

9 FAM APPENDIX F, 200 MAINTAINING VISA CASE FILES

*(CT:VISA-1501; 09-03-2010)
(Office of Origin: CA/VO/L/R)*

9 FAM APPENDIX F, 201 ESTABLISHING AN A-Z VISA CASE FILE

(CT:VISA-1501; 09-03-2010)

- a. The introduction of the Form DS-160, Electronic Application for Nonimmigrant Visa, and the Form DS-260, Online Application for Immigrant Visa and Alien Registration, will largely eliminate the requirement for posts to maintain paper files of visa records. Some posts will continue to maintain some historic paper files, although the general trend is towards more efficiently stored and retrieved "paperless" files.
- b. Case files contain material relating to specific individual cases. Material in a case file should be arranged in chronological order, with the most recent item on top. Employees responsible for filing must be thoroughly familiar with the English alphabet to avoid misfiling and the consequential loss of case records.
- c. For papers that arrive at post prior to the creation of the electronic file, and which cannot be given or returned to the applicant for personal retention, posts must establish an A-Z case file. These cases are usually filed in alphabetical order and therefore sometimes referred to as A-Z files.
- d. Issued nonimmigrant visa (NIV) issuances and 214(b) and 221(g) refusal files are generally batched in chronological order. At most posts immigrant visa (IV) cases are now filed sequentially using the National Visa Center (NVC) assigned case number. These non-alphabetical files are indexed through the NIV and IV automated applications.
- e. Case files are generally organized and located by function and type. In a small consular section, all active cases might be filed together while in a larger one they might be separated by function (e.g., deaths and estate cases together, arrests together, etc.).

9 FAM APPENDIX F, 202 RECORD DISPOSITION IN IMMIGRANT VISA CASES

(CT:VISA-1021; 09-15-2008)

- a. The large size of many visa records, particularly IV cases, makes it particularly important that posts adhere strictly to records disposition guidelines for these cases. Posts retain no paper record of immigrant visas issued. All records for issued cases are retained in the automated system. Documents retained in pending, inactive, and refused cases should be pared to the minimum necessary under regulation, and case files should be destroyed or otherwise disposed of as provided for in the Records Disposition Schedule.
- b. For NIV cases, the consular officer must return to the applicant all documents not pertinent to the refusal or indicative of possible ineligibility. Letters and other documents addressed to an officer or the post should be retained and either filed or destroyed with the refusal file in accordance with the Foreign Records Disposition Schedule for Visa Service.