

# AMERICAN CITIZEN SERVICES U.S. EMBASSY NEW DELHI NEWSLETTER

Fall – Oct. thru Dec. 2015

## American Citizen Services (ACS)

Shantipath  
Chanakyapuri  
New Delhi 110 021  
Hours: 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.  
Tel: 2419-8000  
Emergencies after hours and on  
weekends: 2419-8000  
Fax: 2419-8407  
Email: [acsnd@state.gov](mailto:acsnd@state.gov)

### Useful Links

[U.S. Embassy Website](#)

[Registration and Travel  
Information](#)

[Applying for a Passport or Adding  
Extra Pages](#)

[Consular Reports of Birth Abroad](#)

[Obtaining an Immigrant Visa for a  
Relative or Spouse](#)

[Non-Immigrant Visas](#)

[Green Cards, Employment  
Authorization, and Immigration  
Services and Benefits:](#)

[Medical and Legal Assistance](#)

[Emergency Services for U.S.  
Citizens](#)

[Selective Service System](#)

[Social Security Administration](#)

[Internal Revenue Service](#)

## MEET THE NEW MCCA



We are delighted to introduce our new Minister Counselor for Consular Affairs in India, Joe Pomper. Prior to his arrival in New Delhi in October, he was the Principal Officer at the U. S. Consulate General in Monterrey, Mexico. During his 30-plus years in the Foreign Service, Joe also served overseas in Brussels (United States Mission to the European Union), Mexico City, Mumbai, Brussels (United States Embassy to Belgium), Kingston, London, Tel Aviv, and Hong Kong. In Washington, DC, Joe worked in the International Organizations Bureau and the Western Hemisphere Bureau. He was also Pearson Fellow at the United States

Senate, working on the staff of the Senate Subcommittee on Immigration.

Before joining the State Department, Joe worked at the Department of Commerce. He holds an MA from Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, a JD from Tulane Law School, and an AB from Brandeis University. Joe speaks Spanish, French, and Hebrew, and is a native of Connecticut. Joe is thrilled to be back in India and is looking forward to his assignment as the Minister-Counselor for Consular Affairs.

Joe is a firm believer that the most important aspect of consular work is the safety and protection of U.S. citizens overseas. He looks forward to getting to know the American community in the New Delhi consular district.

### Law Does Not Provide for a Social Security Cost-of-Living Adjustment for 2016

[Print Version](#)

With consumer prices down over the past year, monthly Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits for nearly 65 million Americans will not automatically increase in 2016. The Social Security Act provides for an automatic increase in Social Security and SSI benefits if there is an increase in inflation as measured by the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W). The period of consideration includes the third quarter of the last year a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) was made to the third quarter of the current year. As determined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, there was no increase in the CPI-W from the third quarter of 2014 to the third quarter of 2015. Therefore, **under existing law, there can be no COLA in 2016.** Other adjustments that would normally take effect based on changes in the national average wage index also will not take effect in January 2016. The attached [fact sheet](#) provides more information on 2016 Social Security and SSI changes. Information about Medicare changes for 2016, when available, will be found at [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov). For additional information, please go to [www.socialsecurity.gov/cola](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/cola).

## U.S. Citizen Services New Delhi

The American Citizens Services Unit at the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi is open for routine consular services from **9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday** excluding holidays. Make your appointment online on [here](#). To visit the American Citizen Services Unit, please come to Gate 6 of the Embassy (generally known as the “Visa Gate”) located on Andre Malraux Marg between Nyaya Marg and Shantipath in the Chanakyapuri neighborhood of New Delhi. Appointments are required to add additional pages for passports, renewal of passports, registration of birth abroad, notary public. For general walk in questions you can stop by without an appointment on Thursdays from 3-3:30pm. Emergencies after hours and on weekends call: 2419-8000

### Upcoming U.S. Embassy Holidays

November 11	Veteran’s Day
November 13	Bhai Duj
November 25	Guru Nanak’s Birthday
November 26	Thanksgiving Day
December 25	Christmas Day
January 1, 2016	New Year’s Day
January 18, 2016	Birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr.
January 26, 2016	Republic Day

### *From the desk of ACS Chief ...*

September 23<sup>rd</sup> marks the end of the summer season and welcomes the beginning of autumn. It is also the time of the year when the U.S. government funding is released for the next fiscal year 2016-2017. This funding, as you may already know, is critical to allow us to do the important work we do for the U.S. citizens residing in our consular district.

ACS-New Delhi had quite an achievement in this last fiscal year– outreach events to various parts in Northern India and Bhutan, covering topics from passport renewal, voter’s registration to tax information, conducting welfare and prison visits and meeting local officials and law enforcement – for the most part, to thank them for their past and continued support in helping us to facilitate emergency assistance to Americans who are stranded in the area and are in need of Consular services.

In the spring of this year, ACS New Delhi flew to Nepal to provide much needed assistance to 2,300 U.S. citizens who were affected by the Nepal earthquake. Our work is unique indeed – and we will continue to work hard to give efficient and excellent service to our clients, enhance and strengthen our staff’s skills and talents, and to work closely with our volunteer wardens in our commitment to build a stronger and helpful Consular community. It was wonderful to meet the new volunteer wardens during our September 28<sup>th</sup> conference. I’d like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank them again for sharing their experiences with us - you all play a vital role in the protection of U.S. citizens overseas. In the words of our new Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs, **“when we serve others, we are never alone.”**

In today’s highly digitized world, I encourage you all to connect with us. However you’ll find us – <http://newdelhi.usembassy.gov>; Facebook:[www.facebook.com/AmericanCitizenServicesIndia](http://www.facebook.com/AmericanCitizenServicesIndia); [acsnd@state.gov](mailto:acsnd@state.gov) we value the added sense of connection you provide.

