



SERVAS INTERNATIONAL, a non-profit federation incorporated under Articles 60 to 79 of the Civil Code of Switzerland, and in conformity with Swiss law, with legal seat currently at Ceresstrasse 23, CH-8008 Zurich, Switzerland, hereby adopts the following statutes, repealing all previously adopted statutes:

## I Definition

Servas International is an international, non-profit, non-governmental federation of national Servas groups, encompassing an international network of hosts and travellers. The purpose of the network is to help build world peace, goodwill and understanding by providing opportunities for personal contacts among people of different cultures, backgrounds and nationalities.

## II Membership

- 1) Any national Servas group containing ten or more hosts (including day-hosts), may become, or be reinstated as, a member group of Servas International by a majority vote of the General Assembly. A group may be proposed for membership by
  - a) direct application by the group; or
  - b) recommendation from a Servas International Area Coordinator; or
  - c) invitation from the General Assembly.
- 2) The obligations of a member group to Servas International consist of, and are limited to, paying fees and of following the regulations and procedures as decided by the General Assembly according to Section IV, 3f of the statutes.
- 3) A member group may lose its membership of Servas International by majority vote of the General Assembly if
  - a) it has been without a functioning national secretary for two consecutive years; or
  - b) it has fewer hosts than in subsection 1) above for two consecutive years; or
  - c) it does not fulfil its obligations for two consecutive years.

## III Officers

Servas International shall have at least 6 and no more than 25 officers.

Six of these officers shall be elected by the General Assembly: President, Vice President, General Secretary, Treasurer, Peace Secretary and Host List Coordinator. These officers constitute the **Executive Committee**. The SI News Editor shall also be elected by the General Assembly.

Each of the remaining officers may be elected or appointed by the General Assembly, or appointed by the Executive Committee, as determined by the General Assembly. The term of office for all officers ends no later than three months after a General Assembly

## IV General Assembly

- 1) The General Assembly of Servas International shall consist exclusively of one delegate from each member group. These delegates have the right to vote and to speak.

The officers of Servas International have speaking rights only. The General Assembly may also grant speaking rights (which may be restricted to specified agenda items) to other individuals.
- 2) The General Assembly shall meet at regular intervals as decided by each General Assembly. In addition to this, the General Assembly may be convened at any time when requested by at least one fifth of member groups. In such an event, at least three months' written notice, including agenda, time and place, must be given to each member group.
- 3) The General Assembly shall:
  - a) review and adopt the minutes of the last General Assembly as published or corrected;
  - b) review and vote on reports of Servas International's office holders;
  - c) review and vote on the audited accounts and the auditor's reports;
  - d) decide upon the programme of activities of Servas International;
  - e) adopt a budget showing projected expenditure up to the next regular General Assembly;
  - f) decide upon fees, regulations and procedures of Servas International;
  - g) elect the Executive Committee;
  - h) elect other Servas International officers, or delegate this responsibility to the Executive Committee;
  - i) elect members of committees or working parties for special tasks deemed necessary by the General Assembly, or delegate this responsibility to the Executive Committee;
  - j) elect an auditor, or empower the Executive Committee to pay for independent professional auditing. The auditor shall verify, annually, the accounts of the Treasurer and shall submit a report to the Executive Committee. These reports shall be submitted for adoption to the next General Assembly;
  - k) determine which members of the Executive Committee shall be empowered to sign on behalf of Servas International. Two signatures shall be required.
- 4) An item may be submitted for inclusion on the agenda only by a national group (represented by its national secretary), or by members of the Executive Committee. All items submitted by member groups must be sent to the President at least six

months before the General Assembly to be placed on the agenda of the coming General Assembly. The agenda must be distributed to member groups in writing at least three months before the General Assembly.

- 5) Decisions of the General Assembly, in addition to being recorded in the minutes of the meeting, shall be abstracted from the minutes and a list of such decisions sent to each national Servas group.
- 6) Decisions can be made only on items published in the agenda.
- 7) Decisions made by the General Assembly are binding on the activities and priorities of Servas International.

## **V Executive Committee**

- 1) The Executive Committee is responsible for the day-to-day running of Servas International between one General Assembly and the next. Its decisions and actions should be in accordance with decisions made by the General Assembly. Its expenditure is limited to the budget adopted by the General Assembly.
- 2) The Executive Committee shall appoint those Servas officers who have not been elected by the General Assembly.
- 3) If the post of any Servas officer becomes vacant between General Assemblies, the Executive Committee may appoint a replacement. If the vacancy is for a member of the Executive Committee other than President, the remaining members may make the appointment.
- 4) Within financial limits, the Executive Committee shall meet as often as deemed necessary by the Executive Committee.
- 5) The Executive Committee is empowered to make decisions either
  - a) by a majority vote at a meeting of the Executive Committee; or
  - b) by correspondence, provided that all members of the Executive Committee are given the opportunity to participate in the decisions. For a decision to be made by correspondence, votes must be received within one month of the date the motion is mailed/faxed, and the majority of the votes received must be affirmative.

## **VI Voting**

- 1) All decisions of the General Assembly or the Executive Committee (except votes on the dissolution of Servas International, or an amendment to, or replacement of, the Statutes) shall be taken by majority vote of the persons voting. In the event of a tie, the President shall cast the deciding vote.
- 2) Voting procedure shall be made clear to all delegates before voting takes place. Elections for Servas officers shall be by secret vote. The right exists for any delegate to ask for a secret vote on any issue.
- 3) A delegate attending the General Assembly in more than one capacity shall have only one vote.
- 4) Only those delegates attending the General Assembly in person shall be permitted to vote.
- 5) If, in the election of officers, there are more than two candidates for any position, and none of these receives more than half of the votes, the two candidates receiving the highest number of votes shall stand in a further election in which all voters vote again.
- 6) If, in the election of officers, there is only one candidate for any position, the candidate will automatically take office.
- 7) The minutes shall record the number of delegates voting for, voting against, and abstaining.

## **VII Duties and Responsibilities of Officers**

### **1) The President shall:**

- a) oversee the general operation of Servas International;
- b) preside over all meetings of Servas International or of the Executive Committee, or delegate this function to a suitable chairperson;
- c) represent Servas on other international bodies or delegate this function to other suitable persons;
- d) keep broadly informed about the work of Servas officers;
- e) represent the interests of SI News Editor and Servas Archivist in the Executive Committee;
- f) be responsible for the organisation of the International Conference/General Assembly;
- g) be responsible for the agenda of the Executive Committee and the agenda of the General Assembly; and
- h) perform any other functions directed by the General Assembly.

### **2) The Vice-President shall:**

- a) perform the functions of the President in the absence or incapacity of the President;
- b) be responsible for the development and strengthening of national Servas groups;
- c) keep broadly informed about the work of the Area Coordinators, and represent their interests in the Executive Committee; and
- d) perform such other functions as shall be delegated by the President or General Assembly.

### **3) The General Secretary shall:**

- a) handle the correspondence of Servas International;
- b) collect information from national groups;
- c) arrange for the circulation of host lists and key lists of addresses;
- d) be responsible for the recording of the minutes of meetings and conferences, including the minutes of the General Assembly at the end of the term of office; and
- e) represent the interests of her/his assistants, National Secretaries and Main Contacts in the Executive Committee.

In the case of an assistant or assistants being elected by the General Assembly or appointed by the Executive Committee, the General Secretary nevertheless carries the final responsibility for the duties of General Secretary.

#### **4) The Treasurer shall:**

- a) keep the financial accounts and records of Servas International and arrange for auditing;
- b) send out invoices and collect money owing to Servas International;
- c) submit an annual financial report to the Executive Committee; and
- d) collect financial information from member groups.

In the case of an Assistant Treasurer being elected by the General Assembly or appointed by the Executive Committee, the Treasurer nevertheless carries the final responsibility for the duties of Treasurer.

#### **5) The Peace Secretary shall:**

- a) promote the peace aspect of Servas International in national groups and internationally;
- b) coordinate the work of national Peace Secretaries;
- c) represent the interests of the UN delegates and national Peace Secretaries in the Executive Committee; and
- d) encourage liaison with other peace organisations, and arrange representation in such organisations when appropriate.

#### **6) The Host List Coordinator shall**

- a) collect orders for host lists and notify national groups of these orders;
- b) receive and distribute host lists for certain national groups as appropriate; and
- c) produce and distribute host lists for certain national groups as appropriate.

### **VIII Dissolution**

- 1) Dissolution of Servas International shall be effective upon a vote of the General Assembly carried by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting.
- 2) After payment of outstanding debts of Servas International, and within a period determined by the General Assembly, any surplus funds shall be transferred to another non-profit organisation, or organisations, interested in building world peace, as selected by a majority vote at the General Assembly dissolving Servas International. If that General Assembly cannot agree on such a non-profit organisation or organisations, it shall give specific authority to a committee of at least 5 persons to select the non-profit organisation or organisations.

