American Citizen Services
U.S. Embassy
Kathmandu, Nepal

ACS Kathmandu, Nepal

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American Citizen Service Hours:
1:30 to 4:00 pm, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. To schedule an appointment:
http://go.usa.gov/Yjc
Website:
http://nepal.usembassy.gov

U.S. Department of State's Consular travel website:
http://travel.state.gov

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Meet

Samantha Jenkins

ACS Chief

Hello, I'm Samantha Jenkins, American Citizen Services Chief. I arrived at U.S. Embassy Kathmandu in September 2013. I have been here three months and have been enjoying myself so far. I currently speak Spanglish and am still training in Nepali.

Prior to joining the Department of State, I taught at Hanyang University in Seoul, South Korea. I spent over 20 years in the U.S. Navy traveling the world and being all I could be. I am a native Washingtonian. I obtained my Masters in Teaching from Whitworth University in Spokane, Washington.

I am looking forward to experiencing Nepal outside of Kathmandu Valley and meeting many of you during the course of my stay.

U.S. Messages to Americans

The Embassy wishes to remind American citizens that demonstrations are unpredictable, and can turn violent with little notice. Avoid large crowds and gatherings. Use good judgment and common sense when traveling, and be prepared for disruptions in transportation services. We recommend that U.S. Citizens monitor media coverage of local events for the latest information.

U.S. messages to Americans can be found at:

http://nepal.usembassy.gov/mfe.html

Welcome to Nepal!

Smart Traveler Enrollment Program

For travel information and to register your trip, go to travel.state.gov. Please enter your email address so the Embassy can send you updated security information.

Have a safe trip!

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Maharajgunj, Kathmandu, Nepal
Post Box No. 295

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(U.S. citizen emergencies only)
U.S. citizen service appointment hours:
Monday to Friday, except holidays, from 1:30pm - 4:00pm

Job Opportunities

With the U.S. Embassy
in Kathmandu, Nepal

http://nepal.usembassy.gov/about_the_embassy/job-opportunities.html

Special Rules Relating to Foreign Bank Accounts Held by U.S. Citizens

As many American citizens know, the U.S. Treasury Department has for many years required disclosure of certain foreign bank accounts held by U.S. citizens. In particular, accountholders must file the Report of Foreign Bank and Financial Accounts on FinCEN Form 114 (formerly Treasury Department form TD F 90-22.1) with respect to any year during which they held an account or accounts outside the United States and the cumulative balance of the accounts exceeded $10,000 at any time during the year. This form must be filed even if the accountholder is not required to file an income tax return. The form and instructions can be found at http://bsaefiling.fincen.treas.gov/main.html. The form must be filed electronically no later than June 30, 2014. Although this requirement does not impose any kind of tax on foreign accounts, penalties could apply for failure to timely file the form.

Recent legislation imposes new requirements on foreign banks that have U.S. account holders as well. The Foreign Accounts Tax Compliance Act, from 1 July 2014, will require foreign governments or financial institutions to report directly to the U.S. Internal Revenue Service account details of U.S. citizens. Failure to comply could result in special withholding rules on certain U.S. payments. Additionally, U.S. citizens with significant assets in foreign financial institutions may be required to file IRS Form 8938 with their income tax return. Form 8938 and instructions are available on the IRS' website at www.irs.gov.

For more information on this legislation, please see http://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/tax-policy/treaties/Pages/FATCA.aspx

New Design for Travel.state.gov

The Bureau of Consular Affairs launched our redesigned website, Travel.State.gov, featuring improved functionality, design and navigation.

The new website includes a number of new features on the visa site, such as a Visa Wizard designed to guide prospective applicants to the appropriate visa category webpage, fee and wait time widgets that display information by type of visa, improved search functionality, as well as a step-by-step immigrant visa processing section. Also included is a transition to a portal website integrating the following websites into the Travel.State.gov structure:

Passports.State.gov ChildAbduction.State.gov Adoption.State.gov

http://USVisas.State.gov

The Affordable Care Act

Many U.S. citizens abroad have contacted U.S. embassies and consulates to find out the implications of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) for U.S. citizens residing abroad. U.S. citizens living abroad are generally subject to the same individual shared responsibility provision as U.S. citizens living in the United States. Starting in 2014, the individual shared responsibility provision calls for each individual to have minimum essential coverage (MEC) for each month, qualify for an exemption, or make a payment when filing his or her federal income tax return. However, U.S. citizens or residents living abroad for at least 330 days within a 12-month period are treated as having MEC during those 12 months, and thus will not owe a shared responsibility payment for any of those 12 months. Also, U.S. citizens who qualify as a bona fide resident of a foreign country for an entire taxable year are treated as having MEC for that year.

