



CONSULAR CORNER

ISSUE VII NOVEMBER 2013

Ambassador's Message:



We are once again preparing for the fall and winter holiday season!

The U.S. State Department provides an opportunity for you to receive important messages and travel warnings via email and cell phone when you enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Plan ([STEP](#)). I encourage those who have not done so already to register for STEP. This program plays an important role in keeping U.S. citizens traveling abroad safe and informed.

We are committed to ensuring that any personal information received by our overseas embassies and consulates pursuant to the [STEP](#) process, whether in person or otherwise, is safeguarded against unauthorized disclosure. The data that you provided the U.S. Department of State is subject to the provisions of the Privacy Act (5 USC 552a). This means that the U.S. Department of State will not disclose the information you provide us in your STEP application to any third parties unless you have given us written authorization to do so, or unless the disclosure is otherwise permitted by the Privacy Act.

Before the next issue of the Consular Corner, we will celebrate Veteran's Day (November 11), Thanksgiving (November 28), Christmas (December 25), New Year's Day (January 1, 2014), Orthodox Christmas Day (January 7), and Martin Luther King's Day (January 20). The Embassy will be closed for those holidays. The U.S. Citizen Services [online](#) appointment system reflects these holiday closures.

In this edition of the newsletter you will find information regarding information for filing U.S. federal and state income taxes and a holiday travel checklist. Happy Holidays from me and my colleagues of the U.S. Embassy in Tbilisi!

Sincerely,

Ambassador Richard B. Norland



Click here to view [CONSUL'S PODCAST](#) on American Citizen Services on YouTube



Emergency Contact: (995 32) 227-7000

Includes Crime Victims, Arrest, Death, Child Abduction, Life Threatening Illness or Medical Conditions, Lost/Stolen U.S. Passport, or other safety and welfare issues of a U.S. citizen.

HOURS OF OPERATION & CONTACT INFORMATION

U.S. Citizen Services are available by appointment only. To make an appointment for citizen services please visit

<http://georgia.usembassy.gov/service.html>

Address: # 11 George Balanchine Str. 0131 Tbilisi

Telephone: (995 32) 227-77-24

After hours emergency number: (995 32) 227-70-00

E-mail:

askconsultbilisi@state.gov

Special Point of Interest:

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR U.S. CITIZENS !!!

In case of a crisis and/or natural disaster U.S. citizens in Georgia may tune in to the following FM radio stations for updated U.S. Embassy emergency messages and information for U.S. citizens:

- Radio Green Wave- 107.4 FM (Tbilisi and Gori)
- Radio GIPA — 94.3 FM (Tbilisi)
- Radio Atinati — 105.9 FM (Zugdidi)
- Radio Hereti— 102.8 FM (Lagodekhi and Kakheti)
- Radio Dzveli Kalaki — 107.9 FM (Kutaisi)
- Radio Harmonia — 100.5 FM (Poti)



Information for Women Travelers

The number one mission of the Bureau of Consular Affairs (CA) is to protect the lives and safety of U.S. citizens traveling or living overseas.

International travel can be educational, uplifting, and empowering. The Department of State enthusiastically supports U.S. citizens exploring the world and we have resources to help you do so safely.

There are specific planning steps you as a woman can take to enjoy your trip, and be safe. When traveling overseas, remember to take the same precautions as if you were traveling in the United States. As a U.S. citizen and a woman traveling in a foreign country, you may already stand out: use discretion when moving from place to place; be aware of your surroundings; and be cautious when sharing information about your plans and itinerary with strangers. It is equally important for all travelers to understand the cultural norms of the country they will be visiting. Pay attention to local laws and customs, as they can be quite different than in the United States -- especially if you intend to travel alone.

Research information about where you are going *before you go* and think about how you will be traveling. **Look up the address and emergency contact number of the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate and carry it with you at all times. You can find the contact information for all U.S. embassies and consulates [here](#).** We have duty officers available 24/7 to assist U.S. citizens who have emergencies or who are victims of crime.