### **IX Amendment of Statutes**




The Servas International Statutes may be amended or replaced at a General Assembly by an affirmative vote of at least two thirds of those present and voting, provided that notice of the proposed amendment or replacement is given to the delegates at least three months before the General Assembly at which it will be voted on.










## Saving—environment and money

Many people in Servas are concerned with environmental issues. It takes only a little thought to save paper. You can

-  re-use envelopes
-  use the unused side of used paper for notes or informal messages
-  use as little space as possible in host lists





This will also save money. Saving money on postage is particularly important, since many Servas items—lists in particular—need to be sent in large numbers, and often several times. You will save if you

-  use fairly thin paper
-  do not use thicker paper for the cover of the host list
-  do not request more lists than you need
-  use both sides of a small piece of paper instead of one side of a large piece
-  use your imagination and concern!







## Language

The most widespread language in Servas is English. International Servas information is given in English. But it is not necessary to be fluent in English to be in Servas. SI is constantly trying to find ways to make things easier and better for other language groups. Unfortunately, this is often very expensive. Let us hope that new technology will soon make it easier for everyone to understand.

## Deadlines

	Annual report:	March
	Host list request FORM:	November
	Payment for previous year's stamps	1 <sup>st</sup> January
	Membership application for national group:	BEFORE international conference

## Info+ sent out from SI

	Host list request TABLE:	December
	Key List:	April
	Supplements:	August and December
	Exco Newsletter:	April, August, December
	New stamps/request for payment	December
	SI News:	February/March

## Info+ to be sent to SI

### Annual report

A form is sent to each country with the December newsletter, with questions to be answered: names and addresses of national secretary, peace secretary and others, number of travellers etc. See example, page 4.2

-  Deadline: Normally March

### Host List request form

A form is sent to each country, asking how many lists are needed from each of the countries on the form. See example, page 4.3

-  Deadline: Normally November

### Membership application for national group


When Servas is starting up in a country, the contact person is called the **Main Contact**. When your country has 10 or more hosts, the contact person becomes a **National Secretary**—or a new one is elected—and you can apply for membership of Servas International. This allows a delegate from the country to attend and vote at international conferences. Ask the area co-ordinator or the general secretary how to do this.

## Host List request table

The International Host List Co-ordinator sends this to each country in December, showing how many lists are required by each country.

see example, section 5

## Payment for previous year's stamps

 Deadline 1<sup>st</sup> January

To be paid in Swiss francs to account number 2200-03919-2 at

Bank Leu

Zurichstrasse 5

PO Box

CH-8610 USTER

Switzerland

See form, page 4.1, and *Payment for stamps*, page 2.6

## Key List information

This is names, addresses, telephone numbers etc. of secretary, host list co-ordinator and other Servas officers in your country. They are asked for in the *Annual Report*, but they may change during the year, and the General Secretary would then like to be informed.

 Deadline As available; best in time for Key List or updates

## Requests for financial help

Servas in your country may have so few travellers that there is not enough income to finance your expenditure. If this is so, you may ask for financial help from SI.

 Deadline Usually none, but as long beforehand as possible

## Requests for practical help

Servas in your country may not be able to do all the practical things which are necessary for Servas to work. If you need practical help, you may ask SI for help. An Exco member may be able to help you, or Servas in another country may offer to help. See also **Bilateral agreements**, page 2.2


 Deadline Usually none, but as long beforehand as possible


## Communication with area co-ordinator

There are no **formal** functions. The area co-ordinator is there to help establish or revive national groups, and to encourage them. Contact your area co-ordinator if you need help or advice: he/she may be able to visit you or help you by telephone. You may also share a language which you prefer to English.

## Bilateral agreements

### Aims

 Working together

 Redistribution of resources

### How it works

A national group with a surplus of certain resources (time, technology, Servas experience, expertise, money) makes these available to another national group which lacks the same resource(s). The other national group may have other resources to offer in return.

### How to “get connected”

#### If you have a surplus:

If there is a country which there are special reasons to have connections with, you may offer your resources direct. Otherwise, let SI (General Secretary) know what you have to offer.

#### If you have a shortage:

If there is a country which there are special reasons to have connections with, you may request resources direct. Otherwise, let SI (General Secretary) know what you lack.

## Hosts

### First contact—new hosts






You can use a copy of *Information for enquirers* (page 3.10) or *Information for hosts* (page 3.1) as appropriate. Also give the host a *Host registration form* (page 4.5). If you translate these into your own language or rewrite them for local conditions, that is even better. You may have the capacity to meet or phone the host, but do not worry if you cannot.

### Maintaining contact—minimum

You should write to hosts once a year. See Newsletter below.

### Maintaining contact—options

This is really up to you—your imagination and the time you can spare. A few ideas:

-  national Servas meeting
-  regional Servas meetings
-  work groups
-  newsletter
-  visiting

## Interviewers

### Selecting interviewers

This is really a national issue. You know best the conditions in your country and your part of the world. You know what prospective travellers will need to be told, and what they will probably know already. It is an advantage if the interviewer has experience both as a traveller and a host. There are no formal SI requirements, but a good secretary will make some effort to find good interviewers (whatever they may be).

### Instructing interviewers

Different conditions require different interviewing techniques. To allow for this, this handbook contains material designed for two styles of interviewing.

In countries where experience shows that it is enough to give travellers plenty of information about Servas, you can give applicants (=people wanting to be travellers) *Information for travellers* (page 3.3) **before** the interview, and then the interviewer can go through the points in *Information for interviewers* (page 3.5) with them at the interview.

In countries where it is felt necessary to screen (=judge the suitability of) applicants, you can follow the guidelines in the *Interview Guide* (see page 3.7), and let them have *Information for travellers* **after** the interviewer has decided that they can become Servas travellers.

You can give the interviewer *Information for interviewers* (page 3.5), and go through it together if you can spare the time. It is designed to be used with *Information for travellers* (see page 3.3). It contains many of the same points, drawing attention to potentially difficult situations which can be discussed. It also emphasises a few important attitudes and—hopefully—provides a few topics to think more deeply about. If Servas in your country has decided to have stricter or less strict guidelines, it would be very sensible to make your own version of the checklist.

### Supporting interviewers







The need will vary from time to time and country to country. Some countries have annual interviewer meetings. Others communicate only by post and phone. Choose the form which is most suited to your country.

## Helpers

### Reasons for having helpers







As secretary, you will have plenty to do. It will often be an advantage to have people to help you. It is also a good way to get others to feel that they are part of Servas. Some of the secretary's tasks can be delegated on a permanent basis. Sometimes it will be better to invite helpers for an evening or a weekend of Servas work—which can be fun too!

### Possible tasks







-  Host list production
-  Host list distribution
-  Keeping accounts
-  Peace Secretary
-  Arranging a meeting
-  Editing a newsletter

## Newsletter

### Minimum requirements

-  SI News—this is normally sent to all hosts
-  important Servas International information, if any
-  important national information, if any
-  national Servas accounts, and budget if any
-  reminder to inform of list changes (or re-register, if you have annual re-registration), with deadline
-  request to return statistics (travellers received), with deadline

### Options

-  Travel reports
-  Letters from hosts and travellers
-  Invitations to Servas meetings (social or working), and reports from these
-  Exchanges of opinion
-  Clippings from other newsletters and from magazines/newspapers
-  Artwork and similar by members

## Communication with travellers

### First contact—new travellers

Many potential travellers hear about Servas from friends and acquaintances who are Servas hosts or travellers themselves. If Servas has already been explained to them, they may ask how they can become a traveller. In that case, you could send a copy of *Information for travellers* (page 3.3), and tell them how to go about getting an interview. If they have not been told much about Servas—perhaps because they have read about Servas, you could send *Information for enquirers* (page 3.10), and ask them to contact you again if they would like to become a traveller (or host). If you have plenty of time, you may prefer to arrange to meet them to tell them about Servas. If you screen travellers in the way explained in the *Interview guide* (page 3.7), the first step would probably be to arrange for an interview.

### Interviewing—approval and rejection

How and why to interview travellers has been discussed at practically every Servas International Conference! We must probably accept that conditions in different countries vary so much that different ways of interviewing must be used. This handbook contains material for two different attitudes towards interviews. If Servas in your country decides to use a strict approach (interviewers decide whether people are suitable), you will probably find the *Interview guide* (see page 3.7) best suited to your needs. If Servas in your country chooses a liberal approach (interviewers tell travellers about Servas, and let the travellers decide whether Servas is what they are looking for), you will probably find it possible to give travellers *Information for travellers* (see page 3.3) before they meet their interviewer. In both cases, the interviewer can then go through *Information for interviewers* (see page 3.5) with them.

It should be obvious that it is impossible for an interviewer to **guarantee** that someone is a perfect Servas traveller. Some people learn to be “good travellers” from Servas travel—they meet experienced hosts who give them guidance. Although such guidance is very valuable, it is unreasonable to expect hosts to give travellers information which they should have been given at their interview. Most people will benefit from the experience of Servas travel, as long as they understand what Servas stands for. In the rare case that a person wanting to become a Servas traveller is looking for things which Servas does not offer (long stays, top comfort, professional service, guaranteed accommodation), it should be explained to them that Servas is probably not the right organisation for them. Most people will accept this, and withdraw their application. Servas Canada has a list called *Alternatives to Servas* (about groups which may provide what the applicant is looking for). Available free—see Key List for address.

