



AMERICAN EMBASSY QUITO - ECUADOR

First Quarter 2009

American Citizen Newsletter

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Tax Season

Tax time is once again upon us. U.S. citizens who are resident overseas receive an automatic extension of the deadline to file to June 15th. If you are a U.S. citizen or resident alien, the rules for filing tax returns are generally the same whether you are in the United States or abroad. Your individual circumstances generally determine whether you must file an income tax return. The following link may assist you in determining your filing requirements: [Am I required to file a U. S. tax return?](#) You can find all of the forms, publications and information about income taxes at the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) website by clicking here: [Internal Revenue Service](#).

Unfortunately, a representative from the IRS will not be visiting Ecuador this year. The IRS website is comprehensive and contains all required information for filing your U.S. taxes from abroad. For the answers to the most common questions, please click [frequently asked questions](#). If you still have questions and want to discuss your tax situation with an IRS representative, please click [here](#) for their contact phone and email.

Additionally, we have uploaded an informative IRS presentation on filing taxes abroad to our website. Please visit http://ecuador.usembassy.gov/public_services/taxes.html and download the IRS Tax Seminar Power Point to view.

Health Alert: High UV Index in Ecuador

The Ecuadorian Civilian Space Agency (EXA) has issued an alert regarding elevated Ultraviolet (UV) radiation levels in Ecuador.

EXA released the Hyperion Report in October 2008 regarding a weakening in the ozone layer over Ecuador, Colombia, and Peru. The ozone layer absorbs UV radiation from the sun; when the ozone layer weakens, more UV radiation reaches the earth. EXA has a network of ground stations measuring UV radiation in Quito and Guayaquil. The UV index (UVI) has been up to 14 in Guayaquil and up to 24 in Quito. UVI levels above 11 are considered dangerous. EXA predicts the UVI will continue to be *extremely* high for the next several months, particularly in the Sierra.

When skin is exposed to UV radiation it produces vitamin D, a vitamin needed for regulating calcium absorption, bone growth, and the immune system. However, excessive exposure to UV radiation can increase the risk of skin cancer and eye damage, including blindness. Extremely high levels can potentially alter human DNA. The peak times for UV exposure are between 10:00 AM and 3:00 PM. American citizens are *strongly* encouraged to avoid sun exposure during these hours, and to use the protections listed below:

UV Index	Description	Media Graphic Color	Recommended Protection
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0–2	No danger to the average person	Green	Wear sunglasses ; use sunscreen if there is snow on the ground, which reflects UV radiation, or if you have particularly fair skin.
3–5	Little risk of harm from unprotected sun exposure	Yellow	Wear sunglasses and use sunscreen, cover the body with clothing and a hat, and seek shade around midday when the sun is most intense.
6–7	High risk of harm from unprotected sun exposure	Orange	Wear sunglasses and use sunscreen having SPF 15 or higher, cover the body with sun protective clothing and a wide-brim hat, and reduce time in the sun from two hours before to three hours after solar noon (roughly 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM during summer in zones that observe daylight saving time).
8–10	Very high risk of harm from unprotected sun exposure	Red	Wear sunscreen, a shirt, sunglasses, and a hat. Do not stay out in the sun for too long.
11+	Extreme risk of harm from unprotected sun exposure	Violet	Take all precautions, including: wear sunglasses and use sunscreen, cover the body with a long-sleeve shirt and trousers , wear a very broad hat, and avoid the sun from two hours before to three hours after solar noon.

Source: Wikipedia

Below are some links to further information on UV radiation. In particular, the last two links will show real-time UV radiation readings in Quito and Guayaquil respectively.

<http://www.intellicast.com/Local/Weather.aspx?location=ECXX0008> – general weather forecast, including UV Index, for Quito.

<http://www.intellicast.com/Local/Weather.aspx?location=ECXX0003> – general weather forecast, including UV Index, for Guayaquil.

<http://www.who.int/uv/en> - information from the World Health Organization on UV radiation.

http://www.temis.nl/uvradiation/world_uvi.html - predicted UV radiation levels from KNMI – the Dutch National Meteorological Institute.

<http://www.exa.ec/bp21/index-en.html> - link the EXA's Hyperion Report.

<http://uio.exa.ec> – link to real-time weather and UVI information for Quito.

<http://gye.exa.ec> – link to real-time weather and UVI information for Guayaquil.

Tungurahua Volcano Information

Tungurahua Volcano continues to demonstrate fluctuating levels on seismic activity. As the nearby towns Baños, Shell, and Puyo are popular tourist destinations for American citizens in Ecuador, we wanted to pass on the following information regarding shelters and important links.

During periods of increased seismic activity and/or a volcanic eruption, landslides created by rain mixed with volcanic rocks and mud can prohibit road travel between Baños and Ambato and/or Puyo. In the past, road travel has been re-established quickly.