What Is the Health Insurance Marketplace? The Health Insurance Marketplace, sometimes known as the Health Insurance Exchange, is a new way to find quality health coverage. It can help if you do not have coverage now, or if you have it but want to look at other options. With one Marketplace application, you can learn if you can get lower costs based on your income, compare your coverage options side-by-side, and enroll. When you use the Health Insurance Marketplace, you will fill out an application and see all the health plans available in your area. You will provide some information about your household size and income to find out if you are eligible for a tax credit to reduce your share of the monthly premiums for private insurance plans. You will also learn if you qualify for lower out-of-pocket costs. Furthermore, the Marketplace will tell you if you qualify for free or low-cost coverage available through Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program.

To be eligible for health coverage through the Marketplace, you must live in the United States; must be a U.S. citizen or national (or be lawfully present); and must not be currently incarcerated. See https://www.healthcare.gov/what-is-the-health-insurance-marketplace/ and https://www.healthcare.gov/get-covered-a-1-page-guide-to-the-health-insurance-marketplace/.

For general questions about the Act, see the dedicated ACA website operated by U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) https://www.healthcare.gov/. The HHS website includes a link to information about whether U.S. citizens residing abroad are subject to ACA at https://www.healthcare.gov/am-i-eligible-for-coverage-in-the-marketplace/. (Note the

Tax Issues related to ACA: For tax issues related to ACA, see the ACA page within the IRS website http://www.irs.gov/uac/Affordable-Care-Act-Tax-Provisions-Home. The IRS site provides further links/webpages, depending on whether you are an individual, employer, or other organization. For more information, see the Question and Answer page for Individuals at http://www.irs.gov/uac/Questions-and-Answers-on-the-Individual-Shared-Responsibility-Provision. Specifically, U.S. citizens living abroad may be interested in the following Q&As adapted from this link:

Are all individuals living in the United States subject to the individual shared responsibility provision?

All U.S. citizens are subject to the individual shared responsibility provision, as are all permanent residents and all foreign nationals who are in the United States long enough during a calendar year to qualify as resident aliens for tax purposes. Foreign nationals who live in the United States for a short enough period that they do not become resident aliens for federal income tax purposes are not subject to the individual shared responsibility payment even though they may have to file a U.S. income tax return. The IRS has more information available on when a foreign national becomes a resident alien for federal income tax purposes. Learn more at http://www.irs.gov/taxtopics/tc851.html.

Are U.S. citizens living abroad subject to the individual shared responsibility provision?

Yes. However, U.S. citizens who are not physically present in the United States for at least 330 full days within a 12-month period are treated as having minimum essential coverage for that 12-month period. In addition, U.S. citizens who are bona fide residents of a foreign country (or countries) for an entire taxable year are treated as having minimum essential coverage for that year. In general, these are individuals who qualify for an exclusion from income under section 911 of the Internal Revenue Code, even if they do not use the exclusion for all of their foreign earned income because, for example, they are employees of the United States. See Publication 54, Tax Guide for U.S. Citizens and Resident Aliens Abroad, for further information on the section 911 exclusion. They need take no further action to comply with the individual shared responsibility provision during those months. U.S. citizens who meet neither the physical presence nor residency requirements will need to maintain MEC, qualify for an exemption, or make a payment when filing their tax return for each month of the year that they do not have MEC. For this purpose, MEC includes a group health plan provided by an overseas employer. One exemption that may be particularly relevant to U.S. citizens living abroad for a small part of a year is the exemption for a short coverage gap. This exemption provides that no payment will be due for a once-per-year gap in coverage that lasts less than three months.

Are residents of the territories subject to the individual shared responsibility provision?

All bona fide residents of the United States territories are treated by law as having MEC. They are not required to take any action to comply with the individual shared responsibility provision.

Emergency Preparedness

We have recently updated the English version of our very useful Emergency Preparedness Manual:

http://photos.state.gov/libraries/nepal/391216/misc_pdf/Emergency%20Preparedness%20Manual%202013-12.pdf

We recommend that you print off a copy of this manual or the next time you are visiting the US Embassy we would be happy to print one off for you.

One major change to the manual comes within the section concerning “Rally Points”:

We have assembled a list of Rally/Contact points around the city. In the event of an emergency you should send a representative from your household or community to communicate with a warden at the nearest Rally/Contact point at 12 o’clock noon. The warden may or may not be at the Rally/Contact point at that time, but hopefully at least there will be posted information concerning the emergency contingency plans.The Rally/Contact point will be where information regarding communicating with friends and family (via the Embassy) as to your welfare as well as relaying general news and possible evacuation procedures. Please familiarize yourself with the nearest Rally/Contact point to your home, school and place of work.