Anyone who is determined to misuse Servas will probably manage to “fool” an interviewer. However, a peace organisation should be based on trust rather than mistrust. We probably have to accept that “unsuitable travellers” will occasionally slip through the net. On the rare occasions that an interviewer feels convinced that a person is not capable of learning to build peace through Servas travel, it is of course possible to refuse to approve the application. Many interviewers would find this difficult to do. It may be necessary to say “I’m afraid I don’t feel you understand what Servas is trying to do. Perhaps you would like to try another organisation” (see *Alternatives to Servas* above). But if interviewers don’t manage to refuse applicants, it is important not to blame them: remember that they are voluntary peace workers, and not professional interrogators!

### Registration—fees and deposits

All travellers normally pay a fee to have their *Letter of Introduction* validated. National groups pay a fee to Servas International (in Swiss francs) on a sliding scale—the first stamps are free. The price paid by travellers is decided by each country. In countries where the exchange rate makes Swiss francs expensive, this price may be low, so that as many people as possible can afford to be Servas travellers. In other countries, the price may depend on how many lists the traveller uses, or there may be a standard fee which is the same for everyone, whether they use one list or ten. Again, this is a national issue.

Some countries take a deposit which may be returned to the traveller when the lists are returned after use (some use this as an extra source of income). Other countries prefer to trust travellers to save resources, ecologically and financially. This is also a national issue.

### Supplying travellers with lists and getting lists back after use

In countries where the post is fast and efficient—and especially if it is cheap too—it is a good idea to keep the lists together in one or two places. This way, it is not necessary for each interviewer or travel officer to have a large stock of lists which may or may not be used. It costs money to produce lists, and it is unreasonable to expect other countries to produce a large number of lists which are not used. It is to be hoped that national decisions try to save both financial and ecological resources. Remember that Servas does not have a responsibility to provide an urgent service. If it takes four weeks to send a parcel of lists, we may have to expect a traveller to apply more than four weeks in advance.

There may be reasons for choosing other ways of distributing lists however: if the post is very unreliable or very expensive, for example.

### Travel reports

Some countries ask all their travellers to write travel reports. There are two kinds which are particularly good to receive:

- 📄 information about hosts who have changed address or telephone number, or cannot be reached, particularly in countries where communication by post or telephone is difficult (“The house at address X has been demolished and is now a shopping centre”); AND
- 📄 articles which can be submitted for publication in Servas International News (“Experiences of travel in XX”).

There are also travel reports which you may try to discourage, for example:

- 📄 petty complaints about hosts’ living conditions or personal habits (“There was dust under the bed”);
- 📄 expressions of personal likes and dislikes (“We didn’t get on well” or “NN was rather rude”);
- 📄 criticism of the number of hosts (“There aren’t enough hosts in the XX area”).

Some people—particularly good talkers—dislike writing. If you **insist** on a travel report with the returned lists, you may end up **without** the report and **without** the lists. It may be wisest to leave the choice up to the traveller.

## Host List

### Producing national lists

There are many things to be considered when producing lists. Some of these apply to all countries:

- 📄 Use as little paper as possible: It saves resources (rain forests...). It gives travellers less to carry. It costs less to send by post (weight and size...). It costs less to print and to copy. See two example pages (page 5.2)
- 📄 Do not use thicker paper than necessary—even for the cover. Postal charges are normally calculated according to weight—and many lists may be sent several times.
- 📄 Do not make new lists more often than necessary. Once a year is usually enough. If there are few or no changes, you may make new lists less often—and perhaps produce a list of changes in between.

### Distributing national lists

#### 1 To hosts in the same country





In countries which produce their own lists, a copy of the national list is usually sent to all the hosts in the country. This is practical, as a host who is unexpectedly unable to receive a traveller may then be able to make alternative arrangements with another host. It also makes it easier to have meetings for hosts in one part of a country. Rules for hosts visiting other hosts in their own country vary—at the present time this is a national issue.

#### 2 To other countries

At the end of each calendar year, each country is asked to state how many lists they need from the other countries (see *Host List Request Form* page 4.3). The International Host List Co-ordinator collects this information, and puts it all together on one sheet of paper (*Host List Request Table* page 5.1). The person who distributes Host Lists then sends the correct number of lists requested to the countries asking for them. If more lists are needed later, the secretary or Host List Co-ordinator can write, phone or fax **direct** to the country from which they need more lists.

### Paying for lists

The system in use now is that each country pays for the lists it makes (some countries with few hosts give their lists to the International Host List Co-ordinator, who makes and distributes the lists for them). In countries where the number of travellers **going out** is close to the number **coming in**, this works quite well. In some countries however, there are many more travellers coming to the country than leaving the country. This often makes it difficult to pay for production of lists. Servas has tried for many years to find a fair and easy way to deal with this problem, but has not yet found a fair and easy answer. If this is a problem for your country, the latest suggestions are:

-  you can try to start a bilateral agreement with another country which will produce—and perhaps distribute—your lists for you, or will make copies of a list which you produce (see *Bilateral Agreements*, page 2.2)
-  you can ask your hosts to pay for membership
-  you can ask Servas International for financial support (in the *Annual Report*)
-  you can invent a fair and easy way of paying for lists, and suggest it to SI

### Ordering other lists

See distributing national lists, 2 to other countries above (page 2.5)

## Finance

### Traveller fee

It is normal for travellers to pay a fee to Servas in the country in which they get their Letter of Introduction. This fee covers the cost of the contribution to Servas International (Servas stamp), and contributes to the other costs of running Servas in your country. It is up to each country to decide how much the traveller fee should be. It is reasonable to take into consideration the average income in your country, and the rate of exchange with other currencies, particularly Swiss francs—the currency in which the stamp fee is paid to SI. You may want to give travellers the option of making a voluntary contribution in addition, if they think the fee is very low, or allow people who do work for Servas to pay less. In all cases however, Servas in your country will be expected to pay the normal stamp fee to SI.





### Deposit

It is possible to expect all travellers to pay a deposit on the lists which they borrow, and to return the deposit when all lists are returned to Servas. Some countries give the travellers the option of returning lists **without** asking for the deposit to be returned—this gives Servas an extra income.

Some countries feel it is necessary to use deposits—otherwise travellers do not return lists. Other countries have good experience with trusting travellers to return lists without deposits, and feel that deposits would give them more paperwork. It is up to your country to decide whether to use deposits or not.

### Host contribution

This varies from country to country.

-  Some countries ask all hosts to re-register and pay a fee every year, and remove from the list all who do not.
-  Some ask for re-registration, but do not ask for a fee.
-  Some keep hosts on the list until they ask to be removed, or post is returned unanswered.
-  Some ask hosts to make a contribution if and when they feel they can.

When the hosts re-register every year, the list will probably be more up-to-date, but it will take more work—and perhaps money—to make the list. It is possible that you will lose some hosts just because they are a bit forgetful.

In a country where hosts do not re-register, it may be difficult to know what to do if they do not pay their annual subscription. This may affect which system you choose for your country.

### Other sources

If you have other sources of income, you may note them here:



### Stamp fee

A fee is paid to Servas International for each adult traveller leaving a country. How much is paid is shown clearly on the form *Paying for stamps* (see page 4.1)



## Servas—aims

















Servas is an Esperanto word meaning 'serve'. It is a world-wide, non-profit, non-governmental co-operative network of hosts and travellers, set up with the purpose of helping to build world peace, goodwill, understanding and mutual tolerance. It seeks to realize these aims by providing opportunities for personal contacts between individuals of diverse cultures and backgrounds.

## Servas—history









In 1949 some young pacifists from several countries attending a folk high school in Denmark started a movement called *Peacebuilders*. Inspired by Bob Luitweiler, an American conscientious objector, they established a code of work – study – travel, opening their homes to like-minded people from other countries, in order to actively work for peace. In 1972 Servas International was registered in Switzerland, and the year after it was included in the United Nations' list of non-governmental organisations.