Are you traveling alone?

If so, who knows where you will be? You can let the Embassy know your travel plans by enrolling in the [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#). STEP allows U.S. citizens traveling or residing abroad to get routine and emergency information from the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate. Enrollment can also help the U.S. embassy or consulate nearest you to help you in an emergency. Be sure to update your STEP profile to reflect your in-country contact number if you have one. Download our free Smart Traveler app, available through [iTunes](#) or the [Google Play](#) store, for travel information at your fingertips. Check out our [Country Specific Information](#), available for every country in the world, for information on a variety of matters about the country you will be visiting. The Special Circumstances section for each country will contain any relevant information about attitudes, local laws, and customs regarding women. For example, what you wear on the beach in Mexico might not be acceptable in a temple in Thailand.

How will you get around?

The safety of public transportation varies from country to country. In many places, informal taxis or mini-buses pose undue threats to people unfamiliar with the local conditions, especially women traveling alone. Find out what is safe and what is not before you go. Our [Country Specific Information](#) will give guidance on avoiding unsafe transport.

Are you planning to reside abroad?

If [residing abroad](#), understand what that means for you and your family. All U.S. citizens overseas, whether traveling or residing abroad, are subject to the criminal and civil laws of that country.

What should you do if you run into problems or are a victim of crime while overseas?

The American Citizens Services Section of the U.S. embassy or consulate may be able to help you, especially if you feel you can't approach the local police or encounter difficulties with local authorities. Consular officers will protect your privacy, and will not make generalizations, assumptions, or pass judgement. Also, consular officers may be able to assist you if there is a language barrier. Both the Smart Traveler App and the [Country Specific Information](#) pages have the phone number and address of the U.S. embassy or consulate so you can contact us 24/7 in an emergency. The State Department is committed to assisting U.S. citizens who become victims of crime while traveling abroad. Consular staff at our embassies and consulates can provide information about the country's criminal justice system, including how to file a police report or access medical services, as well as information about other available resources. Please visit our [U.S. Citizens Victims of Crime](#) webpage for more information.

Recent announcements on <http://travel.state.gov/>

Worldwide Caution

On September 25, 2013 the Department of State issued [Worldwide Caution](#) to update information on the continuing threat of terrorist actions and violence against U.S. citizens and interests throughout the world. U.S. citizens are reminded to maintain a high level of vigilance and to take appropriate steps to increase their security awareness.

This information is available [online here](#). Please visit <http://travel.state.gov> for country specific international travel warnings.

Sochi 2014 – Visitor Information For Olympic and Paralympic Games

The Department of State provides U.S. citizens traveling to or residing in Russia the following information related to the XXII Winter Olympic Games and XI Paralympic Games taking place in and around Sochi, Russia, from February 7 to February 23, 2014, and March 7 to March 16, 2014.

This [fact sheet](#) provides information regarding the current conditions within the country to U.S. citizens as they consider traveling to Russia for the Games. Travelers should use the information and resources below to have a safe and enjoyable Olympics experience.

Parents' Corner

Applying and renewing your children's passports is simple but there are some things you need to be aware of before you begin the process.

What you need to apply

- A completed DS-11 form
- One 2"x2" passport photo
- Evidence of child's U.S. citizenship
- Evidence of relationship between child and parent(s)/guardian(s)
- Parent(s) or guardian(s) identification and photocopy of identification
- Provide parental consent
- Pay applicable fee

Photos requirements



- 1) You will need one 2"x2" photo of your child
- 2) Parents cannot appear in the photo with their child*
- 3) Visit the [photograph requirements page](#)

***Tips for taking pictures of your baby—Lay your baby on his or her back on a plain white or off-white sheet. This will ensure your baby's head is supported and provide a plain background for the photo. Make certain there are no shadows on your baby's face, especially if you take a picture from above with the baby lying down. You can also cover a car seat with a plain white or off-white sheet and take a picture of your child in the car seat. This will also ensure your baby's head is supported.**

Children's Passport Issuance Alert Program

The [Children's Passport Issuance Alert Program](#) (CPIAP) is one of the Department's most important tools for preventing international parental child abduction. The program allows parents to register their U.S. citizen children under the age of 18 in the Department's Passport Lookout System. If a passport application is submitted for a child who is registered in CPIAP, the Department contacts and alerts the parent or parents.