Sincerely,

*Greg Floyd*



### Elimination of Visa Page Inserts

**Effective Jan. 1, 2016**, the Department of State **will no longer provide** supplemental 24-page Visa Page Inserts (VPIs, or extra pages) for passports. To reduce the impact of this coming change, new passport applicants now receive 52-page passports. If you are planning to travel in the near future, you need plenty of time to get ready for that perfect vacation or business trip. We encourage everyone to check the expiration date of your passport (some countries require a minimum of 6 months remaining validity) and assess if you have enough visa pages to accommodate the visas you’ll need and entry and exit immigration stamps. **Did you know that the first U.S. passport** was issued in 1796? Today, more than 119 million U.S. citizens, approaching 40 percent of the U.S. citizen population, have a valid passport—the premier document for proof of U.S. citizenship and identity. The Passport Services Directorate adjudicates U.S. citizenship and nationality, determines entitlement, and issues U.S. passport documents to eligible U.S. citizens and nationals. These efforts, by extension, help facilitate legitimate travel, trade, and tourism.

**Thank you for properly securing your passport and for staying on top of your travel plans.**

## Absentee Voting Information for U.S. Citizens Abroad

FVAP's call center is available at 1-800-438-VOTE (8683), DSN 425-1584 or at [vote@fvap.gov](mailto:vote@fvap.gov). Toll-free phone numbers from 67 countries are listed at [FVAP.gov](http://FVAP.gov).



The official US Government website for overseas absentee voting assistance is the Federal Voting Assistance Program website at [www.fvap.gov](http://www.fvap.gov). It has a wealth of information about [absentee voting](#), including the [downloadable absentee ballot application](#), [state-specific instructions](#) for completing the form, links to state and local officials, and a downloadable emergency ballot.

Please also see the [State Department website on overseas voting here](#).

Questions? Send e-mail to [VoteNewDelhi@state.gov](mailto:VoteNewDelhi@state.gov)

### FVAP Publishes 2016 Absentee Voting Deadlines for Military and Overseas Voters

October 8 - ALEXANDRIA, Va. - FVAP is pleased to announce the release of the 2016-2017 Voting Assistance Guide (VAG) with updated content for the 2016 Presidential Election cycle. The VAG is used by over 5 million military and overseas citizen voters who are qualified to vote absentee under provisions of the *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA)*. The information contained in the VAG is also used by the extensive network of Voting Assistance Officers (VAOs) throughout the military and the State Department. The VAG, published every two years and continually updated online at [FVAP.gov](http://FVAP.gov), is a catalog of the State-specific processes and regulations that military and overseas voters need to follow to register to vote and cast a ballot. It is the primary source of absentee voting procedures for citizens covered by the *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA)*.

To publish the VAG for the 2016 presidential election, FVAP coordinated with each State and Territory to verify the accuracy of the information and embrace plain language principles to help potential voters navigate the complex web of State absentee voting laws.

The updated information can be found by selecting a State from the drop-down under "Voters Start Here" or at <http://www.fvap.gov/vao/vag>.

[PDF Version](#)

## Just in case you missed it...

**The** government of India is extending e-tourist visa to 36 more countries and this facility will now be available at seven more airports from August 15, 2015 .... Read more... <http://library.pressdisplay.com/pressdisplay/viewer.aspx?newspaper=international+herald+tribunecid=1003>

**"Significantly damaged"** passports are completely ineligible for travel according to State Department guidelines. Normal wear and tear, frayed edges, leaf – through pages are acceptable – but if your passport meets the department's criteria of "damaged passport" (the term includes water damage, i.e. passport was accidentally thrown into the washing machine, missing visa pages, substantial tears, rips or markings – dog accidentally chewed off the photo on the bio page) airport staff may not be able to determine your identity and may decline to check you in. Remember to check the condition of your passport weeks ahead of your travel dates. *Better safe than sorry.....*

**Find** the best-priced hotel without the hunt? Think again. Tuk-tuk ("tricycles/rickshaws") drivers especially parked right outside the Metro/train stations may offer to take you to the best priced hotel in the area ----- please politely refuse them. We have had a few incidents recently where an unsuspecting U.S. citizen tourist fell into this "scam" and ended up having minor bruises for refusing to pony-up the "commission fee." Carry a city map so you know where you are going and opt for an airport/train pick-up service offered by the hotel if you've made an advanced booking. Read more...<http://mha1.nic.in/foreignDiv/TourVisa.html>

**Did** you know that satellite phones and carrying bullets in your luggage are illegal in India? Kindly remind your friends and relatives to leave these items at home when they come for a visit. The fine and the penalties for these offenses are steep – and no one really wants to spend time in jail in India.

**The** "Official Government Tourist Office "Scam – you see this sign in almost every travel agent's office. The so-called "travel arranger/guides" try their best to make you believe that all train reservations are full or your hotel does not exist or has just recently closed and will charge you an arm and a leg for getting new booking. Best advice is to avoid them and offer to book tickets for your guests.