## Servas—how it works


As a host, your name will be put on the list of your country. Other information may be included:


-  Your year of birth and your sex (male/female)
-  Your address and phone number, and directions for getting there—if relevant
-  How much advance notice you would like (default is 1 day)
-  how you would like to be contacted (write/phone)
-  how many people you can accommodate
-  whether you are willing to consider a family with children for a longer stay
-  whether you will accept visitors the same day (npr=no prior notice required)
-  whether you require visitors to use a sleeping bag, or offer accommodation to more if they have sleeping bags
-  whether you offer contact but no accommodation (day host)
-  whether you are interested in exchange of young people in the family (14–17) with Servas hosts in other countries for some weeks
-  Your occupation, other family members (name/sex/year of birth)
-  Languages you can use/understand (distinguishing between confidently and slightly)
-  Your main interests, other countries you have travelled to or lived in
-  Organizations you belong to which have aims related to Servas (save space by being selective)
-  Significant house rules such as *no smoking, no alcohol, share food expenses*
-  Other relevant information such as *have cats/dogs/gorillas/snakes, good wheelchair access/many steps, you may help on the farm.*


## Suggestions for contact with travellers


-  Don't let **anyone** pressure you into receiving them—good travellers don't try to. If you don't feel you can be sociable, it is better to say *no*—you needn't explain why. You are not committed to accepting every traveller who makes contact. It is better to have one good visit than twenty poor visits.
-  You may find it useful to have a short, written list of house rules, particularly if you have special conditions, such as a temperamental shower, a temperamental landlady or a temperamental neighbour! You may include when it is convenient for the traveller to have a shower/bath; when you would like to have meals with your traveller; whether there are doors which must be kept closed/open/locked; lights which must be left on/turned off. You know your own conditions best. But try to keep the list short. If you would prefer to tell travellers these things yourself, that is fine!
-  No-one can guarantee that you will **like** every traveller you receive. You have no responsibility to go to a lot of extra trouble just to please them if you don't feel like it, but of course you can if you want to. If you feel travellers are behaving unreasonably, tell them politely how you feel—it may just be thoughtlessness. Clearing up minor conflicts is good peace work!
-  If Servas travellers write to you and enclose a reply coupon, it is considerate to reply as soon as you can. If they have not enclosed a copy of their Letter(s) of Introduction, you may ask for a full name and town, so that you can report to a coordinator if they don't arrive as arranged.
-  If you have said “yes” to travellers, and then cannot receive them, it is considerate to try to let them know. You may be able to make arrangements for them to stay with another host in your area, or get help from a co-ordinator.
-  All Servas travellers should show you their Letter of Introduction—the original, not a copy—soon after they arrive. You may check that it is valid (has a stamp and interviewer's signature, and has not expired) and contact a co-ordinator if it is not. If you like, you may keep it until the travellers leave.
-  Most Servas hosts like to keep a visitors' book. You may note the names and addresses of the travellers, the dates of their visit, and any other applicable comments—or perhaps you prefer the travellers to write in the book themselves.
-  You *may* assist with transport of travellers, but you do not have to. Travellers should normally expect to make their own way to hosts' homes. If your entry in the host list says you can collect travellers, but you are unable to when a traveller


contacts you, you may let the traveller choose to find another host or you may ask him/her to make his/her own transport arrangements to your home.


 The standard Servas arrangement is that travellers should stay for two nights, and should not ask to stay longer. If you have specified **longer stay** in the host list, they *may* ask, but you can still say “no” without giving a reason. If they do not seem to know this rule, you can explain it to them, or contact a co-ordinator for help. You may of course ask travellers to stay longer if you want to, or accept them for a 1-night stay.

 You may give travellers meals as convenient for you. Do not be offended if they offer to contribute some food or drink for a meal even if this is unusual in your culture—in many countries this is considerate behaviour.


 Expect to spend some time with Servas travellers—this is the real value of Servas. Remember, travellers will gain most by learning how you live!


 Remember that travellers have their needs too! They may feel tired and/or dirty after a long journey when they arrive. Be prepared to give them time for rest, refreshment and a shower, so they can feel that they are at their best when you start talking together.

 If you suggest places to go out for a meal or entertainment, remember that travellers may have a limited budget.


 If you arrange to go out together—for example for a meal—there are no **Servas** rules for who should pay. It will probably avoid misunderstanding if you agree together who is paying **before** you go out, even though you may find this difficult to discuss. You or the traveller may of course insist on paying, but the best starting point is probably that everyone pays for themselves.

### Ways to deal with problems

 Remember that travellers may not understand your language perfectly—even the English, French or Spanish spoken on opposite sides of the Atlantic may not be understood in the same way! People from different cultures may expect different behaviour in a certain situation. If you say “Help yourself to food from the fridge”, **you** may mean “Take a little food if you are hungry”, but travellers may think you mean “Take as much food as you like”—and eat **everything!** Perhaps that is what they would have meant if **they** had said it to you at **their** home! Nobody ever said that international understanding was easy—it may involve discussions about what is acceptable behaviour, or what people **really** mean when they say something.

 If there is a “problem” with travellers, first make sure that they understand the responsibilities of a Servas traveller, and that the problem is not a misunderstanding because of culture or language. If you feel they are intentionally abusing Servas, and they continue to behave unreasonably, then **immediately** contact your national co-ordinator (and your local co-ordinator, if there is one), so that they can try to help.

### Routine points to consider

 Advise your host co-ordinator and/or national host list co-ordinator as soon as possible of any changes to your host listing, or if you wish to be deleted from the list.



**Please read this before you start travelling**

**Servas—aims**

Servas is an Esperanto word meaning ‘serve’. It is a world-wide, non-profit, non-governmental co-operative network of hosts and travellers, set up with the purpose of helping to build world peace, goodwill, understanding and mutual tolerance. It seeks to realize these aims by providing opportunities for personal contacts between individuals of diverse cultures and backgrounds.

**Servas—history**

In 1949 some young pacifists from several countries attending a folk high school in Denmark started a movement called *Peacebuilders*. Inspired by Bob Luitweiler, an American conscientious objector, they established a code of work – study – travel, opening their homes to like-minded people from other countries, in order to work actively for peace. In 1972 Servas International was registered in Switzerland, and the year after it was included in the United Nations' list of non-governmental organisations.

**Servas—how it works**













You fill in a “Letter of Introduction”, giving some information about yourself. You are interviewed, your Letter of Introduction is stamped and signed, and you pay a small fee. Now you are an approved Servas traveller.



Personal background on your Letter of Introduction is not meant to be a life story or a list of qualities which make you suited to be a Servas traveller. Include a few personal details, especially things you are interested in and would like people to ask you about. But your interviewer may ask you why you think you would like to be a Servas traveller, and how you feel about peace building.

You receive lists of hosts in the countries to which you are travelling. You contact hosts in advance, and they may agree to host you for two nights (some may consider shorter or longer stays, and some may offer just to meet and talk, not give you accommodation). You do not pay anything to the hosts. Remember however that Servas is a voluntary peace organisation: it does not guarantee that you will find hosts, and it does not commit hosts to accepting you. The lists remain the property of Servas, and should always be returned after use. This saves paper—environmentally sensible—and money for Servas.

















**Servas—what to do as a traveller**

**Before arriving**






-  Learn in advance about the places you are going to, but do not fall into the trap of believing that you know more than the people who live there. Interviewers may be able to help you.
-  Give hosts the advance notice that they ask for. They are not there to provide a service: they are seeking contact with people from other places and with other experiences. They have a reason for asking for the notice specified on the list, and it is disrespectful to ignore that.
-  If you would like a reply to a letter, include enough international postal coupons (often two, sometimes more) for air mail, and allow time for a reply. From some countries, even air mail may take more than 30 days. If you do not enclose reply coupons or stamps, you have no reason to expect a reply.
-  You get a more complete picture of a country if you do not stay in major centres only. Hosts outside city centres often have more time and enthusiasm for travellers.
-  In most countries, it is normal for travellers to contact hosts directly. If you are writing to a co-ordinator to arrange your Servas visits (this is suggested in some host lists to avoid language difficulties), describe yourself, your approximate arrival dates, any special considerations such as allergies or disabilities, and include a copy of your Letter of Introduction.
-  Always contact hosts at least one day before arrival unless *npnr (no prior notice required)* is specified.
-  Don't phone—or arrive—too early or too late (what this means may be different from country to country—between 0900 and 2100 is usually OK, but some countries have a mid-day break too).
-  If you have written, it is considerate to phone hosts one or two days before you are expected, whether you have received a reply or not, and particularly if you will not be arriving as arranged after all. If your hosts have not replied, they may still expect you.
-  If you have arranged to visit a host and you change your plans or are delayed, it is important to inform the host. Some hosts change their own plans because of travellers, and they may be upset if you just don't turn up, or arrive late without letting them know. Some may worry for your safety, and even contact the police or your embassy. If there is no phone, you can still send a card to apologise—afterwards is better than not at all. **This is one of the most common complaints about travellers—please be considerate about it.**
-  Never pressure hosts to accept you. They always have the right to say no without telling you why.
-  It is considerate to take a sheet bag or sleeping bag, and to offer to use it, and to use your own towels.
-  Read the instructions to travellers in the list of each country you visit. It may annoy some hosts to be asked about matters which are covered on the list. It will most likely annoy hosts if you ignore specific instructions or requests which are dealt with on the list.

-  Do not **expect** hosts to fetch you, even if the list says they can. You may of course accept an offer. It is a good idea to ask your hosts for clear instructions to their home when you contact them.
-  Read what the list tells you about your host (and family). It tells you what the hosts consider most important or attractive about themselves. Memorize at least how many children there are, even if you find the names impossible to pronounce.