[Download and print a kid's activity book](#)

Holiday Traveling Checklist

Winter break is just around the corner and many families will be taking advantage to explore new places in the region and around the world. You don't want bumps in the road to spoil your plans. Make sure your travel documents are in order and that you are well informed. If the answer to the following questions are "yes", then you are off to a good start. If not, then it might be time to make an [appointment](#) with us.

Do you have a valid passport?

Make sure you have a signed, valid pass-port, and a visa, if required, and fill in (in pencil) the emergency information page of your passport. It's a good idea to keep a copy of your passport data page with you while traveling.

Does your passport have a minimum of 6 months validity?

Check your passport expiration date. To enter, many countries require travelers to have at least 6 months validity on their passports beyond their planned duration of stay. If your passport expires in six months or less you need to renew it now. Don't wait until the last minute; the processing time for passport applications is 10 workdays. For complete information on how to renew a passport please visit of our [website](#).

Does your passport have sufficient visa pages?

Check your passport to make sure you are not about to run out of pages for visas and entry/exit stamps. If your passport has at least one year validity and is in good condition, but you are running out of visa pages, then you can apply for extra visa pages to be added. Keep in mind that the Consulate may only add the extra pages 2 times. For more information visit our [website](#).



Are you are well informed about the local conditions and laws of the places you will be visiting?

Remember that while in a foreign country you are subject to its laws. [Look up Country Specific Information](#) about the places you plan to visit, as well as [Travel Warnings and Travel Alerts](#). In addition, make sure to check with the embassies of your destination countries for information on prohibited items.

Have you enrolled in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)?

Sign up for the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program. It's easy and it's free! Doing so will help your family and friends get in touch with you in case of an emergency and the U.S. Embassy or Consulate con-tact you in case of a crisis in the places you visit.

Are your friends or relatives aware of your travel plans?

Leave copies of your itinerary, passport data page and visas with family or friends, so you can be contacted in case of an emergency. In addition, check out the Department of State's webpage on [Tips for Travelling Abroad](#).



PLEASE NOTE!!!

ACS UNIT WILL NOT BE ABLE TO ASSIST WITH VISA INQUIRIES
ALL VISA INQUIRIES SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO THE CALL CENTER
LISTED ON THE LEFT. PLEASE NOTE ALL VISA APPLICATIONS ARE
ONLY ACCEPTED ONLINE. FOR THE VISA PROCESS PLEASE VISIT
WWW.USTRVELDOCS.COM

Contact Information for Visa Correspondence and Scheduling

Email: To reach a customer service representative email
support-georgia@ustraveldocs.com

Telephone: Contact a customer service representative using one of these
telephone numbers:

- **Callers in Georgia** Call +995 32 2471 160.
- **Callers in the United States** Call 703 988 7103.

NEW!! Visit [here](#) to get live chat assistance, track the status of your passport or application, or Skype with a representative during business hours.

To contact the
Consular section
during business hours

Call:
(995 32) 227-77-24

Email:
AskConsulTbilisi@state.gov

For after-hours
Emergencies call
(995 32) 227-70-00

Reminder: Appointments Required for Routine ACS Services

All of our American Citizen Services are available by appointment only. Visitors may receive multiple services during the same visit — please make a separate appointment for each service (e.g., to apply for passports and obtain a notary service, make two appointments). Arrive a few minutes before your appointment to allow time to go through security.

ACS appointments must be made using our website:
<http://georgia.usembassy.gov/service.html>

In case you need an emergency appointment please contact us via phone or email and we will try to accommodate your request at the earliest convenience.

