



Ministerial Brief

By

**The Hon. Patricia Gordon-Pamplin, JP, MP
Minister of Home Affairs**

February 10, 2017

'Sign After Receipt' (SAR) Personalization Change To UK And British Overseas Territories Citizen (BOTC) Passports

Mr. Speaker, on May 27, 2016 and July 15, 2016, I presented Ministerial Statements that specifically announced changes to the British Overseas Territories Citizen (BOTC) passport process. Today, I wish to present another change to the passport process, this time for both UK and BOTC passports.

Mr. Speaker, with the goal to remove the requirement, in the future, for passport customers to send paper forms and printed photographs in support of their UK or BOTC passport applications, Her Majesty's Passport Office (HMPO), effective at January 28, 2017, are now requiring passport applicants to sign their passports after it is issued. The new feature is known as "Sign after Receipt" (SAR). With the effective date being almost 2 weeks ago, I wish to advise that the delay in this announcement relates to the Bermuda Passport Office, Department of Immigration,

waiting for clarity on one aspect of the new process. That clarity was only received earlier this week.

Mr. Speaker, a passport is not valid for travel without the inclusion of a signature. To this end, passport holders should sign their passport (on page 3) as soon as they receive it. While clear customer guidance will be uploaded on the government portal, passport applicants should know that the passport must be signed above the signature line using **black** ink. For passport holders who are exempt from providing a signature (e.g. children aged 11 or under, or those with disabilities who are unable to sign), the wording “**The holder is not required to sign**” or “**The holder is unable to sign**” will be automatically printed beneath the signature caption on page 2 of the passport.

Mr. Speaker, in summary, the key messages relating to SAR include:

1. From January 28, 2017, passport applicants for BOTC passports will be required to sign their passport after it has been issued to them;
2. The inclusion of a handwritten signature brings the UK in line with passports issued by other countries such as the USA, France, Ireland, New Zealand, and Canada;
3. With this change, BOTC passports continue to be highly secure and trusted documents that meet rigorous international standards; and
4. There is no change in the passport design, number of pages, application arrangements or processing timescales, and no additional security features have been added.

Finally, **Mr. Speaker**, I confirm that applications for BOTC passports can still be submitted at the Bermuda Passport Office, Department of Immigration, First Floor of the Government Administration Building, Parliament Street, Hamilton. UK passport applications (which do not come under the remit of the Bermuda Passport Office) are completed online.

For BOTC passport customers, the Bermuda Passport Office will continue to ensure that applications are sent to HMPO for printing and will contact passport customers for collection of their passport, once it is returned from HMPO. For BOTC passport application forms and for more information relating to SAR (including questions and answers), passport customers should access the government portal at www.gov.bm or call/visit the Bermuda Passport Office, Department of Immigration.

Thank you **Mr. Speaker**.