### When you arrive

-  When you first meet hosts, give them your Letter of Introduction—the original, not a copy. Some may want to keep it until you leave; some may read it and give it back immediately; and some may not even want to look at it. Some may like to be given a copy to keep. In all cases, it shows you are a genuine Servas traveller.
-  In contact with your host, be sensitive. Use your awareness of others' reactions and behaviour to judge what is acceptable behaviour. Some people are formal, others informal. Some have a highly ordered life, others are free and easy. Some wish to treat you as an honoured guest, others as a member of the family, and others as a casual acquaintance. Some have plenty of time for you, others make a small space in a busy schedule. Some are deeply involved in active peace work, others see their peace role mostly on a personal level. Respect their differences, and their right to behave as they choose.
-  Make sure you have time to spend with your hosts. Remember that they want to find out about **you, your background, and your country**. Don't let sightseeing keep you from spending time with your hosts.
-  Even if your hosts offer you a house key, ask when you should leave for the day. Some hosts may expect you to leave the house when they do.
-  You are in someone else's home, so **be considerate**. Clean up after yourself; don't expect to be waited on; if you want food, ask—don't just help yourself; follow house rules and schedules; help with chores and small jobs if your host would like you to. Water or hot water may be scarce, so do not shower or wash clothes without asking.
-  Never stay longer than two nights unless your host sincerely invites you to do so. Never ask to stay longer unless the host specifies *longer stays* in the host list. One-night stays are discouraged because they often give too little time for meaningful visits, but they may be considered if convenient for both host and traveller.
-  You must be willing to accept the sleeping arrangements offered by hosts—mattresses on the floor, and separate beds or even separate rooms for couples may be what they choose to give you, and you should respect that.
-  It is foolish to openly criticize your host's country—even things like the weather or the quality of the roads.
-  Do not offer your hosts money, but be considerate of their financial situation. Do not borrow money from or exchange money with hosts. Many hosts appreciate small gifts, though they should not expect them.
-  Be sure to have enough money for transport and phone calls to reach hosts, and for alternative accommodation if you do not get a Servas stay. Be prepared to go out for your meals if you are not offered food.
-  Ask—sensitively—about meals. Many hosts will give you food, but they do not have to. If you go out with your hosts, you should expect to pay at least for your own food and entertainment. You may choose to pay for your hosts too, but they have no right to expect this, and you should not expect them to pay for you.
-  Ideally use pay phones (it may be worth buying a phone card). Never use a host's phone without asking first, and always pay for your call. Do not assume that certain calls are free (local, information etc.) just because they are in your country. In some countries, directory enquiries are **very** expensive, for example!
-  If you are travelling with a small child in your care, you should be sure to carry with you a little food which you know the child likes. This applies to yourself too if you have special dietary needs, restrictions or preferences. It is not your host's responsibility to pacify a child who is tired from travelling or to tend to medical needs, though many will be willing to help you do so.
-  Servas expects **all** travellers to have a valid Letter of Introduction. A good Servas traveller will not ask a host to accept someone who is not a Servas traveller. Try to arrange an interview for your travelling companion first.
-  Be sensitive to hosts' values and customs. If you think your host is behaving offensively, remember that good behaviour is not necessarily the same in all countries and cultures. Perhaps the same host thinks you are behaving offensively too—and neither of you mean to! You could try talking—sensitively—about your differences.
-  If you have a serious problem, contact a Servas co-ordinator. Remember however that Servas is not a travel bureau—and does not guarantee problem-free personal relationships. That is **your** role in peace-building.

### After you leave

-  You might like to send your hosts a card, thanking them for their hospitality.
-  If you are asked to, send a report to your national secretary. This is specially relevant in certain countries (your interviewer will tell you if so).
-  Remember to return used lists to your national secretary or host list co-ordinator as soon as possible, so that they may be used again by other travellers.
-  If you like writing, you could write a travel report for publication in your national newsletter, or in SI News.
-  Consider becoming a Servas host, day host or volunteer. Servas survives because of its volunteers.





**If you received this sheet before your interview, please bring it with you.**






## Aim of interview

This is to some extent a national issue. Some countries may consider it appropriate to screen prospective travellers, and assess their suitability. In that case, they will probably prefer to use the alternative *Interviewer Guide* rather than this checklist. On the whole however, faith in human nature and a desire to promote world peace will make most interviewers want to make Servas open doors available to everyone who applies to be a Servas traveller. Most complaints will probably be avoided if interviewers do enough to make sure that the traveller properly understands the aims of Servas and the way it works. Perhaps some people may become more considerate and peaceful through the experience of being a Servas traveller. However, if you believe that an applicant should not become a Servas traveller, you might recommend another organisation. Servas Canada has produced a booklet, "Alternatives to Servas", which they will send you free if you ask (see Key List for address, or ask your national secretary).















## Prepare for the interview

-  The traveller reads *Information for travellers* and fills in *Letter of Introduction* beforehand whenever practical.
-  Arrange where and when to meet. Do not have a guilty conscience about making it somewhere convenient for the interviewer: Servas is not a commercial service organisation, and travellers must be prepared to go to some trouble. But don't go out of your way to make it difficult, either! Be flexible, but not self-sacrificing.
-  Make arrangements beforehand about payment, according to national practice.
-  Set aside enough time. Many interviewers feel that less than two hours is too little.

## At the interview

-  If the traveller has questions, start with those if appropriate.
-  Servas—how and when it started, aims. Person-to-person peace organisation.
-  Servas—how it works. Hosts and travellers. Provides opportunity but no guarantees.

## Important practical rules—discuss these with the applicant

-  Be observant, listen and be sensitive! This is the most important guideline, and can't be emphasised enough.
-  Read the instructions in the host list. You may be asked to do certain things—it is disrespectful not to do so.
-  Servas does not exist to provide cheap accommodation. If you don't feel sociable, or you don't find a host, expect to use alternative accommodation.
-  Contact in advance as specified (*wr/ph/npnr*), respecting length of notice required (2d, 3wk). Never make first contact same day unless *npnr*. If you write expecting a reply, you are normally asked to enclose postage (reply coupon). If *wr* is not specified, hosts probably do not want to have the trouble of writing to you, but you may try writing to say you will contact them later—without expecting reply.
-  Be aware that people on the host list may have stopped being hosts after the list was printed. Be specially considerate in these cases.
-  Never pressure hosts to take you. They always have the right to say no without telling you why.
-  Do not phone hosts at unsociable hours. This varies from country to country (siesta time, normal bedtime) but in many countries 21.00 is the latest you should phone, and earlier for *npnr*. Not too early either!
-  If you arrange to arrive at a certain time and can't, let your hosts know as soon as possible. They may have changed their plans in order to meet you, and it is inconsiderate to ignore this. In areas of some unrest, they may worry about you if you just don't turn up, and may go to the trouble of contacting the police, your embassy or your national secretary. This can be embarrassing for all concerned.
-  Two nights stay maximum, unless longer specified. Your host may invite you to stay longer, however.
-  One night is often rather too short a time to make good contact. However, a) arrival 20.00, two nights' stay and departure 09.00 is only one day, whereas b) arrival 10.00, one night's stay and departure 20.00 is two days' stay, so you may try being flexible.
-  Give your host your Letter of Introduction immediately on arrival—it shows you are an approved Servas traveller. It is up to your host whether to read it or not. Some hosts don't bother, but many will be annoyed if they have to ask. Some may keep it until you leave; some may give it straight back. Some may like to be given a copy to keep; others prefer not to accumulate paper!
-  In some countries it is normal to remove footwear before entering the house—in others to do so just inside. In other countries it is considered strange to take your shoes off. This is the sort of "small thing" which can be important to hosts. Thoughtlessness could be very offensive.
-  Your host has offered you accommodation (and some time). You may well be offered food, but you have no right to expect it. You will probably be offered a bed, but you may get a sofa or a mattress on the floor. You may be offered towels, but don't *expect* them. If comfort is essential to you, stay at a hotel and visit hosts for the day.
-  It is usually unwise to travel from host to host without time to yourself in between.

