

5 FAH-1 H-400 LETTERS

5 FAH-1 H-410 OFFICIAL STATE DEPARTMENT LETTERS

(CT:CH-20; 08-01-2007)
(Office of Origin: IRM/BPC/PRG)

5 FAH-1 H-411 GENERAL

(CT:CH-11; 05-18-2005)

- a. Letters are used to correspond with the following:
 - (1) Federal, State, and local government officials;
 - (2) Private individuals and organizations;
 - (3) Members of diplomatic missions in Washington, DC, or of the host government on informal, routine subjects;
 - (4) Officials representing international organizations, commissions, and conferences; and
 - (5) Officers of the Department and Foreign Service and between them on an informal, but official basis (Official Informal).
- b. Letters are either formal or informal in tone and style, depending upon the content and relationship of the signing officer, and addressee.
- c. Letters should present facts and ideas in an organized, precise, and easily understood manner.
- d. Drafters should only use acronyms that are well known (UN, NATO) and spell out all others the first time used.
- e. Drafters should ensure that letters are prepared in final form as prescribed in this chapter. See 5 FAH-1 H-500 for guidelines for drafting and preparing Congressional letters; see the Executive Secretariat InfoLink Web site for guidelines for letters prepared for the Secretary,

other Department principals and the President and Vice President.

5 FAH-1 H-412 TYPES OF LETTERS

5 FAH-1 H-412.1 Letters to Addressees in the United States

(CT:CH-10; 01-19-2005)

- a. The subject matter determines how letters are transmitted and distributed from posts to addressees in the United States.
- b. When letters involve controversial services to U.S. citizens or need Department policy review, the original with a copy of the communication is forwarded by Form OF-41, Routing and Transmittal Slip, to the appropriate Department office.
- c. When letters involve misconduct of U.S. merchant seamen, send the original with a copy of the communication being answered to CA/OCS by Form OF-41.
- d. Letters involving U.S. Treasury checks (except Federal benefits relating to salary payments, travel reimbursement) and payments to vendors and others are sent to the Office of Financial Operations (RM/FO). (See 7 FAM 500, Federal Benefits for Individuals Abroad and Services for Other Federal Agencies.)
- e. See 9 FAM for instructions on immigration and visa matters.

5 FAH-1 H-412.2 Letters From Posts Involving Policy Matters

(CT:CH-14; 03-28-2007)

- a. Letters involving policy matters or other matters requiring Department clearances are cleared through the chief or deputy chief of mission, the principal officer, or designee.
- b. One copy of cleared, policy-level correspondence is sent to A/ISS/IPS.

5 FAH-1 H-412.3 Letters to Private Individuals Outside the United States

(TL:CH-4; 07-31-2002)

Letters may be sent from the Department directly to addressees outside the United States. When letters are written from a post to an addressee within the jurisdiction of another post, the original and one copy is sent attached to Form OF-41 to that post. The receiving post forwards the original letter to the addressee, or advises the originating post of objections to delivery.

5 FAH-1 H-412.4 Letters to Congress

(TL:CH-4; 07-31-2002)

See 5 FAH-1 H-500 for guidance on drafting and preparing letters to members of Congress.

5 FAH-1 H-412.5 Form Letters

(CT:CH-14; 03-28-2007)

- a. Form letters are pre-printed or computer generated for use. The nature of work in certain offices suggests using form letters, which may or may not be personally addressed, or have fill-ins and check-offs. Form letters may be signed, have facsimile signatures printed, or have no signature.
- b. Supervisors may authorize the use of form letters for recurring or voluminous correspondence, as an interim acknowledgment awaiting a final reply, or when an acknowledgment is requested to expedite handling.
- c. Form letters proposed in the Department should be submitted to the Office of Directives Management (A/ISS/DIR) for approval before printing.
- d. At post, the principal officer or person designated by the principal officer must approve form letters. The Information Program Center (IPC) maintains a supply of up-to-date form letters.
- e. Computer generated forms are available online and should be used in place of pre-printed forms when practicable

5 FAH-1 H-412.6 Official Informal Letters

(TL CH-4; 07-31-2002)

- a. The use of Official Informal letters is authorized in 5 FAM subchapter 210. (See 5 FAH-1 Exhibit H-412.6.)

- b. Official Informal letters give or ask an opinion or interpretation of forthcoming or established policy; exchange views; report progress; or obtain or provide background information on a formal communication. Official Informal letters are record material. Official Informal letters are used between:
 - (1) Officials of the Department and officers at posts;
 - (2) Officials of other Federal agencies and officers of the Foreign Service performing work of interest on a continuous basis; and
 - (3) Officers at post for correspondence between posts.
- c. The Official Informal letter bears a classification or control designation appropriate to its contents. It is handled in accordance with security regulations.
- d. The general guidelines for letters in this chapter should be followed when preparing Official Informal letters.