Due to Nepal’s unique geological placement it is not a question of “if” an earthquake hits but “when”. The manual has essential information for preparing yourself, your family and your household for a disaster. If you live in Nepal then you owe it to yourself and your loved ones to become familiar with this manual if not follow through with the manual’s suggestions. If you have any questions concerning the Emergency Preparedness Manual please feel free to contact us at wardenktm@state.gov.

Earthquake Preparedness

How much water do I need to store for myself and my family and how should I store it?

A bare minimum for a family of four for one week (2 quarts to drink per day) is 14 gallons. However, to stay healthy you need 1 gallon per day, adding up to 28 gallons for a week. Then add in water to cook and wash, and to supply pets with water, and you should be storing at least 36 gallons of water.

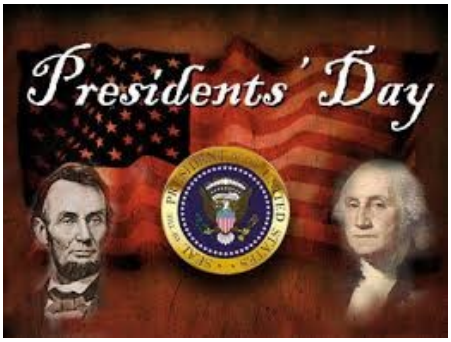
The small plastic bottles used for purchased water are not the ideal storage container because plastic has a tendency to breathe in fumes, and these bottles tend to crack over time. If you must use these bottles, store them in **a black trash bag** to keep light to a minimum – this will extend the life of the bottles and the water.

Source: Adapted from: ***Your Survival: The complete resource for disaster planning and recovery****, Dr. Bob Arnot and Mark Cohen. 2006, Hatherleigh Press: Long Island City, NY.*

Upcoming Holidays

The U.S. Embassy will be closed:

- On February 17, 2014 in observance of President's Day.
- On February 27, 2014 in observance of Maha Shiva Ratri.



George Washington was the first president of the United States of America. His first term as president was from 1789 to 1793 and his second term from 1793 to 1797. Before he became president, he played important roles in the military, leading the American Continental Army to victory over the British in 1783. Washington is often seen as the father of the United States and is probably the best known American politician ever.

The likeness and name of George Washington can still be seen in many places in the United States. There is the portrait of him and three other American presidents carved into Mount Rushmore National Memorial in South Dakota. His image is also used on the one-dollar bill and the quarter-dollar coin. The capital of the United States, Washington D.C., Washington State and at least three universities are named after him.

Washington's Birthday was first celebrated as a holiday in the District of Columbia in 1880. It was made a federal holiday in 1885. The holiday was originally held on the anniversary of George Washington's birth, on February 22. In 1971, this holiday was moved to the third Monday in February.

This holiday is legally designated as "Washington's Birthday." Though other institutions such as state and local governments and private businesses may use other names, it is the federal government's policy to always refer to holidays by the names designated in the law.

Maha Shivratri, which literally translates to "great night of Shiva" is a Hindu festival largely celebrated in India as well as in Nepal. The festival is celebrated on the new moon day in the month of Maagha according to the Hindu calendar. The day is celebrated to venerate Lord Shiva, an important deity in Hindu culture.

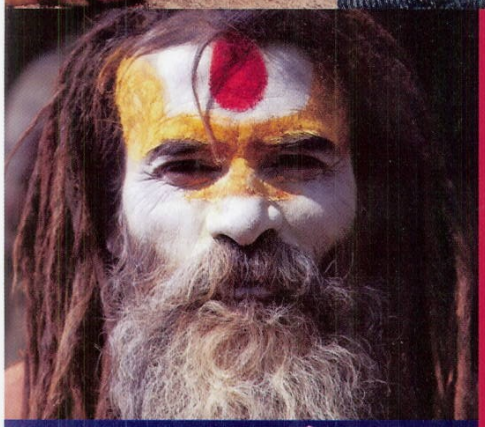
There are many mythological legends associated with this day. According to a popular legend, when a hunter could not find anything to kill for his food in a forest, he waited on the branch of a Woodapple tree. In order to attract deer, he started throwing the leaves of the tree on the ground, unaware that there was a Shiva Lingam beneath the tree. Pleased with the Woodapple leaves and the patience of the hunter, it is believed that Lord Shiva appeared in front of the hunter and blessed him with wisdom. From that day onwards, the hunter stopped eating meat.

Another legend has it that after the Earth was faced with an imminent destruction, Goddess Parvati pledged with Lord Shiva to save the world. Pleased with her prayers, Lord Shiva agreed to save the world on the pretext that the people of the Earth would have to worship him with dedication and passion. From that day onwards, the night came to be known as Maha Shivratri and people began worshipping Shiva with a great enthusiasm.

