

# MS 214 VOLUNTEER/TRAINEE BAGGAGE

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## 1.0 PURPOSE

This Manual Section establishes the regulations and procedures for transportation of Volunteer and Trainee (V/T) Baggage.

## **2.0 AUTHORITY**

The Transportation Branch of Administrative Services (M/AS/T) administers the transport of Trainee baggage within the U.S. and to overseas assignments. The Post administers transport of V/T baggage from the overseas assignment back to the home-of-record.

## **3.0 POLICY**

V/Ts are given baggage allowances for the transport of personal effects from their authorized points of departure to countries of assignment and return. Airline baggage regulations vary greatly on a worldwide basis; therefore, the free baggage allowance will vary greatly. Peace Corps' authorized allowances are restricted to a total of 80 pounds in two checked pieces of accompanied baggage.

There are two methods used by airlines to determine baggage allowance. The airlines restrict baggage either by weight or by piece, depending upon the airline and the origin and/or destination points of travel. V/Ts traveling between two points that allow more than two checked pieces of baggage free of charge may take advantage of this allowance provided there is no additional charge to Peace Corps.

**NOTE:** V/Ts are not permitted to take pets, weapons, explosives, radio transmitters, automobiles, motorcycles, or motor scooters. Additionally, flammable material or liquid such as lighter fluid, cleaning solvents, aerosol containers, etc. are not permitted.

### **3.1 Trainee Baggage**

Trainees are authorized to bring accompanied baggage, subject to the size and weight restrictions below, from their authorized point of departure to staging and training sites and to countries of assignment.

Trainees are responsible for packing, marking, insuring, safeguarding, and handling their accompanied baggage (see paragraph 7.0).

Accompanied baggage that exceeds either the size or weight restrictions described below, i. e., excess baggage, shall be carried at personal expense unless authorized as a special baggage allowance in accordance with paragraph 5.0.

### **3.2 Baggage Allowance (04/15/99)**

#### **3.2.1 Checked Baggage**

V/Ts are authorized two pieces of checked baggage, with a combined weight of up to 80 pounds. The combined dimensions (length plus width plus height) of the pieces when added together may not exceed 107 inches. The largest piece may not exceed 62 inches.

M/AS/T shall issue Government Excess Baggage Allowance Tickets (GEBATs) to allow a total of 80 pounds of accompanied baggage for segments of travel where the carrier baggage allowance is less than 80 pounds.

**NOTE:** A special baggage allowance (see paragraph 5.0) may be approved for "cold weather" countries. At present, the allowance is 102 pounds in two checked bags. Trainees who receive this allowance will be notified by mail.

### **3.2.2 Carry-on Baggage**

Carry-on baggage of one or more pieces is allowed, but the sum of the dimensions when added together shall not exceed 45 inches. Some carriers weigh carry-on baggage and count it as part of the total carrier weight allowance.

### **3.2.3 Miscellaneous Baggage**

Each of the following articles will be considered as one piece at 55 inches regardless of actual dimensions: one sleeping bag or bedroll, one knapsack or backpack, or one duffel bag. Any musical instrument less than 39 inches in length shall be considered as one piece at 39 inches.

### **3.3 Excess Baggage**

Accompanied baggage in excess of 80 pounds in two bags shall be carried at personal expense unless authorized as a special baggage allowance in accordance with paragraph 5.0.

### **3.4 Clearance through Customs**

The Country Director shall arrange for clearance of Trainee baggage through the local customs agency.

### **3.5 Transportation of Baggage in Country of Assignment**

V/Ts are responsible for transporting their own baggage in country of assignment. Transportation costs will be paid from the in-country budget.

### **3.6 Unaccompanied Baggage**

Trainees are not authorized unaccompanied baggage from authorized point of departure to staging (pre-departure orientation) or training site to country of assignment. V/Ts are authorized unaccompanied baggage at Peace Corps expense only under the conditions described in paragraph 6.0.

## **4.0 BAGGAGE ALLOWANCES FROM OVERSEAS ASSIGNMENTS TO THE U.S.**

V/Ts returning directly to the U.S. are subject to the baggage regulations described in paragraph 3.0.

### **4.1 Checking Baggage Directly to the U.S.**

V/Ts who can be routed directly (without more than a ten-hour stopover) should check their baggage all the way through from Post to the United States.

### **4.2 Excess Baggage**

Baggage over the authorized baggage allowance will be transported at the V/T's personal expense. V/Ts returning to the United States are not entitled to GEBATs except when required for any initial segments of international travel to permit the V/T to transport 80 pounds in two checked bags.

Excess baggage shall not be authorized in conjunction with emergency leave travel or medical evacuation travel.

### **4.3 Exceptions to Direct and Immediate Return**

Completion of Service (COS) Volunteers and Early Terminating Volunteers who are granted exceptions to the "direct and immediate return" (see MS 284, "Early Termination of Service," paragraph 8.1.3) may receive, on request, an allowance for excess baggage in lieu of the GEBAT they would otherwise receive.

This allowance shall be equivalent, in local currency, to the cost of the GEBAT. Payment shall be made in local currency, unless the baggage is to be shipped on an airline that requires payment in U.S. dollars.

Volunteers serving in countries that allow 80 pounds in two checked pieces from that country to the United States may not receive any allowance in lieu of GEBAT.

