



# Chengdu Tribune

Cool News From the Land of Hotpot



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## Assistant Secretary Michele Bond Visits Chengdu

The Department of State's Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs, Michele Bond, visited the U.S. Consulate in Chengdu April 12-14. She is the first Assistant Secretary for Con-



sular Affairs to visit Chengdu. In addition to meeting with consular management and local staff, Assistant Secretary Bond learned about the issues facing U.S. citizens in southwest China and participated in the first ever We Chat video conference with Chongqing Citizen Liaisons to discuss their important role supporting the U.S. Citizen community in that city.

### Holiday Closures:

**May 30**, Memorial Day

**June 9**, Dragon Boat Festival

**July 4**, Independence Day

For a complete list of holiday closures, please visit the [U.S. Consulate Website](#)

## Upcoming Events

### Voting Information Sessions

CHENGDU: May 28th, Voting information booth at the QSI Spring Fair

CHONGQING: June, date and venue to be announced

KUNMING: July, date and venue to be announced

*See page 3 for more information about voting.*

Be sure to [register with STEP](#) to receive important information from the U.S. Consulate in Chengdu, including future announcements for upcoming consular visits and events in your area!

# News, Announcements, and Reminders

## Consular Officer visits Kunming

In March, staff from the U.S. Consulate visited Kunming to provide special and routine services to U.S. Citizens, including accepting passport applications, performing notaries, and answering citizen inquiries.

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## Apply Early for Your Passport Renewal

In 2007, the Department of State experienced an unprecedented surge in passport applications, issuing more than 18 million passports as a result of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI). Nearly ten years later, those passports are beginning to expire, and the Department is experiencing increased demand for passport renewals. Travelers are encouraged to submit passport applications well ahead of their planned travel dates in order to avoid delays. U.S. passport holders are no longer able to add extra visa pages to their passports. This worldwide policy, which went into effect on January 1, 2016, was made to enhance passport security and comply with international passport standards. Applicants in need of additional pages in their valid passports must obtain a new passport. To make an appointment for a new passport, please visit [http://shanghai.usembassychina.org.cn/appointment\\_system011309.html](http://shanghai.usembassychina.org.cn/appointment_system011309.html).

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## Travel Smart: Enroll in STEP

STEP (Smart Traveler Enrollment Program) is a service for U.S. citizens and nationals traveling abroad to enroll their trip with the nearest U.S. Consulate or Embassy. Enrolling your trip allows your local embassy or consulate to send you important information regarding safety conditions in your destination country, helping you make informed decisions about travel plans. Enrollment also helps the U.S. embassy or consulate contact you in the event of an emergency, whether natural disaster, civil unrest, or a family emergency.

Enrolling is free and easy: simply visit the [STEP website](#) to create an account and register your trip.

## Benefits of Enrolling in STEP

- ✓ Receive important information from the Embassy about safety conditions in your destination country, helping you make informed decisions about your travel plans.
- ✓ Help the U.S. Embassy contact you in an emergency, whether natural disaster, civil unrest, or family emergency.
- ✓ Help family and friends get in touch with you in an emergency.

**Already enrolled?** Take a moment to update your information with any changes to your location, name, contact info, or travel plans. Maintaining up to date information will help us better serve you in an emergency and will ensure you receive the most relevant information from us, including emergency messages and travel warnings, as well as news about upcoming events, changes in Consulate services, and our trips to your area.

## VOTING

### Voting Is Now Easier Than Ever Before

Now, all U.S. citizens can receive their blank ballots electronically. Depending on the state in which you are eligible to vote, you may get your ballot by email, fax, or internet download.



### Registration and Ballot Request

Go to [www.FVAP.gov](http://www.FVAP.gov) to complete a new Federal Post Card Application (FPCA), print and sign the form then return it to your local election office in the United States. We recommend overseas U.S. citizens get in the habit of completing FPCAs each January. You should include your email address on the form so it's easier for your election officials to reach you if there is a problem. If your state delivers ballots electronically by fax only, be sure to include your fax number. If you request electronic delivery and include your email address or fax number, you'll receive your blank ballot 45 days before general and mid-term elections and generally 30 days before special, primary, and run-off elections for federal offices. Most states now have voter registration verification websites, and many offer a means of tracking the status of your registration and ballot.

### Returning Your Ballot

Overseas voters have a number of options for returning voted ballots:

- **Local mail:** mail your ballot with appropriate international postage.
- **U.S. Embassy Pouch:** You can drop off your ballot request or voted ballot at the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate for return to the United States, or you can have someone drop it off for you. It must be addressed to your local election officials and have sufficient U.S. postage or be in a postage-paid envelope. A postage-paid envelope is available on the FVAP web site.
- **Fax, Email, or Internet:** A number of states now allow the electronic return of voted ballots. Consult the Federal Voting Assistance Program's Voting Assistance Guide for electronic transmission options for your state.
- **Express Courier Service:** If time is short or local mail is unreliable, you can use professional courier services such as FedEx, DHL, or UPS. *NOTE: FedEx does not deliver to P.O. boxes.*

# Local Resources for U.S. Citizens

## Emotional Support Services

Living as an expat in China can be both exciting and challenging. Being away from your established support network, facing language difficulties, and being immersed in an unfamiliar culture can be overwhelming.

Often this adjustment is extremely difficult and it helps to have someone to talk to. But who can you talk to when you need support in facing the challenges of living and working in China or life pressures in general?

Recognizing this need, Lifeline Shanghai was founded in 2004 to provide a crucial helpline for the international community of Shanghai. Taking calls from not only Shanghai but around China, this confidential, anonymous helpline provides information and emotional support when people need it the most.