- 
- Be prepared to fit in with your hosts' plans. Some may have taken time off work to be with you, others will have to go out to work. Some may leave their house open for you or give you a key, others will expect you to be out when they are out themselves.
- 
- Don't expect your hosts to take you sightseeing. Some hosts may want to show you round however.
- 
- Avoid using hosts' phones, but if you do, pay for your call immediately.
- 
- Always be sensitive and considerate. Customs, traditions and forms of politeness vary from country to country. As a Servas traveller, feel free to ask what is the polite way to behave. Do not assume that the way you behave at home is considered polite in the country you are visiting.
- 
- Do not pass judgement on your hosts. Attitudes and behaviour are often dictated by the society in which one lives. They have to live with their neighbours after you have left. What may appear to you to be a prejudice may have reasons which you do not understand without having lived in that place. Discuss by all means, but always politely and with an open mind.
- 
- It is not normal Servas practice to give hosts money. However, you should be sensitive to the financial situation of your host. When a host invites you to share a meal, it may be appropriate to offer to bring something to drink (be aware of attitudes to alcohol). In other cases, you could bring some fresh fruit, or you could offer to buy the ingredients for, and to prepare a dish typical of your own country. But be careful not to offend your hosts by suggesting that their hospitality is unsatisfactory. Be sensitive and aware!
- 
- If you are included in family meals or activities, be prepared to offer to do the tasks which family members would do (washing up, laying table, helping in the garden...). If your host insists on treating you as an honoured guest, accept this graciously and be careful to express your appreciation.
- 
- If you experience serious problems with a host (criminal behaviour, sexual harassment...), you should inform a Servas co-ordinator. This should be reserved for serious cases however: the sort of misunderstanding which could arise in normal interpersonal contact is a matter for you and your host to clear up, and not a Servas matter.
- 
- Servas is a peace organisation. It is legitimate to touch on sensitive topics like politics and religion, but do not press the matter if your hosts are unwilling to talk about them – they probably have good reason for avoiding them.
- 
- Be prepared to tell the host about yourself and your background, perhaps with photos of your home and family. be sensitive to how much they want to know: they may already have had a dozen travellers from your town recently!
- 
- Find out a bit about the countries you are going to—but don't try to be more knowledgeable than your hosts!
- 
- Don't take consideration too far. Polite honesty is often better than trying to give the reply you think your host wants. For example, if you are asked whether you would like coffee or tea, say “I'd prefer coffee, but I'm quite happy with tea if that's what you're having, thank you.” If your host asks, “Would you like to go to bed?” you could reply “Well, I am quite tired, but will we have more time to talk tomorrow?” In this way, you express your own preference while allowing your host to make the decision.
- 
- Hosts' children are people too, and it may be appreciated if you try to make contact with them. As with adults, their reactions to you will vary. Perhaps they will include you in a game or sport which you know or they can teach you. As long as their parents approve, you may like to share something from your country.
- 
- Some hosts like to receive small gifts—mementoes of you and your place of origin. But they have no right to expect them. Whether you give gifts or not is your choice.
- 
- Be considerate. The relationship between host and traveller should be equal, not of a giver and a receiver. This involves you giving of yourself.
- 
- If in doubt, show too much gratitude rather than too little! Your hosts will let you know if you are embarrassing them!



## Introduction

Interviewing procedures around the world vary. While this is only a guide, we hope that interviewers will read, consider and adopt, if possible, these suggestions. It was decided at the 1986 SI conference that travellers must be interviewed. Some countries require written references for travellers & at least a verbal reference for hosts.

## Stage 1: Assessing travel applicant

To ensure suitable, Servas-spirited members and excellent exchanges, please remember that joining Servas is a privilege, not a right. Servas is not suitable for every person and every travel plan. You are right to refuse applicants who might abuse the system and lead to members quitting.

*Note 1: It is not a proper interview if an interviewer only asks "Have you read & will you obey the Servas rules?"; the applicant says "Yes" and is then approved.*

*Note 2: Two persons travelling together from different addresses need separate Letters of Introduction and should be interviewed as individuals.*






## Where to Interview

Most are done in the interviewer's home. It is suggested that the interviewer not be alone if unsure of an applicant. A public place or cafe may be used if needed. Sometimes, personal interview is impossible. Use great care interviewing by phone. References should be carefully checked.





## Atmosphere

Hold interview in a welcoming environment. Make applicant feel relaxed. Offer a refreshment perhaps. Allow 2 to 3 hours in order to do a thorough job of determining motives of the applicant and have time to answer questions. It is a big responsibility to approve or refuse applicants.




## Preparation

-  Be sure to tell the applicant what forms, references, photos, money (preferably cash, not cheque), photocopies, etc. are needed for the interview.
-  Be clear about the time, date and length of the interview.
-  Get applicant's phone number in case you must change the appointment.
-  Read the applicant's letter or application form and reference letters to determine what areas you need to concentrate on during the interview.
-  One reference should be from a "responsible person in the community".


## Conversation

-  Do **not** begin with a lot of complex questions. Respect and allow silences.
-  Give the applicant time to talk—suppress your desire to talk and explain everything.
-  Don't say too much, especially don't explain the Servas "spirit" and rules or applicant will know what answers you want to hear and repeat them meaninglessly.
-  Let the applicant talk about him/herself and travels to determine their "spirit"—don't give them the answers or ask obvious questions like "Do you believe in peace?".




## Observations

-  Did the applicant follow instructions you gave, arrive promptly, show awareness of your "house rules," was polite, and appreciative of you giving your time?
-  Does the applicant listen well? Would he/she be welcome in most homes?
-  Were any prejudices displayed? Was interest in people and culture shown?




## Possible questions:


-  Remember there is no "right" answer. Assess applicant's sensitivity, tact, listening skill, flexibility, tolerance, acceptance.

On any prior trips without Servas











-  What did you learn from your trip? (Does the applicant display Servas-like spirit?)
-  Have you had any unexpected difficulty. How did you deal with it?
-  Have you stayed with local people? How was the experience? How did you meet?

Previous "Servas -like" experiences

-  What interests you in travelling?
-  What are your travel plans, transportation, your pace of travel?
-  Have you invited in, or been invited in by, friends and/or strangers?












 Describe your time with: leisure, study, work, clubs, friends, people.

#### General questions

-  What questions do you have about Servas? Do you understand its aims?
-  How will Servas meet your needs? What do you expect of hosts?
-  How many nights of your trip will you hope to be with hosts?
-  Have you time to give advance notice to your hosts?
-  If your time is limited, how much time will you spend with your host?
-  What will you bring to the host family? (help, food, photos of your culture)
-  What would you hope to discuss with hosts?
-  What do you expect to get out of your stay?
-  Why do you think people join Servas as hosts?
-  Considering stamps, phone calls, extra travel distance, gifts, will you save money with Servas?




How does the traveller deal with various situations?

What would you do as a traveller do if:

-  offered a dusty floor to sleep on
-  offered unappetizing or offensive food
-  host has emergency and can't accept traveller. Isn't home when traveller comes
-  one member of the household is not a Servas member and resents your visit
-  host invites you to come at 8 pm, but doesn't say it is for dinner
-  host doesn't offer any food or meals
-  host expects you to do 5 hours of washing & ironing their clothes
-  host expects you to do something you feel incapable of doing, i.e. babysitting infant
-  host wants traveller out of house when host goes to work at 7 a.m.
-  host invites you to stay longer but you're expected at another host home
-  you're expected at 6 pm but unable to find transportation in time to get there

#### Approve or reject applicant



Note: In some countries the National Secretary or Travel Officer is responsible for final approval, and may question applicants after their interview, before giving them host lists. This extra precaution can be a good safeguard, and will hopefully not be seen as a lack of confidence in the interviewer.

-  If interviewer feels the applicants and travel plans are suitable, go to stage 2.
-  If unsure, take a day before deciding. Perhaps consult another interviewer. Remember that the applicants are trying to make a good impression in their native language at home: consider how they might respond in less comfortable travel situations.
-  If unsuitable, suggest the applicants might consider another organization more suited to their plans or personalities. (The booklet “Alternatives to Servas” is available from Servas Canada). Often an explanation of the extra time, expense and inconveniences of Servas makes applicants reconsider joining.




## Stage 2: Inform the applicant about Servas

**Explain Servas:** history, Esperanto meaning, aims, how Servas works, SI function, conferences, organization, newsletters, costs, distribution of lists.

### Responsibilities

-  Explain responsibilities of the traveller. These should be printed on paper (for example *Information for travellers*, page 3.3), covered verbally one-on-one, and the paper given to the approved traveller to review. Discuss each point and answer questions: there should be some.
-  Stress showing Letter of Introduction to hosts and when requesting host lists.

### Contacting hosts

-  Cover items special to the countries visited. For example, European capitals (especially London, Paris and Vienna) are very busy, so write ahead, stay in suburbs, write to 2 or 3 hosts telling each if they are writing to more hosts than they have time to see.
-  Some countries require special precautions because—for example—government is suspicious
-  Travellers who receive no reply from letters must not assume they are not welcome, and should try to phone hosts to clarify the situation.

## Host Lists

- ☞ Traveller should read the notes in each host list and notice and respect each country's rules and suggestions.
- ☞ Explain how to get lists in your country or from a "key person" in another land.
- ☞ Give only a reasonable number of lists. Copy a few pages if that is all they need.

## Travel Report

- ☞ Explain the importance of, and give traveller a Travel Report form
- ☞ To improve interviewing, a Travel Report form could contain: interviewer's name; did your interview adequately prepare you for Servas?; suggested improvements?; you must return this report to receive a host list deposit refund.
- ☞ (Also: Can we give your phone number to travellers going to similar areas?)

# Stage 3: Paperwork

## Host Lists

### To get best use of host lists interviewers should suggest

- ☞ travellers not request an entire list if only one area/city is needed.
- ☞ travellers might copy addresses required and return the lists **before** their trip
- ☞ large **deposits** on lists (a minimum of the cost to photocopy list)
- ☞ travellers must return lists promptly to receive their deposits
- ☞ to request host lists: phone if time is short, or ask traveller to write to appropriate person, enclosing a copy of their Letter of Introduction.