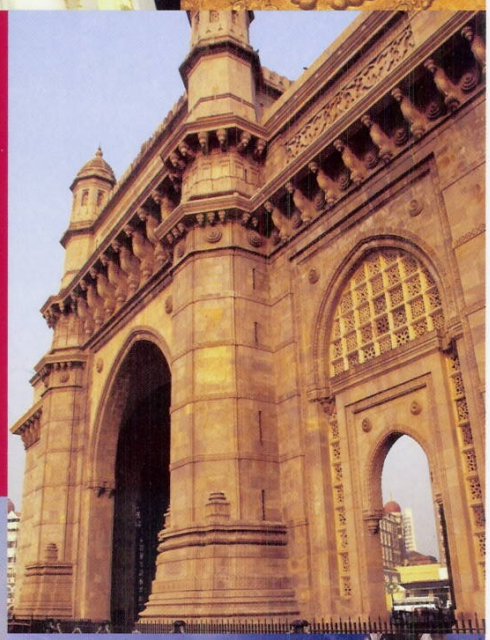
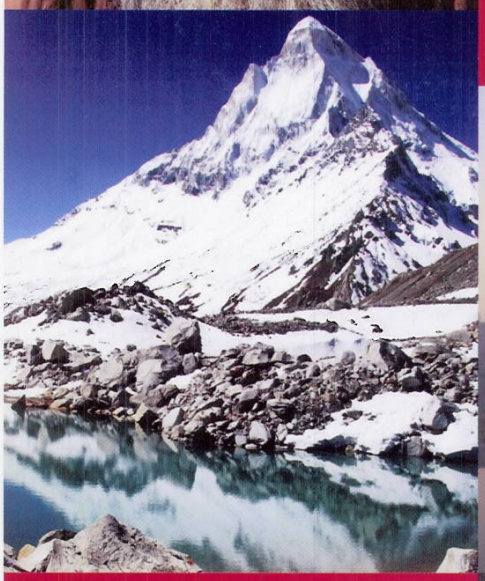
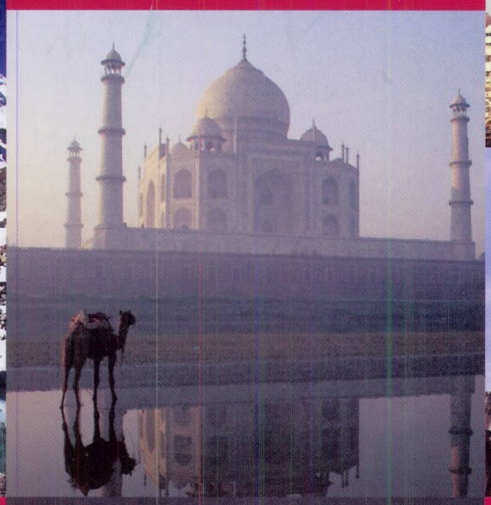
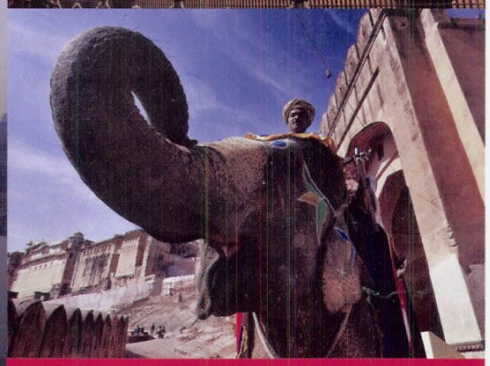
Some folklore also consider this to be Shiva's day as this was believed to be the answer given by Lord Shiva when asked about his favorite day by Goddess Parvati.

People often fast on the night of Shivratri and sing hymns and praises in the name of Lord Shiva. Hindu temples across the country are decorated with lights and colorful decorations and people can be seen offering night long prayers to Shiva Lingam. Woodapple leaves, cold water and milk are offered to the Shiva Lingam on this day as they are believed to be Lord Shiva's favorite.

It is believed that the people who fast on this night and offer prayers to Lord Shiva bring good luck into their life.



Are you an American Citizen visiting South Asia ?

STAY INFORMED. STAY CONNECTED. STAY SAFE.

Tell us where you're going as you travel through this amazing region!

All American citizens are encouraged to sign up for our free Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP). By providing the details of your stay in South Asia, you will automatically receive the most current safety and security information about your trip. In case of a local emergency or should we need to contact you because of an emergency at home, our Embassy and Consular personnel will be better able to locate and assist you.

Smart Traveler Enrollment Program http://www.travel.state.gov/step

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