term partnership with the State Department to provide efficient, timely, high-quality, and high-security production services for U.S. passports."

The current GPO passport line, which will be retained as backup capacity, consists of two separate machines. The first assembles the preprinted pages and cover into a strip of three unfinished passports. The second prepares the strip of three into three finished passports. These machines are more than 10 years old and a large number of their component parts are no longer available. The passport pages are printed on GPO's six-color press. The press is not scheduled for replacement with this acquisition.

Cumulative passport production has been greater than 60 million passports on the existing system. Production in FY 1998 was 7,016,000

passports. Passport production requirements are expected to increase by approximately 5 percent annually for the next several years. The new equipment, which is being acquired from Uno Seisakusho Company, Ltd., under competitive bidding procedures, will ensure the necessary production capability. Total equipment and site preparation costs for the new system are estimated at \$3.6 million.

The State Department has been planning to introduce a new photo digital passport in November 1998. The new passport book will no longer employ the lamination process, but will have the data page coated with a secure coating that will be applied by GPO's new silk screen press. This new process will eliminate photo substitution and fraud. Employing the silk screen press adds one task to press operations and eliminates a task in binding operations. The new passport book will be produced in English, French, and Spanish.

**United States Government Printing Office  
Washington, DC 20401**

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