## Record

### In some countries, some or all of these responsibilities may be taken by the Secretary or a Travel Officer

- ☞ Keep a copy of Letter of Introduction (LoI) in case of problem, loss, etc.
- ☞ If LoI is hard to read or in difficult English, have traveller rewrite/type it.
- ☞ Add SI stamp, note fee and host list deposit paid, add interviewer's name and sign.
- ☞ Note: each adult requires their own SI stamp, even if at same address.
- ☞ Never add a SI stamp or sign an application which is incomplete.
- ☞ Collect cash for fee and adequate host list deposit. Collect for all lists expected to be received even if all are not available at the time. To avoid bad cheques (because traveller closes his/her account) ask for cash.
- ☞ If current lists are unavailable, lists may be obtained in other countries by showing LoI: further deposit may be needed.
- ☞ Send to treasurer (or the appropriate officer) **your** cheque for fee and deposit collected and all the paperwork.

## Finances and Host List System

- ☞ This will vary depending on size, and the number of volunteers in each country. However it is suggested for efficiency:
- ☞ Very few interviewers (one person only if possible) should have a full set of host lists.
- ☞ All lists be returned to the host list coordinator (1 per country) for reuse.
- ☞ A treasurer be found who receives all fees and deposits from interviewers and keeps detailed financial records.
- ☞ The treasurer or host list coordinator return all host list deposits to travellers.
- ☞ (Interviewers do not retain fees or the list deposits.)

## Suggested Form for Interviews

- ☞ Adopt a form which relieves Servas of legal & monetary responsibility...

"I have understood the instructions, meaning and requirements of the Servas organization. I will act in accordance with the Servas rules and in a respectable manner. It is my own responsibility to contact hosts independently. My contribution does not entitle me to any services over and above acceptance as a member, except for return of my host list deposit. For various reasons I may not be able to contact or arrange stays with hosts. I will take no legal action against Servas, its branches, groups, volunteers, hosts or any members."

## **Servas – aims**

The aims of Servas are, as stated in its charter

*...to help build world peace, goodwill and understanding by providing deeper, more personal contacts with people of other cultures and backgrounds*

*...to share the hosts' life and their concern in social and international problems, their interests in creative activity, and mutual responsibility for their fellow men.*

## **Servas – how does it work?**

It is not a matter of exchange. A Servas traveller need not be a host. As a rule, a traveller may spend two nights with a host, unless invited to stay longer (some countries have specified exceptions). It is also possible to be a day host without offering accommodation. A host may always refuse a traveller. Servas opens for possibilities, but it does not give guarantees. Servas is run by volunteers; it is not a travel agency.

## **Servas – history**

The idea was conceived at Askov Folk High School in Denmark in 1948–9 by Bob Luitweiler, a young American conscientious objector, who hoped that a further holocaust could be prevented by international understanding on a “grass roots” level. The name of the organisation—Peace Builders—was changed at its conference in 1952 to Servas, which is an Esperanto word meaning *serve*. At the 1972 conference, Servas International was registered in Switzerland as a Non-Governmental Organization, and is represented at the United Nations in New York, Geneva and Vienna.

The first Servas hosts were recruited in Denmark by Bob, but the idea soon spread to other countries by word of mouth and through pacifist organisations. Committees in several countries collated lists of hosts, and with these the first Servas travellers ventured out. To start with, most hosts and travellers were pacifists, often heavily involved in active peace work. The organisation owes much of its early success to a group of dedicated pacifists in England who—amongst other things—produced a broadsheet to keep members up-to-date on peace matters. As time progressed, it became clear that Servas could not survive as an organisation for the few, and members were recruited outside pacifist circles. It was accepted that Servas should work across all boundaries—nationalities, races, politics, religions, ages, cultures and interests.

We may not be able to prevent war by our own efforts alone, but we can do much to break down the prejudice and mistrust which can so easily come from unfamiliar situations. Servas provides opportunities to get to know countries from inside, and to find a home in a foreign land. As hosts we can receive the world into our homes.

## **How to become a Servas traveller**

A Servas traveller fills in a *Letter of Introduction*, and is interviewed by the national Servas secretary or another experienced Servas host. The Letter of Introduction is stamped and signed, and is then valid for a year. The traveller pays a fee, and is supplied with lists of hosts for the countries to be visited. These lists remain the property of Servas, and must be returned after use (some countries take a deposit). The fee covers running expenses, such as printing and distributing the lists, and a contribution to Servas International (SI). SI publishes SI News, which is distributed to hosts, and gives financial aid to new national Servas groups and to existing groups with scarce resources. Servas is based on voluntary, unpaid work.

## **How to become a Servas host**
















Many people who become hosts have either been Servas travellers themselves, or have been introduced to Servas by experienced hosts. Some countries have detailed written information; others have interviews for hosts or support groups. As a host, you may receive many requests from travellers, you may receive few, or even none at all for some time, depending on where you live and how many other hosts there are close by. New lists are normally prepared for publication each year. Your national secretary will tell you the deadline for being included on the next list.

## **What to do if you want to become a host or traveller**





Contact one of these people:
















**Hosts**

-  I'm sorry, it's not convenient for you to stay at the moment.
-  Could you arrive in time for [dinner] at [7.30]?
-  Would you mind having [dinner] before you arrive?
-  We'll have to be out of the house by [8 o'clock] tomorrow morning.
-  It would be nice if we could eat breakfast together at [7].
-  We'll need the bathroom from [7 to 7.30].
-  We'd like you to leave the house when we do—or before.
-  We'll be home from work at [5]. Will you come back then or later?
-  It would be convenient if you ate [dinner] before you come back.
-  If you'd like to eat [dinner] with us, we'll be eating at [6].
-  There is hot water between [8] and [10]. You can have a shower then.
-  Our water is [metered] [in short supply]. Please don't waste it.
-  Electricity [is expensive] [comes from nuclear/fossil fuel/our own generator]. Please remember to [turn off lights][close doors][keep windows closed].
-  We don't drink alcohol in our house. I'm sure you can respect that.
-  You look as if you'd like a bath/shower. (*Not*: you smell as if you need . . .)



**Hosts and travellers**

-  How do you think Servas works for peace?
-  Would you tell me a bit about the political situation in [your country], please?
-  I'd like to know a bit about religion in [your country].
-  Do we get a distorted picture of [your country] from the media?

**Travellers**

-  Would it be convenient for me to stay with you...
-  When would it be convenient for me to arrive?
-  Would you like me to eat [dinner] before I come?
-  Is there anything I can get from the shop before I arrive?
-  Would you like me to take my shoes off in the house?
-  Is there anything I can get from the shop while I'm out?
-  May I get in some wine to have with our meal?
-  I'd prefer [tea], but [coffee] is fine, if that's what you're having, thank you.
-  May I have a [shower] [bath], please? Do I need to be careful about anything in particular?
-  May I use the telephone, please? How can I find out how much it costs?
-  Where can I dry my towel?
-  May I wash out a few clothes? Where can I dry them?
-  In [my country] it is polite for guests to [help wash up]. Is it the same here?

**English speakers in other language areas**

-  Yes please/No thank you. (Be direct: *That would be lovely* or *I'm afraid that's not my scene* may leave your hosts wondering whether you meant *yes* or *no*).
-  May I use the [toilet][lavatory]? (Be direct: many people won't understand euphemisms like *use the bathroom/powder my nose/wash my hands/can you show me the geography of the house?*).





Country \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

Rate	Price (Swiss francs)	Number permitted	Number received	Number used	Number returned	Fee to pay (Swiss francs)
Free	0.00	10	10			0.00
Scale 1	5.00	40				
Scale 2	15.00	unlimited				
<b>SUM</b>						
Stamps received for new year			Further stamps requested for new year:			

To be paid by 1st January (of the year **after** the date on the stamp) to:

Account number 2200-03919-2

at

Bank Leu

Zurichstrasse 5

PO Box

CH-8610 USTER

Switzerland.

Alternative arrangements may be made with the treasurer of Servas International.



Year

Country

Please return this form to the address below by

	National secretary	Deputy secretary if any	Host list officer if any	Peace secretary if any
<b>Name</b>				
<b>Address</b>				
<b>Phone</b>				
<b>Fax</b>				

<b>Hosts and travellers</b>		
<b>1</b>	How many hosts are/were there in your country on 31st December?	
<b>2</b>	How many of these hosts are Day Hosts?	
<b>3</b>	How many travellers have been approved in your country this year?	
<b>4</b>	How many traveller's reports have you received this year?	
<b>Communication with members</b>		
<b>5</b>	Do you send out a newsletter and/or a bulletin to members in your country?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
<b>6</b>	If yes, how many issues this year?	
<b>Host Lists</b>		
<b>7</b>	When will your host list for the coming year be distributed?	
<b>8</b>	Can your national group manage to pay for production and postage? If no, give details on the back of this form.	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
<b>9</b>	Do hosts in your country get a copy of the list?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
<b>10</b>	How many hosts want Servas International News?	