If in Baños when an a volcanic eruption occurs, it is advisable to try to reach the evacuation shelters on the east side of town, within the "Santa Ana" neighbourhood. This is on the main road out of Baños towards Puyo. Evacuation routes would be marked with yellow arrows throughout the town. Additionally, there is also a siren system to alert people to evacuate.

For further information, the Civil Defence Committee can be contacted on 00593 3 2741789. For the latest information on volcanic eruptions throughout Ecuador, please visit the [National Ecuadorian Geophysics Institute](#).

ACS Regional Outreach Visits

Following up on our successful outreach visits in 2008, the American Citizens Services sections in Quito and Guayaquil are planning to visit numerous cities and towns in Ecuador throughout 2009 in order to meet with American Citizens and provide services. From passports to Social Security, our traveling American Citizen Services team will be there to assist American Citizens residing in Ecuador. We are currently organizing our 2009 schedule, but would like your help and assistance. If you are an American Citizen residing outside of Quito or Guayaquil and believe that an American Citizens Services visit would be beneficial to the American Citizen community in your town, please email ConsularQuito@state.gov if in Quito's consular district or ACSGuayaquil@state.gov if in Guayaquil's district in order to discuss possible dates, locations, etc.

Warden Conference in Quito

The U.S. Embassy in Quito will hold its 1st Annual Warden Conference on March 20, 2009 from 9am to 12pm. The Conference will be held in the Chimborazo Auditorium at the U.S. Embassy in Quito. We will discuss various important subjects, including the warden system, warden responsibilities, security in Quito and Ecuador, and preparation and response to natural disasters.

Conference attendees will require a confirmation of attendance to participate in the conference. Space is limited. Sign up will be on a first come, first serve basis with preference given to existing wardens. If space permits, we will allow American citizens that are currently not wardens to participate. We will send out an email notification with RSVP instructions in the near future with further details.

Warden Training Sessions in Guayaquil

The U.S. Consulate General in Guayaquil will be conducting quarterly training sessions to better inform and prepare the wardens residing in its consular district. These morning trainings will take place in the consulate building on the following dates: (1) Friday, March 6th 10:00-12:00; (2) Friday, June 5th Warden Conference 9:00-12:00 (3) Friday, September 11th 10:00-12:00 and

(4) Friday, December 11th 10:00-12:00. The trainings will be held in the consulate building and will require a response for attendance.

In our first meeting, the ACS team will discuss emergency preparedness - steps that you can take to minimize your risk in an emergency situation, and how to inform and protect other U.S. citizens when an emergency occurs. Each quarterly training will deal with a different topic of concern to U.S. citizens living in Ecuador. The consulate will be sending out email notification before the training sessions with further details. We encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity to meet consular officials, fellow wardens, and strengthen communication among U.S. citizens living in Ecuador.

Voting Slogan

Submit Your Entries for the 2009 Voting Slogan Contest Today!

The Federal Voting Assistance Program is pleased to announce the kick-off of the biennial contest to promote participation in the democratic process among citizens covered under the *Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act* -- members of the Uniformed Services, the Merchant Marine, their families, and all U.S. citizens residing outside the United States.

To enter just create a simple slogan (or slogans) that expresses the importance of voting and will inspire one to vote. A panel of judges will review all slogan submissions and choose the winning slogan on its originality and motivational value. This winning slogan will be featured in the FVAP's 2010/2011 outreach campaign which focuses on increasing voter awareness among U.S. citizens worldwide to include the FVAP website at www.fvap.gov, in the 2010/2011 Voting Assistance Guide, on motivational posters, and other FVAP publications.

The contest winner and runners-up will not only feel the satisfaction of knowing that their slogan is helping the FVAP in its efforts to improve voter awareness, but they will also be given a certificate of recognition from the Department for their contribution to this important endeavor.

There is no limit to the number of entries an individual may submit but each entry may only contain one slogan. All entries must be received by **April 9, 2009**.

All submissions must include your full name, branch of service (if military), mailing address, daytime telephone number, fax number and e-mail address (if applicable). If submitting by mail, please type or print the slogan and contact information on a regular letter size sheet of paper.

How to submit entries:

E-mail: slogan@fvap.ncr.gov. Text only (e-mail messages with attachments are deleted for information security purposes). One slogan per e-mail including contact information.

Fax: (703) 696-1352 or DSN 426-1352. Visit the FVAP website at www.fvap.gov for international toll-free fax numbers. Submit one slogan per fax including contact information. No cover sheet is necessary.

