



HOW TO HELP A FRIEND OR RELATIVE WHO IS IMPRISONED IN JAMAICA

Contact information at the U.S. Embassy in Kingston is: American Citizen Services 1-876-702-6470
KingstonACS@state.gov.

I. GETTING FOOD TO A RELATIVE

Jails, as opposed to the prisons, generally only provide two meals a day. The meals in both types of facilities are meager. It is best to arrange for food to be delivered from a restaurant and/or by a family member or friend. Check with the facility to find out which days of the week food can be delivered. All items are thoroughly searched. Vitamins and supplements, including protein bars are a good item to have delivered to your family member.

II. SENDING MONEY / PACKAGES TO A RELATIVE

Prisoners often request spending money to purchase additional groceries and toiletries, since prison provisions are quite basic. Although you can handle transfer of money through family or friends in Jamaica, we can also help by setting up an OCS Trust (explained below).

If you send spending money, please include in your instructions that “partial disbursements may be made as requested by the prisoner (include the prisoner’s name).” This will allow the prisoner to determine exactly how much money he/she would like in his/her possession.

The Overseas Citizen’s Trust is a special account put in place to assist people in the United States to send money to friends or relatives abroad who are imprisoned or destitute. There is an initial \$30.00 fee to set up an OCS trust for a specific individual. Please note that there are three ways to contribute money to the OCS Trust: A. Overnight or Regular Mail; B. Western Union; C. Bank wire: These are explained below. If you have additional questions regarding the OCS Trust, call 202-647-5225 (Hours are M - F 8:00 AM to 10:00 PM and Sat 9:00AM to 3:00PM).

Upon receipt of the funds at the Department of State by the methods described below, a telegram is sent to the Embassy in Kingston to authorize disbursement on the next workday. Please be aware that the funds may not be given to the prisoner until the next scheduled prison visit. The forwarding of funds will be delayed if you fail to provide the overseas location (Kingston, Jamaica). Funds are normally disbursed in local currency – Jamaican dollars – not in U.S. dollars.

A. OCS Trust Accounts

1. Overnight or Regular Mail

Overnight or courier mail may take 3-4 days to reach the embassy. Regular mail may take 3-4 weeks due to security procedures. We do not recommend this method for urgent situations or emergencies. Obtain a cashier’s check or money order for the amount you wish to send plus the \$30 processing fee, made payable to the **Department of State**. Note that **The Department of State does not accept personal checks**. A letter with your name, address, and telephone number, as well as the name and location of the overseas recipient

must accompany the money order. Include the name and location of the U.S. citizen you are sending money to. Include your name, address and telephone number. Mail to:

Overseas Citizen Services, Department of State
SA-29, 4th Floor
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

2. Western Union

This is usually the fastest way to send money. Be aware that some states place restrictions on the use of QuickCollect by phone or the Internet. Western Union can inform you of the states with these restrictions. We will deduct our \$30 processing fee during the transfer. The final amount received overseas will be \$30 less than what you send so you should include it in the total. Western Union charges additional fees for its services.

If you have a MasterCard or Visa credit card, you can call Western Union's QuickCollect service at 1-800-634-3422. Western Union has a limit per credit card within a 7 day period. A second credit card may be required to send an additional amount during the same 7-day period.

- The "code city" is "OVERSEASEMERGENCY, DC."
- The "pay to" name is "Department of State."
- Use your telephone number as the account number.
- Ask the operator to add the name and location of the U.S. citizen you are sending money to in the "reference" field.

If you have a MasterCard or Visa credit card, you can also visit Western Union's website:

- Click on "Make Payment."
- Choose a payment type.
- Choose "Other Billers."
- Select code city "OVERSEAS CITIZEN SERVICES."
- Follow the instructions to register.

If you want to pay in cash, you can visit any Western Union location in person:

- Call 1-800-325-6000 to find the closest location.
- Complete a payment form.
- Include the name and location of the U.S. citizen you are sending money to on the form.

3. Bank wire

It may take 2-3 days to process a bank-wire transaction and requires State Department fees and bank fees to be paid for processing. Please contact the U.S. Embassy ACS section 1-876-702-6470 for further instructions on this method.

