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PASSPORTS 400

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WASHINGTON, MARCH 25 (AP)-IT NORMALLY TAKES ABOUT A WEEK TO RECEIVE A NEW PASSPORT DURING THE TOURIST SEASON. BUT IF YOU HAVE A REAL EMERGENCY, YOU CAN GET ONE IN AS LITTLE AS 15 MINUTES.

STATE DEPARTMENT PASSPORT OFFICE OFFICIALS SAID TODAY THEY KEEP A 24-HOUR WATCH SERVICE IN WASHINGTON WHICH CAN--AND OFTEN HAS--HELPED SPEED U.S. CITIZENS ON EMERGENCY TRIPS ABROAD.

THE VIETNAM WAR HAS BEEN ONE SOURCE OF HURRY-UP DEMANDS FOR PASSPORTS. FAMILY MEMBERS RUSHING TO SAIGON TO VISIT A WOUNDED SON, FOR INSTANCE.

BUT THE WAR HAS NOT BEEN THE PRINCIPAL FACTOR IN EMERGENCY ISSUANCE OF PASSPORTS, THE OFFICIALS SAID.

MORE COMMON ARE CASES STEMMING FROM SUDDEN ILLNESS, INJURY OR DEATH, ARREST, ELOPING DAUGHTERS AND A WIDE VARIETY OF OTHER HAPPENINGS AROUND THE WORLD.

UNDER USUAL PROCEDURES, A U.S. CITIZEN NEEDING A PASSPORT APPLIES AT THE PASSPORT OFFICE AT THE STATE DEPARTMENT IN WASHINGTON OR AT ONE OF ITS BRANCH OFFICES AROUND THE COUNTRY -- IN BOSTON, NEW YORK, PHILADELPHIA, MIAMI, NEW ORLEANS, CHICAGO, SEATTLE, SAN FRANCISCO, LOS ANGELES AND HONOLULU.

THE CITIZEN IS SUPPOSED TO APPEAR PERSONALLY AT ONE OF THE OFFICES, FILL OUT AN APPLICATION FORM, SUBMIT PHOTOGRAPHS WITH IT AND SHOW A BIRTH CERTIFICATE FOR PROOF OF IDENTITY AND NATIONALITY.

DURING THE CURRENT RUSH PERIOD IN OVERSEAS TRAVEL, THE APPLICANT PROBABLY FACES A WEEK'S WAIT BEFORE RECEIVING HIS PASSPORT. HE CAN PICK UP THE PASSPORT PERSONALLY WHEN IT IS READY OR HAVE IT MAILED TO HIM.

WHEN A PERSON APPLIES IN A PRESSING EMERGENCY, HOWEVER, OFFICIALS SAID THEY CAN AND HAVE TURNED OUT PASSPORTS WITHIN 15 MINUTES OF RECEIVING THE APPLICATION FORM, PHOTOS AND BIRTH IDENTIFICATION.

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FOR EMERGENCIES THAT DEVELOP AFTER REGULAR OFFICE HOURS, THE PASSPORT OFFICE IN WASHINGTON HAS DUTY OFFICERS WHO CAN BE REACHED BY TELEPHONE AROUND THE CLOCK.

THE WASHINGTON DUTY OFFICER IN TURN CAN TELEPHONE PASSPORT OFFICERS AT THE BRANCH OFFICES TO TELL THEM TO SUPPLY THE NEEDED PASSPORT AFTER HOURS IF THEIR LOCATION IS BETTER SUITED FOR THE EMERGENCY APPLICANT, THE OFFICIALS SAID.

STILL ANOTHER PROCEDURE IS SOMETIMES USED TO EXPEDITE EMERGENCY TRAVEL: THE PASSPORT OFFICE HERE WAIVES THE CUSTOMARY REQUIREMENT THAT THE TRAVELER HAVE A PASSPORT FOR HIS DEPARTURE FROM THE UNITED STATES. THEN IT TELEGRAPHS AHEAD TO THE U.S. CONSULATE AT THE POINT WHERE THE TRAVELER IS HEADING, INSTRUCTING THE CONSULATE TO ISSUE THE PASSPORT TO THE CITIZEN ON HIS ARRIVAL THERE.

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