

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

Winter – Jan.-March 2016

## American Citizen Services (ACS)

Shantipath  
Chanakyapuri  
New Delhi 110 021  
Hours: 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.  
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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](#)

[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 one of our Wardens

**Name:** Sharat Nath Bhandari; **Warden's Zone:** Jodhpur, Rajasthan



Sharat was born and raised in San Francisco, and spent foggy summers in California, sub-zero winters in Belgium, and monsoon rains in India and he says it has been an incredible ride so far. Without a doubt, there's a culture shock in all three continents but that also has its own reward(s). Sharat feels at home wherever he goes. Jodhpur is currently his home – busy developing a Web 2.0 news portal for the new generation of readers who are becoming more tech savvy by the day. Even the biggest media houses have not tapped the potential of social media in India, while the people are scores ahead and hungry for more. Former Law Minister Mr. V. Moily, Former CM of Rajasthan Mr. A. Gehlot, HH Maharaja Gaj Singh were among others who commended this initiative, and if it hadn't been for Sharat's father, Dr. Bhupendra Bhandari, one of our dedicated ACS wardens and a media old-timer, Sharat would probably still be surfing the beaches in California. Recruited to be a warden a few years ago, Sharat recalls one incident where an American family of four was to visit Jodhpur, and was wondering about health and safety in the city. Sharat gave them the dos and don'ts, and a few helpful tips about the city. Sharat wasn't at all surprised when at the end of their first day in the city; they extended their three-day stay to seven. Sharat was so delighted that he invited the American family over to his house for dinner. For Sharat, it has been a gratifying experience to be part of the ACS Warden system.

## CONSULAR RECORD OF BIRTH ABROAD (CRBA)

Did you know that ACS is now accepting appointments on Wednesday mornings from 08:45 to 12:00 pm for reporting the birth of your child who may have a claim to U.S. citizenship at birth? Application for a Consular Report of Birth Abroad (CRBA) must be made in person. The child must accompany the parent to the Embassy. To make an appointment, please visit:

<https://evisaforms.state.gov/acs/default.asp?postcode=NWD&appcode=1>





# Absentee Voting Myths & Realities

FACT SHEET

**Wherever Americans go, FVAP ensures their voice is heard.**

The Federal Voting Assistance Program — FVAP for short — works to ensure Service members, their eligible family members and overseas citizens are aware of their right to vote and have the tools and resources to successfully do so — from anywhere in the world.

## ★ Myth

I have heard that absentee ballots only count in close elections.

## ★ Reality

No — in fact, absentee ballots submitted in accordance with State laws are counted for every election. The difference is that in a close election, the media reports that the outcome cannot be announced until after the absentee ballots are counted. However, all ballots are counted in the final totals for every election — and every vote (absentee or in-person) counts the same.

## ▶▶▶ The rights of absentee voters are protected by law

The *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act* — UOCAVA for short — protects the rights of Service members and their eligible family members to vote in Federal elections regardless of where they are stationed. It also protects the Federal voting rights of U.S. citizens residing outside the United States. FVAP works to administer the Department of Defense's responsibility for UOCAVA.



## ★ Myth

I can vote in person at a local embassy/consulate or on a military installation.

## ★ Reality

No — actually, U.S. elections are run at the State level and citizens must communicate directly with their election official to register, request a ballot and vote. Voting Assistance is available at most embassies and consulates and in all military units to help in the completion of necessary forms. Be sure to account for submission and mail delivery time to ensure your forms are received by the State deadline.



## ★ Myth

States all have the same election rules and deadlines for military and overseas voters.