B. Stella Maris Catholic Church - Prisoner Outreach

Stella Maris Catholic Church has a prisoner outreach program at many of the prisons. If you are interested in learning of the help this entity may be able to provide, please contact them directly:

Stella Maris Catholic Church
62 Shortwood Road
Kingston 8, Jamaica
(876) 925-7131
stellamaris@cwjamaica.com

Warning: Relatives of U.S. citizens who are prisoners in Jamaica have received telephone calls from people alleging that they are Jamaican police officers or other public officials. The callers state that the prisoner has had trouble and needs financial help. The caller states that money should be sent to the caller who will assist the prisoner. Money is sent, but fails to reach U.S. citizens in need. If you receive such a call, get as much details from the caller as possible, then contact the American Citizen Services Unit of the Embassy's Consular Section at once.

II. VISITING AND PHONE CALLS

Jails: Visiting Hours in the Jails (as opposed to the Prisons) are very limited and vary. You should call the Jail to get the information on dates and times for food delivery and visits. Phone calls are generally not allowed

Prisons: Visitors to St. Catherine, Tower Street, Fort Augusta and Tamarind Farm prisons must print out the following form from the website for the Department of Correctional Services, then fill it out and take it and Photo ID and the requested items to the prison on the first visit or submit it to the Department of Correctional Services: http://www.dcsj.net/dcsj/form_visitors_relatives_etc.pdf

Visiting hours and policies vary by facility and are subject to frequent changes. Visitors should always call the prison in advance to advise of the visit. Visitors should also bring along a passport or other photo identification every time they visit. Visitors are welcome to bring food, toiletries, clothing items and reading materials for the prisoner, but check with the prison on permissible containers. Glass is not allowed and some facilities require you to provide plastic baggies into which shampoo, lotion etc. is poured before it is given to the inmate. Please be aware that prison authorities generally do not allow prisoners to come to the telephone to receive calls.

Visiting Hours at Specific Locations:

(Visitors should call and confirm that there is nothing special occurring that has changed the schedule). If you are arriving from the United States, the Embassy MAY be able to arrange for you to visit your family or friend outside of the normal visitation hours listed below.

St. Catherine, Tower Street and Fort Augusta:

Wed: Food can be taken 9:00-11:00 & 1:00-3:00
Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri: Visiting Hours 9:00-11:00 & 1:00-3:00

Visitation days are also restricted depending upon the first letter of the last name (i.e. on Mondays only persons whose last name begins with an A-L are allowed visitors). The range changes periodically. A call to the prison should be made to ensure the visit occurs on the appropriate day.

Tamarind Farm

Sat 1:00-3:00; Sun 9:00-11:00 and 1:00-3:00. Food can be taken both days.

New Broughton:

Food and Visits can occur any day 8:30 -4:00 and there is no need to fill out the Department of Correctional Services' form.

III. TO PAY A FINE

There are two recommended methods of paying a fine.

- A. The first is for a friend or relative to pay the fine in person in Jamaican cash. Get a receipt.
- B. The second option is to have the U.S. Embassy make the payment on your behalf. You can wire the money through the OCS Trust and the Embassy will use the funds to pay the fine. Since the embassy normally does not hold enough petty cash for these types of transactions, please be sure to pay fines through the OCS Trust at least six weeks PRIOR to the release of your relative. See the section titled SENDING MONEY TO A RELATIVE above for additional details about the OCS Trust.

If you have additional questions about the payment of fines, call the American Citizen Services Section of the United States Embassy.

IV. PURCHASE OF AN AIRLINE TICKET TO BE USED UPON RELEASE

All citizens of the United States who are not also citizens of Jamaica are not allowed to remain in Jamaica and must leave immediately.

Please purchase the ticket at least three weeks prior to the scheduled release date.

- A. Ensure that you know the exact date of release. This should be confirmed with the prison as the embassy's information may not be the most current.
- B. Purchase a pre-paid, unrestricted ticket from American Airlines, Air Jamaica, or any other carrier that services Norman Manley Airport in Kingston, in the prisoner's name. Unrestricted tickets are *strongly* preferred, because there is no guarantee that Immigration will be able to get the released person to airport in time for the flight you pick. It is better to have a ticket that can be cancelled and reused quickly for another flight without a penalty that will need to be paid.
- C. If you are unable to purchase an unrestricted ticket, try to purchase the ticket for an **afternoon** flight on the expected release date. If that is not possible, then purchase the ticket for the morning of the day after the release date. The inmate will be held an additional night at the prison or at an Immigration remand center until he/she is taken to the airport on the following day.
- D. Be sure to e-mail a copy of the itinerary to the U. S. Embassy in Kingston: kingstonacs@state.gov. The Embassy will forward a copy of the itinerary to Jamaican Immigration.