Mail: Federal Voting Assistance Program

Attn: Voting Slogan Contest

1155 Defense Pentagon

Washington DC 20301-1155

“Be Smart, Do Your Part, Vote!” was the winning slogan for the 2007 Voting Slogan Contest. It was submitted by YNC Karen Bassingthwaite, U.S. Navy, Tampa, Florida. Many of the other exceptional slogan entries for the 2007 Voting Slogan Contest are featured in the *2008-2009 Voting Assistance Guide*.

Please join the FVAP in helping to inspire others to vote by submitting your entry today and you could be one of this year’s winners!

Organization Profile: Manna Project Ecuador

We would like to make it a normal practice of highlighting charity and non-profit organizations through which Americans are working to assist Ecuador. We welcome organizations to submit a short (150-300 word) description of their group to the newsletter. If and when possible, in each future edition, we will highlight a different organization. This quarter’s featured organization is Manna Project Ecuador.

Manna Project International Ecuador

The Manna Project International Ecuador team lives in Conocoto, Ecuador, twenty minutes outside the capital city of Quito and has committed itself to providing a holistic range of services to the small adjacent communities of San Fransisco, Rumiloma, and the surrounding barrios. The daily Apoyo Escolar (School Support) program was founded in October 2007 and continues to be MPIE's flagship program providing thirty underprivileged children ages 4-12 with 2 hours of homework help and an hour of curriculum enrichment lessons in literacy, English and the visual and performing arts.

Motivated by the enthusiasm with which they've been received in the community, the team has been working diligently on developing impactful and sustainable programming. Embracing an asset based approach to community development the team is working with key community leaders to expand local access to healthcare and microfinance services. They have enjoyed early successes with preventative healthcare programming, English instruction for adults and sports programming and continue to expand upon these efforts. In every initiative the team pursues they do so with an eye towards sustainability and meaningful community involvement. With this in mind we are conducting an asset-based community assessment and mapping exercise in partnership with a local school for underprivileged children. Focusing on the skills and interests local residents have rather than on what they lack, MPIE is positioning itself to be a matchmaker between residents and local organizations, fostering job opportunities, targeted volunteerism and increased community involvement. Harnessing the enthusiasm of our program directors and the limitless possibilities of a blank canvas, MPIE has grown from a wishful idea to a full fledged community development site in less than a year. And we're just getting started. For more info, see www.mannaproject.org

Recent Article of Interest

New Law Makes Escape Tougher For Tax Exiles. “It's been called ‘the ultimate estate plan’: moving to a desert island or other far-off locale to escape the Internal Revenue Service. Indeed, hundreds of Americans do formally renounce their U.S. citizenship every year, many in order to protect their wealth from income, estate and gift taxes. But a recently passed law by Congress may have made life less rewarding for tax exiles.”
http://online.wsj.com/public/article_print/SB121193252276024279.html

Hours and Contact Information

The U.S. Embassy in Quito and Consulate in Guayaquil provide a full range of consular and passport services for American citizens. Please [click here](#) to access Quito's website for information on opening hours, contact information and general information on each our services.

Please [click here](#) for Consulate Guayaquil's general information.

The U.S. Embassy in Quito and Consulate in Guayaquil is closed on Ecuadorian and American holidays. In the coming months, we will observe the following holidays:

February

16th : Washington's Birthday

23rd: Carnival
Friday

24th: Carnival

April

9th: Holy Thursday

10th: Good

Contact information and opening hours

Quito: <http://ecuador.usembassy.gov/overview-and-contact-info.html>

Guayaquil: http://guayaquil.usconsulate.gov/business_hours.html

Quito American Citizen Services

Notarials:

Monday - Thursday
1:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

All Other Services:

Monday – Thursday
1:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Social Security:

Tuesday – Thursday
1:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Telephone Inquiries: 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Tel: (593) 398-5000 EXT. 5077 (Only Social Security)

Telephones:

Tel: (593) 398-5000

Fax: (593) 398-5268

For calls concerning the arrest, injury, serious illness, or death of an American citizen after regular business hours (5:00 p.m. - 8:00 a.m.), please call:

(593) 398-5200

E-mail:

General e-mail: Consularquito@state.gov

Consulate General Guayaquil American Citizen Services

Passport, Add Pages, Birth Abroad Services:

Monday – Thursday
12:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Notarials:

Friday
08:00.m. - 11:30 p.m.

Business other than American Citizen Services

Immigrant Visas or Non-Immigrant Visas

Tel: (593) 4- 232-3570

Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

ACS Telephones:

Telephone Inquiries are best in the AM hours

08:00 a.m. - 11:30 p.m.

Tel: (593) 4-232-3570 ext 227/228

Fax: (593) 4-232-0904

For calls concerning the arrest, injury, serious illness, or death of an American citizen after regular business hours (4:00 p.m. - 8:00 a.m.), please call:

(593) 4-232-1152

E-mail:

ACSGuayaquil@state.gov

Please do not send visa inquiries to the above email address