## ★ Reality

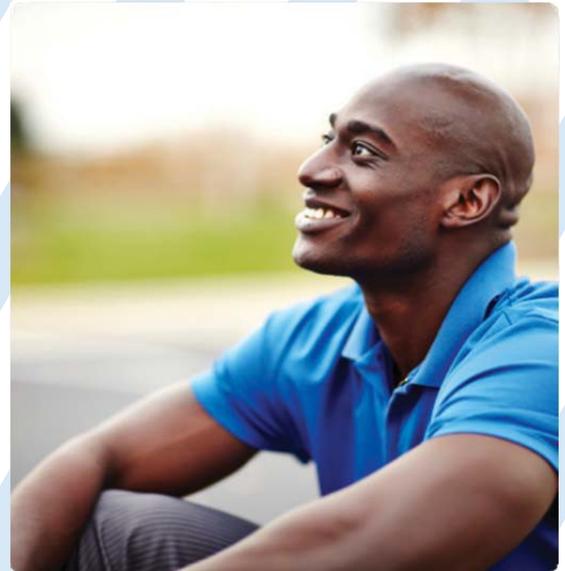
False. States have different rules in regard to how and when the forms are returned. Visit [FVAP.gov](http://FVAP.gov) for your State-specific guidelines.

## ★ Myth

Military spouses and dependents cannot use military absentee voting forms.

## ★ Reality

No — in fact, military family members who will be 18 years old by election day should use the same Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) and Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB) that members of the Uniformed Services and overseas citizens do, even when voting absentee Stateside. Dependents attending college overseas should also use those forms.



## ★ Myth

I am a U.S. citizen who was born overseas and has never lived in the U.S. — I pay taxes but cannot exercise my right to vote.

## ★ Reality

It depends. A growing number of States now allow U.S. citizens who were born abroad but never resided in the U.S. to vote using the address where a parent or other relative is eligible to vote. Visit [FVAP.gov](http://FVAP.gov) to see a current list of States that allow these U.S. citizens to vote.

## ★ Myth

Voting will affect the tax status of overseas citizens.

## ★ Reality

It depends. Voting for Federal office candidates will not affect your Federal or State tax liability. Depending on the laws of your State, voting for State or local offices may affect your State income tax liability. If you are concerned about your State tax status, consult legal counsel.

## ★ Myth

Absentee ballots are not secret.

## ★ Reality

Not true. State absentee ballots and the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot are designed with a “Secrecy Envelope” allowing for the separation of the voter’s identity from the cast ballot. Voting Assistance Officers also ensure voters casting absentee ballots on Department of Defense (DoD) facilities are able to do so in a private and independent manner. Local election officials are professionals who go to great lengths in their ballot handling procedures to ensure your vote, and personal information, are kept private.

## ★ Myth

I can’t vote if I’m deployed.

## ★ Reality

False — you absolutely can vote while deployed. If you’re registered to vote while deployed and you don’t get your State ballot in time to vote from your location, you can use the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB) found at [FVAP.gov](http://FVAP.gov). Remember to submit the form at least 30 days before the scheduled election.

### CONTACT FVAP

Monday–Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. ET Phone: 1-800-438-VOTE (8683) | DSN: 425-1584 | Email: [vote@fvap.gov](mailto:vote@fvap.gov)

Go to [FVAP.gov](http://FVAP.gov) and click on “contact” to find where to send your election materials. Media inquiries: [media@fvap.gov](mailto:media@fvap.gov)

[Facebook.com/DoDFVAP](https://www.facebook.com/DoDFVAP) and [@FVAP](https://twitter.com/FVAP)

## 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 **8:45 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday** excluding holidays. **Wednesday mornings** from **08:45 to 12:00 p.m.** are now **open** for Citizen Report of Birth Abroad cases (**CRBA**). Make your appointment online [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 for new passports applications, renewal of passports, registration of birth abroad, and notarial services. For general walk in questions you can stop by without an appointment on Thursdays from 3-3:30pm. For **Emergencies** after hours and on weekends call: 011-2419-8000

### Upcoming U.S. Embassy Holidays

January 26	Republic Day
February 15	Washington's Birthday
March 24	Holi
March 25	Good Friday
April 15	Ram Navami

*From the desk of ACS Chief...*



Happy New Year to all!