**NOTE:** Country Directors should become familiar with relevant local airline regulations regarding baggage allowances.

## **5.0 SPECIAL BAGGAGE ALLOWANCES**

Trainees may be provided a special baggage allowance on such items as job-related books, supplies or equipment, and additional clothing or personal items necessitated by climatic or other host country conditions.

### **5.1 Requests by Country Director**

The Country Director may recommend a special baggage allowance in the project plan, if appropriate. After approval by the Regional Director, the Country Desk Officer will provide M/AS/T with a copy of the portion of the plan requesting the allowance.

### **5.2 Requests by Country Desk Officer**

The Country Desk Officer may submit an independent justification to the appropriate Regional Director for approval if the project plan does not recommend a special allowance.

### **5.3 Request Procedures**

Requests for special baggage allowances should indicate the number of additional pieces and additional weight. If the request is approved, the Country Desk Officer will forward the original and one copy to M/AS/T, and one copy to the Country Director.

Requests for special baggage allowances must specify whether:

- Materials involved are to be purchased by the Peace Corps or by the Trainee.
- Peace Corps or the Volunteer will retain possession of the materials upon completion of service.
- Peace Corps will pay return shipment costs if the Volunteer retains possession.
- The Country Director and the Country Desk Officer will maintain a record of all special baggage allowances to determine whether Peace Corps will pay the cost for return shipment of the materials, if the V/T is to retain possession of the materials upon termination of service.

## **6.0 UNACCOMPANIED BAGGAGE**

### **6.1 Medical Evacuation (Medevac)**

Excess baggage is not authorized for medevac travel. V/Ts separated for medical reasons will be authorized 100 pounds of unaccompanied air baggage from Post to home-of-record by the Office of Medical Services (VS/MS). In-country staff will be responsible for shipping such unaccompanied baggage. The VS/MS will notify M/AS/T and Post that shipments have been authorized (see paragraph 6.4).

## 6.2 Emergency Leave

Excess baggage is not authorized for emergency leave. However, V/Ts who resign while on emergency leave for reasons related to the family emergency are allowed 100 pounds of unaccompanied air baggage from Post to home-of-record. In-country staff will assist with shipping such unaccompanied baggage. The Office of Special Services (VS/SS) will notify M/AS/T and Post that it has authorized such shipments (see paragraph 6.4).

## 6.3 Extraordinary Situations

In extraordinary situations, other than those described above, where V/Ts are required to leave a Post without the opportunity to carry their personal possessions as accompanied baggage, the Country Director may authorize up to 100 pounds of unaccompanied baggage upon the approval of the Regional Director. If unaccompanied baggage is authorized, the Regional Director or the Country Desk Unit will notify M/AS/T.

## 6.4 Shipment of Unaccompanied Baggage

The costs for shipment of unaccompanied baggage shall be charged to Post. In-country staff must send authorized unaccompanied baggage shipments through the nearest U.S. Despatch Agency (U.S. gateway city) for customs clearance and forwarding to the home-of-record.

U.S. Despatch Agents responsible for clearing and forwarding unaccompanied baggage are located in Miami, Seattle, and New York. Shipments of unaccompanied baggage are to be marked, consigned, and prepaid directly to the appropriate U.S. Despatch Agent at the gateway city. The air shipment must terminate at the gateway point. The U.S. Despatch Agent will arrange for customs clearance and will arrange for forwarding to the home-of-record.

### DESPATCH ADDRESSES:

U.S. Despatch Agency  
PO Box 522396  
General Mail Facility  
Miami, FL 33152

U.S. Despatch Agency  
Airports Place Building  
Suite 108  
2800 South 192nd Street  
Seattle, WA 98188

U.S. Despatch Agency  
JFK Airport  
New York, NY

The container and the Air Waybill must show the V/T's name, Peace Corps, the destination address, and the telephone number. The Air Waybill must also indicate "upon arrival at (gateway city), notify U.S. Despatch Agency for customs clearance and forwarding."

## 6.5 Packing Procedures for Unaccompanied Baggage

The containers used for unaccompanied air freight should be made of light-weight material but be substantial enough to withstand handling and weather conditions. Trunks, footlockers, etc. should be locked. All containers should be banded or strapped; steel-banded containers are preferred. Containers should not exceed dimensions of 80 inches by 40 inches by 40 inches.

## 6.6 Personal Shipments

COS Volunteers who elect to ship personal effects back to the United States must do so at their own expense. Peace Corps will assume no responsibility for handling, customs clearance, forwarding to residence, or other costs incurred in connection with the shipment.

## **7.0 INSURANCE AND BAGGAGE CLAIMS ON PERSONAL EFFECTS**

The Peace Corps assumes no responsibility for accompanied or unaccompanied baggage that is damaged or lost. Refer to MS 235, "Volunteer/Trainee Losses of Property and Cash," for additional guidance.

### **7.1 Purchasing Insurance**

V/Ts are encouraged to insure their personal effects. Brochures describing a private insurance plan will be distributed to Trainees prior to overseas departure; however, Trainees may purchase any policy they wish. Withdrawals may be made from the readjustment allowance account to cover the cost of this insurance.

### **7.2 Insurance Claims**

V/Ts are personally responsible for submitting claims to the carrier or to their insurance companies.