5 FAH-1 H-413 SECURITY CLASSIFICATION, DECLASSIFICATION OR ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROL DESIGNATION

(CT:CH-10; 01-19-2005)

- a. Letters that contain classified information must be classified by an original or derivative classification authority and marked according to Section 1.7, E.O. 12958. Each element (title, paragraph, table, or chart) and any attachments must be marked UNCLASSIFIED (U), CONFIDENTIAL (C), SECRET (S), or TOP SECRET (TS).
- b. The overall classification must equal the highest classification level of any of its parts. On the first page, enter the overall classification flush with the left margin two lines below the seal, underlined in capital letters. At the bottom of the first page, center and underline the classification in capital letters. Center and underline the classification in capital letters at the top and bottom of succeeding pages.
- c. In the lower left corner of the first page, show the following:
 - (1) "Classified By" followed by the name and position of the original classification authority, and the agency and office of origin (unless otherwise indicated);

- (2) The reason(s) for classification along with the appropriate classification category(ies) from Section 1.5, E.O. 12958; and
- (3) Declassification instructions (date, event or exemption category from Section 1.6, E.O. 12958 (see 5 FAH-1 H-325.9 for declassification and downgrading instructions for letters with classified attachments).

NOTE: See 5 FAH-1 H-132 for additional guidance on declassification, portion marking, marking foreign government information, and derivative classification markings.

- d. Letters that require the administrative control designation, Sensitive But Unclassified (SBU), must also be protected from unauthorized disclosure. Enter SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED on the first page flush with the left margin two lines below the seal, underlined in capital letters. Center and underline SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED at the bottom of the first page and at the top and bottom of succeeding pages (see 12 FAM 540).

5 FAH-1 H-414 PRINTER FONT

(CT:CH-10; 01-19-2005)

- a. Times New Roman 14 pitch is the Department's standard font and size. This font must be used for all written materials prepared for Department Principal Officers. There is one exception. Materials prepared by L/T (Treaty Affairs) and by HR/PAS (Presidential Appointments) for the President's signature should continue to use Courier New 12.
- b. At post, instructions provided by the Executive Office or IPC should be followed.

5 FAH-1 H-415 THROUGH H-419 UNASSIGNED

5 FAH-1 EXHIBIT H-412.6 OFFICIAL INFORMAL LETTER

(TL:CH-4; 07-31-2002)



Embassy of the United States of America

Tokyo, Japan

March 21, 2002

CONFIDENTIAL
OFFICIAL INFORMAL

Mr. Frank Black
American Consulate General
Naples, Italy

Dear Frank:

(C) Use Official Informal letters between officials of the Department and officers at posts; officials of other Federal agencies and officers of the Foreign Service performing work of interest on a continuous basis; and officers at post for correspondence between posts. Official Informal letters give or ask an opinion or interpretation on a forthcoming or established policy, exchange views, report progress, or obtain or provide background information on a formal communication.

(U) Do not use Official Informal letters to convey policy decisions, serve as the documentary basis for an official action, or request or submit administrative, economic, political, or other reports.

(U) Follow the general instructions for letters to prepare Official Informal letters. Use an informal salutation and complimentary close. Prepare the first page on official letterhead stationery, and succeeding pages on plain white bond paper. Enter the notation OFFICIAL INFORMAL underlined in capital letters, two lines below the seal or classification.

CONFIDENTIAL

Classified by: J.M. Kay, Executive Director, Reason E.O. 12958 1.5(B)
Declassify on: 3/21/2012

CLASSIFIED FOR EXHIBIT PURPOSES ONLY

CONFIDENTIAL

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(C) If the letter is classified or administratively controlled (SBU), show the appropriate security classification or control designation two lines below the seal, and at the bottom left corner. Place the declassification directly below the classification at the bottom of the first page only. If the letter is unclassified, it must also be marked UNCLASSIFIED at the top and bottom.

(C) For succeeding pages center the classification at least four lines below the top of the page. Center the page number at least two lines below the classification.

(U) Prepare an envelope and any receipts according to the instructions in 5 FAH-1 H-430, Envelopes and Mailing. Be sure to stamp or mark the envelope with the security classification, control designation or "UNCLASSIFIED" on both the front and back. (For classified mail going through the U.S. Postal System, use double envelopes and place classification on the inside envelope only and affix a U.S. Postal Service Registered mail tracking number to the outside envelope). When the letter is ready for mailing, forward the sealed envelope to the Mail and/or Pouch Room for dispatch. Ensure that the courier understands that the letter is classified.

Sincerely,

John G. Brown
Counselor of Embassy
for Administration

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5 FAH-1 EXHIBIT H-413 CLASSIFIED LETTER

(TL:CH-4; 07-31-2002)



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

SECRET

February 5, 2002

Mr. James T. Doe
Special Agent in Charge-Boston
Department of State
150 Tremont Street
Boston, MA 02111-1500

Dear Mr. Doe:

(S) This Exhibit shows a letter that has been classified for instructional purposes only. Enter the classification at the top left, flush with the margin, two to four lines below the seal. Show the same classification at the bottom with the "Classified by:" line and declassification or downgrading information immediately below it on the first page only.

(U) Each paragraph must be preceded by the appropriate classification in parenthesis. These markings are necessary to ensure that recipients will have no doubt about the classification of each paragraph, section, or part of the letter.

Sincerely,

Paul M. Doety
Executive Officer
Information Security

SECRET

Classified by: E.K. May, Assistant Secretary, EUR, Reason E.O. 12958 1.5(B)
Declassify on: 2/5/2012

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