This New Year gives us a great opportunity to review our hopes for 2016, and to remember to do those things we've been meaning to. Here is my list:

- I hope for a peaceful year where U.S. citizens in India are safe in their travels.
- I hope for a great election in the U.S. and that U.S. citizens in India are able to get their votes counted! Be sure to register and check out [FVAP.gov](http://FVAP.gov) for details.
- I hope that we can all take advantage of India's amazing history to learn and grow.
- I hope to see U.S. citizen newborns on our new Wednesday appointment days for Consular Records of Birth. We love our newest (and cutest) citizens!
- I hope that you will not forget to file your taxes -- remember that tax filing season begins on January 19<sup>th</sup>. Use care when choosing a tax preparer, and make sure to keep your tax records secure (Check out IRS' Tax Record Theft Tip #8 at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov)).

One big change this year is the end of our extra visa pages program. If you run out of space in your current passports, you will need to apply for a new passport. This is actually good news -- new passports are more cost-effective per page than the old visa page inserts. And this will allow you to update that terrible old photo, too!

Wherever you are in India in 2016, know that we are here for you 24/7 and we will continue to provide service to our U.S. citizens with a sense of purpose and attention to your safety and well-being. Please be sure to keep in touch with us at <http://newdelhi.usembassy.gov>; [acsnd@state.gov](mailto:acsnd@state.gov) and [www.facebook.com/AmericanCitizenServicesIndia](http://www.facebook.com/AmericanCitizenServicesIndia). We value our connection with you and welcome your feedback. In the words of our Asst. Secretary for Consular Affairs, "when we serve others, we are never alone."

Sincerely, *Greg Floyd*



### Most Americans won't Use their Passport next year according to Lonely Planet Guide

Two-thirds of [Americans](#) won't be using their passports in 2016 and those who do will mostly travel to neighboring countries like Mexico, the Caribbean and Canada, according to a recent study.

The [results of the study](#) -- commissioned by Travelex, a foreign currency exchange company, in conjunction with YouGov, a market research company -- states that 66 per cent of Americans surveyed don't plan to travel abroad in 2016. The top five international destinations for Americans are Mexico, the Caribbean, Canada, the UK and Italy.

But when travelling outside of those regular destinations, the study notes that people in the South are most likely to go to Brazil; Westerners are most likely to go to France, the UK or Australia; Mid-westerners stick to Canada, Mexico and the Caribbean; and North Easterners are most likely to head to Japan.

While cost can be a big reason for inhibiting travel, 39% of Americans said that they would sacrifice eating out in the States in order to save up for a trip abroad. Cutting costs on food makes sense as 40% say they spend the majority of their travel money abroad on food. As travelers have different aims in heading abroad, it is the over 55 age group that says they are seeking culture as a main objective, followed by relaxation. For 18 to 34 year olds and 35 to 54 year olds, the top reason is relaxation, followed by culture.

## Quick Summary on 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](#);

For **FAQs read more .....**

<https://www.fvap.gov/vao/vag/appendix/faq>

**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.

Voters Start Here" or at <http://www.fvap.gov/vao/vag>.

## Just in case you missed it...

### For Students traveling Abroad during Spring Break

#### 9-1-1 Emergency Contact Numbers Abroad

It's bad enough to have an emergency when you're at home. Remember how much you dread calling your parents to help with a flat tire or because you were in an accident? But, imagine how awful it would be in a foreign country with no idea of how to get help. Planning for the unexpected is as important as booking the flight. This section provides information on steps to take before your trip and what to do in case of emergency. "Be Prepared" isn't just a Boy Scout motto.

U.S. consular officers are located at over 260 Foreign Service posts abroad. There are also consular officers in 46 foreign cities without U.S. embassies or consulates. They're ready to provide assistance if you need it.

Earthquakes, hurricanes, political upheavals, and acts of terrorism are only some of the events threatening the safety of Americans abroad. Each event is unique and poses its own special difficulties. When a crisis occurs, the State Department sets up a task force with all the necessary personnel to work on the situation. Usually this Washington task force is in touch 24-hours a day with our Ambassador and Foreign Service Officers at the embassy in the country affected.

The State Department works hard to provide information in times of crisis and to protect the lives of Americans abroad. You can make it easier for the State Department to locate you by registering your trip.

Be informed and **stay safe.**

### Before you Travel

#### Enroll Your Trip