At the heart of Lifeline Shanghai, is a group of dedicated volunteers who come from 30 different countries. Through active listening, volunteers listen, support and assist the caller to clarify options and choices that are best for them, in the belief that everyone has the right to be heard, supported and understood. In identifying the appropriate resources for callers, volunteers may refer the caller to appropriate psychological support services.

Lifeline Volunteers are screened carefully and receive intensive, ongoing training; adhering to a code of conduct and ethics as required by Lifeline International. Lifeline Shanghai values their volunteers and continually seeks those who would like to provide meaningful and valuable service to their community by joining in this work. Please consider contacting them for further information at [www.lifeline-shanghai.com](http://www.lifeline-shanghai.com).

Lifeline Shanghai's mission is to enhance the resilience and well-being of Shanghai's international community and as such, meets regularly with mental health professionals and associations, consulates and businesses. Lifeline Shanghai provides presentations and training for various groups after consultation and a needs assessment is undertaken.

Lifeline Shanghai is available 365 days a year between 10 a.m. and 10 p.m. Expats from all over China are welcome to use this helpline service by calling (021) - 6279 8990.

**Note:** *Lifeline Shanghai is a private organization and is not a service of the U.S. Consulate.*

# International Travel Warnings and Alerts

## Travel Warnings:

The Department of State issues a Travel Warning when we want you to consider very carefully whether you should go to a country at all. Examples of reasons for issuing a Travel Warning might include unstable government, civil war, ongoing intense crime or violence, or frequent terrorist attacks. We want you to know the risks of traveling to these places and to strongly consider not going to them at all. Travel Warnings remain in place until the situation changes; some have been in effect for years.

## Travel Alerts

The Department of State issues a Travel Alert for short-term events we think you should know about when planning travel to a country. Examples of reasons for issuing a Travel Alert might include an election season that is bound to have many strikes, demonstrations, or disturbances; a health alert like an outbreak of H1N1; or evidence of an elevated risk of terrorist attacks. When these short-term events are over, we cancel the Travel Alert.

Type	Issued	Location
Warning	24-May-16	<a href="#">Somalia Travel Warning</a>
Warning	16-May-16	<a href="#">North Korea Travel Warning</a>
Warning	21-Apr-16	<a href="#">Philippines Travel Warning</a>
Warning	21-Apr-16	<a href="#">Mali Travel Warning</a>
Warning	18-Apr-16	<a href="#">Chad Travel Warning</a>
Warning	15-Apr-16	<a href="#">Mexico Travel Warning</a>
Warning	14-Apr-16	<a href="#">Central African Republic Travel Warning</a>
Warning	11-Apr-16	<a href="#">Saudi Arabia Travel Warning</a>
Warning	7-Apr-16	<a href="#">Pakistan Travel Warning</a>
Warning	5-Apr-16	<a href="#">Colombia Travel Warning</a>
Warning	1-Apr-16	<a href="#">Tunisia Travel Warning</a>
Warning	31-Mar-16	<a href="#">Syria Travel Warning</a>
Alert	30-Mar-16	<a href="#">Laos Travel Alert</a>
Warning	29-Mar-16	<a href="#">Turkey Travel Warning</a>
Alert	28-Mar-16	<a href="#">Djibouti Travel Alert</a>
Alert	22-Mar-16	<a href="#">Europe Travel Alert</a>
Alert	17-Mar-16	<a href="#">Republic of Congo Travel Alert</a>
Warning	14-Mar-16	<a href="#">Iran Travel Warning</a>
Alert	11-Mar-16	<a href="#">Haiti Travel Alert</a>
Warning	11-Mar-16	<a href="#">Burundi Travel Warning</a>
Warning	1-Mar-16	<a href="#">Algeria Travel Warning</a>

# Customs Information

## Pay attention to customs restrictions when you travel.

Many countries, including China, have restrictions on what you can bring into or take out of that country. For China, items subject to customs control include: drugs, weapons, animals and animal products (including coral and coral products), plants, cultural artifacts and antiques, banned publications, and some religious literature. China also restricts the amount of alcohol and tobacco products that can be brought into the country. Travelers may not carry more than 20,000 RMB in cash or the equivalent of 5000 USD in foreign currency, though traveler's checks and letters of credit are not restricted. If you are carrying anything that might be controlled or restricted, remember you must go through the "Goods to Declare" Red Channel at customs. In China, failure to declare controlled items to customs officials can result in criminal prosecution.

For a complete list of items allowed in and out of China, please see the [General Administration of Customs](#)

For a concise and practical guide to customs restrictions, please see the [Beijing Capital Airport's customs page](#).

## Contact Us

### U.S. Consulate, Chengdu

4 Lingshiguan Lu  
Chengdu, Sichuan

Phone: (86 28) 8558-3992  
Fax: (86 28) 8554-6229

Email: [AmcitChengdu@state.gov](mailto:AmcitChengdu@state.gov)

Appointment Hours: Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays from 13:00—16:00

Please make appointments through the consulate website:

<http://chengdu.usembassy-china.org.cn>

**We welcome your feedback!**

## CAUTION



Please use caution when walking in the street in front of our facility. Chinese authorities have restricted pedestrian access to the sidewalk in front of the U. S. Consulate General in Chengdu.

The Consulate continues to request that the sidewalk be opened to pedestrians for their safety and convenience.

### Chinese emergency numbers:

Police	110
Fire Department	119
Ambulance	120
To report a traffic accident	122
Information	114