The following services do not need an appointment and you may stop by the Consular any business day from 2 pm to 4 pm:

- * Report an emergency or urgent matter (e.g., death, hospitalization, or arrest of a U.S. citizen)
- * Report a lost or stolen passport
- * Pick up passports, Consular Reports of Birth Abroad (CRBA)
- * Pick up Social Security or tax refund checks



Leaving Georgia?

If you are departing Georgia and have been enrolled in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program ([STEP](#)), please do not forget to end your enrollment when you leave.

If you previously enrolled online, you can end your enrollment by visiting <https://step.state.gov/step/>. If you previously submitted a paper registration form at the U.S. Embassy Consular section in Tbilisi, you may unregister yourself by sending an email request to close your enrollment with the Embassy to:

askconsultbilisi@state.gov



Can the U.S. Embassy help me with my U.S. taxes?

No. Regrettably, we cannot help you with your taxes. **There is no IRS office or IRS representative at the U.S. Embassy in Tbilisi.**

Our consular staff does not have the ability to provide answers to specific questions about income taxes.

For immediate assistance from a taxpayer specialist, you can call, fax or email the **International Customer Service Site** located in Philadelphia. The Service Site is open Monday through Friday, for 17 hours each day, from 6:00 AM to 11 PM, Eastern Time. Their contact information is as follows:

Telephone: (267) 941-1000

Fax: (267) 941-1055

U.S. citizens must report their worldwide income on their federal income tax returns. Living or earning income outside the United States does not relieve a U.S. citizen of the responsibility for filing tax returns. However, U.S. citizens living and/or working abroad may be entitled to various deductions, exclusions,

and credits. ACS provides a limited supply of federal tax forms. For basic tax information for U.S. citizens overseas, please visit the [U.S. Citizens and Resident Aliens Abroad](#) page of the Internal Revenue Service. For more information on general U.S. tax issues, please consult the [IRS web site](#).

U.S. State Tax Information

The U.S. Citizen Services does not have State tax forms. For your convenience, we list the states' tax web sites below.

[Alabama](#) | [Alaska](#) | [Arizona](#) | [Arkansas](#) | [California](#) | [Colorado](#) | [Connecticut](#) | [Delaware](#) | [District of Columbia](#) | [Florida](#) | [Georgia](#) | [Hawaii](#) | [Idaho](#) | [Illinois](#) | [Indiana](#) | [Iowa](#) | [Kansas](#) | [Kentucky](#) | [Louisiana](#) | [Maine](#) | [Maryland](#) | [Massachusetts](#) | [Michigan](#) | [Minnesota](#) | [Mississippi](#) | [Missouri](#) | [Montana](#) | [Nebraska](#) | [Nevada](#) | [New Hampshire](#) | [New Jersey](#) | [New Mexico](#) | [New York](#) | [North Carolina](#) | [North Dakota](#) | [Ohio](#) | [Oklahoma](#) | [Oregon](#) | [Pennsylvania](#) | [Puerto Rico](#) | [Rhode Island](#) | [South Carolina](#) | [South Dakota](#) | [Tennessee](#) | [Texas](#) | [Utah](#) | [Vermont](#) | [Virginia](#) | [Washington](#) | [West Virginia](#) | [Wisconsin](#) | [Wyoming](#)

On May 23, 2013, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) issued a news release to remind U.S. citizens and resident aliens, including those with dual citizenship who have lived or worked abroad during all or part of 2012, that they may have a U.S. tax liability and a filing requirement in 2013. For such taxpayers who reside overseas, their form 1040 Individual Tax Return is due by June 17. Depending on the tax-payer's personal situation, Form 8938, Statement of Foreign Financial Assets, may also be due (attached to their form 1040). Depending on the balance maintained in a foreign bank account, a tax-payer may also need to file a form TD F 90-22.1, Report of Foreign Bank and Financial Accounts (FBAR) by June 30, 2013.