You can give more details on the back of this form if you would like to. Thank you for your co-operation.

Please return this form to:



How many lists do you want from other countries?

Return by  
to

Year  
Filled in by

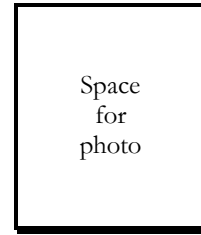
Country:

Country	Requested
<b>EUROPE + NEAR EAST</b>	
Albania	
Austria	
Belarus	
Belgium/ Luxemburg	
Britain	
Bulgaria	
Czech Republic	
Denmark	
Estonia	
Finland	
France	
Germany	
Greece	
Hungary	
Iceland	
Israel	
Ireland	
Italy	
Latvia	
Lithuania	
Malta	
Netherlands	
Norway	
Poland	
Portugal	
Romania	
Russia	
Slovakia	
Slovenia/Croatia	
Spain	
Sweden	
Switzerland	
Turkey	
<b>Countries not included</b>	

<b>AFRICA</b>	
Ghana	
Kenya	
Mali	
Mauritius	
Senegal	
South Africa	
Tanzania	
Uganda	
Zimbwabe	
<b>AMERICA</b>	
Argentina	
Bolivia/Chile/Peru	
Brazil	
Canada	
Caribbean	
Central America	
Colombia/Venezuela/ Ecuador	
Mexico	
Paraguay/ Uruguay	
USA West	
USA North-East	
USA Mid-South	
<b>ASIA</b>	
Bangladesh	
China	
Hong Kong	
India	
Indonesia	
Japan	
Malaysia	
Nepal	
Singapore	
South Korea	
Taiwan	
Thailand	
<b>OCEANIA</b>	
Australia	
New Zealand	



Please show this letter to your host without being asked



Family name

Given names

Permanent address

①

Present address

①

Travel address (e.g. a base abroad while travelling)

①

Countries to be visited (with approximate dates)

Nationality

Sex (M/F)

Occupation

Age

Passport No

Languages

Are you a Servas host? (Y/N)

Family members included on this Letter of Introduction

Other Servas travellers travelling with you

Dates of travel:

START

FINISH

PERSONAL BACKGROUND

Signature

Date

Interviewed by

Date

Valid until

Address

Stamp and signature



Welcome to Servas!

We hope you will meet many pleasant and interesting people through Servas, and that this contact will help to foster international peace and understanding.

The information you provide on this form will be included in the list of hosts in your country, and will give Servas travellers from all over the world an impression of you and your interests. Include things which are important to you, but don't include everything—saving paper is an environmental issue. You may be proud to belong to 14 local clubs, but this unlikely to make a difference to the number of travellers who visit—or avoid visiting—you!

An entry on the list may look something like this:

101	Ana & Boz DICKENS	Bus 45 or 76	Eng	f'35 manager; m'52 author
wr/ph	Albertstrasse 19832	30 mins N	Sp	Ch: Carl(m'75), Daisy(f'79)
2p	X-354 65 KUANGHO	from City	swa	Weaving, football, gardening
fam	w9323456 h9323365	centre	fr	Org: AI, CND. Tr: Europe USA.

Notes : **Day host** means no accommodation. Advance contact: **write** indicates that travellers may write, and suggests that you will reply to a written query when return postage is enclosed; **phone** that you accept queries by telephone. Travellers may not ask to stay more than 2 nights unless longer is specified. All contact is at least 24 hours before, unless **npnr** (no prior notice required) is specified. Small children travelling with their family may find 2-night stays disruptive, so **fam** on the list indicates that you will consider longer stays for families with young children. **Y**—Youth exchange—indicates that a young person in the household may be interested in an exchange stay (several weeks) with another Servas youngster.

Name Year of Birth Sex Occupation  work

Name Year of Birth Sex Occupation  work

Children at home (sex/year of birth)

Address  home

Brief directions for getting there (time and direction from nearby town/railway station/etc.)

Tick boxes  as appropriate (see notes above for explanations)

<input type="checkbox"/> day host only	No of persons:.....	<input type="checkbox"/> Family—may stay longer	Member of:
<input type="checkbox"/> write <input type="checkbox"/> phone	<input type="checkbox"/> Male only	<input type="checkbox"/> Youth exchange	<input type="checkbox"/> Amnesty International
<input type="checkbox"/> no prior notice required	<input type="checkbox"/> Female only	Sleeping bag(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Environment organisation
<input type="checkbox"/> notice required . . . . .	<input type="checkbox"/> Mixed couple(s)		<input type="checkbox"/> required for all travellers
<input type="checkbox"/> may ask to stay longer	<input type="checkbox"/> Any combination	<input type="checkbox"/> can take ...extra travellers	<input type="checkbox"/> Other.....

Languages spoken fluently

Languages understood to some extent

Travelled in these countries

Lived in these countries

Important information not covered above

Date Signature

Please return this form to:





Travellers' name(s)

Dates of arrival and departure	Name, address, country, as on list	Essential changes to list, other comments





This is just an example—it is not complete or accurate

Country	AU	BE	CH	CZ	D	D K	E	FL	FR	GB	GR	H U	IR L	IS	IT	LA	LI	NL	N O	PO	➔
AR	2	2	3	2	5	3	7	2	5	4	3	3	2	5	7	1	1	3	2	2	➔
AU	-	2	4	2	10	2	5	2	10	8	3	3	5	2	10	1	1	2	2	2	➔
AUS	25	15	35	10	60	25	20	10	80	80	20	10	20	10	60	1	1	20	20	7	➔
BE	3	-	3	3	4	3	4	3	6	3	1	3	1	3	5	1	1	5	4	3	➔
BR	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	➔
CAN	1	20	25	5	35	5	15	5	20	25	15	5	5	5	35	5	5	20	5	10	➔
CH	3	3	-	2	6	5	5	3	8	10	2	3	3	3	6	2	2	5	5	1	➔
CZ	5	1	10	-	5	1	5	1	10	10	1	1	1	5	10	1	1	5	1	1	➔
D	25	20	20	25	-	40	25	25	65	60	15	20	30	30	50	12	12	30	20	25	➔
DK	6	5	5	5	12	-	14	5	18	15	4	6	7	5	15	3	3	6	7	5	➔
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓



Here are a couple of examples:

1.1 wr/ph 2 days before 3p	Grogjh HUHJJHRK 43 Huhuhf Road 6757 Thrihjek h(05)3456789	Bus 32 or 32 to Hardsed + 5 mins walk	Eng Ger sp	f74=Student Hunting, shooting, fishing Org: AI, Disarm, Scouts, musical Tr: Europe, USA
1.2 wr/ph/npnr 3p sb5p WMT	Alf GHGYGH & Jo TYUYTUTY 67 Marchkjdsfuk Ave 6900 Hyerjhkgj h(05)34567890 w(05)45678901	Tram or Bus 20 mins West from train station to Jdkuril	Eng fr it	m'65=Carpenter, f'71=Housewife Ch: George (m'89), Ann (f'92) Gardening, making music and people Tr: USA, SE Asia Lv: Australia
1.3 ph/npnr sb4p longer no smoking	Penkjh YUROKJKHSDKJH & Hogkjgdh TYTTRYTHK The Kdkjrikjdll 6999 Koskitonky h(05)923456789	Bus 45 20 mins East Phone for directions	eng ger sp it	f'42=Waitress, m'46=Athlete Ch: Haskjh(m'93), Gkjlkkj (f'93) Org: AI, ecology, environment Tr: Japan, Oceania Vegetarians—have marsupials

86 BUHKJDHK (00000) 11m from Sas Hjjdjj 0, more 2P:2N, fam N:5W, NSMOKI, not available Jun–Oct	Madhg <b>Johndj</b> & Ghdjhg <b>Ghdjhg</b> 456738 Hudfijh Ave Hjdkjdjuh, Ms 785748–45637 h654-555-5656 Bus and walk	SP, FR F'45 insurance assessment executive, M'44 resource conservation engineer Int: art, dance, politics, hiking, boking, reading, walking, talking, basketball, meditation, religion Org: Homeless Committee Lv: Spain, Germany, Switzerland Tr: France, Italy, Egypt, New Zealand, Tasmania, Easter Island
87 JHUJGHFH (000001)—“we like to travel and meet people. You'll love meeting our next-door neighbours” 4, same 4P: 2+N, Age 12+, Dis: H, V, (M) N:1P, NSMOK, no pets,	Dotty <b>Glugbolle</b> 134 Tyduygh Ghjdjh 54637 Ghasjhg akjhd Gy 4567382 h478-657-6788 w667-434-7888 e-mail: dot.g@exo.edu	FR, sp, ger F'23 Mainframe computer research assistant Int: people, walking, gardening, children, skiing, soccer, baseball, gymnastics, building, permaculture Org: Bicycle Activist, Vivisection, Amateur Lobotomy Lv: Canada, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Mexico, San Christobal Tr: Monaco, France, Sicily, Corsica, Sardinia, Russia, Belarus





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