These reminders are addressed in the IRS News Release found at <http://www.irs.gov/uac/Newsroom/IRS-Reminds-Those-with-Foreign-Assets-of-U.S.-Tax-Obligations>. More details may be found at www.irs.gov.



LOCAL UNITED STATES CITIZEN SKILLS/RESOURCES SURVEY



U.S. citizens abroad may possess critical skills and resources invaluable for helping other U.S. citizens in a time of crisis. The Consular Section in Tbilisi would appreciate your assistance in identifying these skills and resources.

If you are interested in contributing information to the Consular “Skills Bank” please complete this survey and email a copy to askconsultbilisi@state.gov

We will keep your responses confidential.

<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/128210.pdf>

Make Sure Your Vote Counts

U.S. 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. To start, go to 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. Find more information:

http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/living/overseas_voting/overseas_voting_4754.html



U.S. citizen overseas voters can register to vote and request absentee ballots using the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) available at the Federal Voting Assistance Program’s website: www.FVAP.gov. This online resource provides important information on absentee voting to help uniformed service members, their families, and other citizens living outside of the United States.

Follow Us on Social Media OR Get More Travel Information by Selecting the Icons Below:



- <http://twitter.com/TravelGov>
- <https://www.facebook.com/travelgov>
- <http://www.flickr.com/photos/statephotos>
- <http://blogs.state.gov/>
- http://www.travel.state.gov/news/news_3162.html
- <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/rls/dos/165020.htm>
- <http://pinterest.com/consularcorner/>
- <https://step.state.gov/step/>
- https://www.facebook.com/tbilisi.usembassy/app_256579511063777

Facebook Q&A Sessions



On the first Friday of each month at 10:00 EDT, an expert from the Visa Office, in collaboration with the New Media Unit in CA/P, answers questions via the Consular Affairs Facebook Page www.Facebook.com/TravelGov.

FOCUS ON STAYING CONNECTED:

Sample Pinterest Hot Topics!



Children can enjoy CPSC's educational videos and interactive activities while learning about pool safety and family fun in the water.

From www.poolsafety.gov

The Library of Congress presents



Discover the stories of America's past, like Buffalo Bill and Harriet Tubman; find out about interesting inventions and get fascinating historical facts.

From <http://www.americaslibrary.gov/>



The Federal government's official job list. Shown are employment search, information center, veteran information and forms.

From www.usajobs.gov



The official benefits website of the U.S. government. Informs citizens of benefits they may be eligible for. Provides information on how to apply for assistance.

From www.benefits.gov

**Emergency-response center
112**

(Includes Patrol Police, Medical-Emergency Center, Fire and Rescue Services)

Information Centre

Tel: 118 09

Airport Hotline

Tel: +995 32 2310421;
+995 32 2310341

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LIST OF DOCTORS

LIST OF ATTORNEYS

No Doctors or Attorneys are affiliated with the U.S. Embassy and the lists are provided for informational purposes only.

CIVIL REGISTRY AGENCY

Issues residency permits, Georgian passports, civil documents, and Apostille on Georgian documents.

DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM

Information on Tourism activities, entertainment, cultural events.

E-map of Georgia



Important Security Announcement

When visiting the Embassy, please remember not to bring mobile phones or any electronic devices (such as Blackberries, iPods, or PDAs), food/drinks, medicine or cosmetic products, as they are not allowed within the Embassy. We also strongly advise that you do not bring large bags, such as backpacks, suitcases or packages to the interview as there are no storage facilities on Embassy grounds.

WE WELCOME YOUR IDEAS...

The U.S. Citizen Services Unit is constantly thinking of new ways to improve our service and efficiency.

If you have an idea or a suggestion about how we can make your visit easier or about items or subjects you'd like to see covered in this newsletter or future public broadcasts please let us know by email:

askconsultbilisi@state.gov

To remove your name from our mailing list, please [click here](#)