



October 2010

## American Citizen Services eNewsletter



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### WE ARE HERE TO SERVE *YOU* - FROM CONSUL GENERAL JIM GRAY



Thank you for the opportunity to allow us to be of service to you! It is our privilege and commitment to provide you with the best possible service for the products you require: on-line appointments will expedite your visit to the embassy, and passport renewals can be accomplished in little more than a week (and without the “expedite” surcharge that such service would cost in the U.S.). But I would like to address a further dimension of our duty. The first responsibility of the Department of State – from Secretary Clinton to Ambassador Gitenstein to Consul Rob Doughten and his American Citizen Services team – is the safety and security of our overseas U.S. citizens.

One of our primary concerns for residents of Bucharest is the matter of preparedness for a major earthquake. It is not a question of if but when it will happen – are you ready? The bottom line is that survival may depend on the adequacy of preparation and self-sufficiency for at least 72 hours. Our website provides an excellent background and links to helpful resources: [http://romania.usembassy.gov/acs/disaster\\_preparedness.html](http://romania.usembassy.gov/acs/disaster_preparedness.html). Don't be a victim!

And allow me to pay tribute to our wardens around the country. These individuals are our volunteer “force multipliers” – in times of need, we turn to them to assist the embassy in passing information to or conveying information from U.S. citizens when circumstances may preclude an on-site presence by our consular officers. We have some vacancies – if you think you might be interested please let Consul Rob Doughten know at [ACSBucharest@state.gov](mailto:ACSBucharest@state.gov).

I hope to see you at the embassy. *La revedere!*



**All non-emergency ACS services (renewal of U.S. passports, Consular Reports of Birth Abroad, and notarials) are provided by appointment **ONLY**.**

**Please visit our website [http://romania.usembassy.gov/acs/general\\_information.html](http://romania.usembassy.gov/acs/general_information.html) to make an appointment.**

#### AMERICAN CITIZEN SERVICES

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Tel: +40- 21- 200 3300

Fax: +40- 21- 200 3578

In the event of an emergency involving an American citizen, please, call +40-21-200-3433

For information about public hours, please visit <http://romania.usembassy.gov/acs/index.html> .





## EARTHQUAKE! ARE YOU PREPARED?

It is a well-known fact that earthquakes happen in Romania. Vrancea seismic zone, remember? Earthquakes strike suddenly, violently and without warning. Identifying potential hazards ahead of time and advance planning can reduce the dangers of serious injury or loss of life from an earthquake. In addition to extensive [Disaster Preparedness](#) information on the Embassy Website, we recommend that you visit the Websites of [FEMA](#) and [CDC](#) to learn more about

- [What to do before an earthquake?](#)
- [What to do during an earthquake?](#)
- [What to do after an earthquake?](#)

**Be prepared!**



## AND A WORD OF ADVICE ON HOME AND PERSONAL SECURITY

In recent years, Halloween has become increasingly popular in many European countries. An American holiday, originally exported from Ireland, is rapidly being brought back to Europe. In Romania, Halloween is celebrated around the myth of Dracula. In Transylvania, especially in the city of [Sighișoara](#), there are many costume parties, for teenagers and adults with carved pumpkins, vampire treats, and visits to Dracula castle.

This is also the time when street robbery and burglary may increase significantly. If you welcome “trick or treaters” and are happy to open your door to someone dressed in a costume, at least be aware that this may be an excuse for criminals to walk in unrecognizable. So, consider keeping the chain on and don’t open your door until you are sure who is outside. Remember -- *if in doubt, keep them out!*

If you do not want “trick or treat” callers, you may wish to consider placing a polite note on the door -- “Sorry, no trick or treaters, please”.

If you are out and about, always be aware of your surroundings. Be aware, don’t be a victim.

## SECURE FLIGHT PROGRAM



**Transportation  
Security  
Administration**

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is in the process of implementing a new initiative, known as the “*Secure Flight Program*”, that is designed to improve the safety of airline passengers and make it more convenient to fly to/from the United States.

Effective **October 1, 2010**, if your travel plans include airline flights to/from the United States, you will be required to provide the following information at the time you make your reservations and at least 72 hours before beginning travel:

- **Full Name (as it appears on your passport)**
- **Date of Birth**
- **Gender**
- **Passport number and date of expiration**

The information you provide will be submitted to Transportation Security Administration (TSA) officials, who will then check it against the information on those persons included on its no-fly lists. If the TSA has not received this information in a timely manner, then your reservations may be cancelled and you could be denied boarding at the time you are scheduled to fly.



For more information about the program, please, visit TSA’s Website at [http://www.tsa.gov/what\\_we\\_do/layers/secureflight/faqs.shtm](http://www.tsa.gov/what_we_do/layers/secureflight/faqs.shtm).



### ***Safety and security concerns rank higher than health issues***

“**Americans** rank safety and security as top concerns for international travel, according to results of a recently released survey conducted for the **US Travel Insurance Association**. Even so, 70% of respondents say that safety & security issues would not deter them from traveling internationally. The study was conducted for UStiA July 20-22, 2010 by synovate, eNation”. **Read more at** [http://www.traveldailynews.com/pages/show\\_page/38981-Older-US-travelers-more-concerned-about-safety,-security,-health](http://www.traveldailynews.com/pages/show_page/38981-Older-US-travelers-more-concerned-about-safety,-security,-health)



# TO OPEN OR NOT TO OPEN: THAT IS THE QUESTION! (Or A Word Of Advice on Computer Security)

By Curtis Presson,

Embassy Information Management Officer

**“Watch the cute bouncing Jack-o-Lantern!” or “See a cute kid’s costume!” or “Funny/Scary/Cute Halloween costumes” or...**

You get the idea. Do any of these have a computer virus or malware associated with them? It’s hard to say. The people who create the viruses are making them faster than protection software can keep up with. And we can’t anticipate what they are doing.

How do you protect yourself? Continue to do what you should already be doing:

- If you don’t know the sender, don’t open it.
- If you do know the sender, but don’t think they would have sent it, ask them first. If they did, OK (maybe). If they didn’t, you may have just warned them about a problem with their computer
- If in doubt, but really want to look, try a Google search for the name of the file, or go to the website it is supposed to be from to look at it directly – not through the link.
- If you receive an attachment, save it to your desktop and then scan it with the antivirus software you have. Of course, you should have the most recent updates to that software.

Bottom line – if you don’t *have* to look at it, **DON’T!**

The “virus senders” look at every opportunity to send something to damage your computer, use your computer for themselves, or to trap you into giving them information.

Holidays, tragedy, celebrities and public officials are all great ways to get people to click on links they shouldn’t or give information they shouldn’t.

Happy Halloween, but be careful on-line!



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS CORNER: “Do I need an appointment to come to the Embassy?”

Most likely, **YES**. By now, you already know that all non-emergency American Citizen Services (ACS) - like *passport renewals, Consular Reports of Birth Abroad, and notary public services* - are now provided at the consular section by appointment **ONLY**.

The ACS section chose to commit to the online appointment system because of its flexibility and several other advantages it has to offer.

First and foremost, it allows us to provide better-quality services to our American and Romanian customers by ensuring that we have adequate staffing to cover public hours, as well as minimizing public wait time. Secondly, the appointment system allows us to

better manage section’s routine workflow and dedicate time to provide responses to public inquiries via email and telephone.

So, if you need to come to the consular section for a non-emergency appointment, please, follow the link to [U.S. Citizen Services](#) on the Embassy Website, find appropriate service under “General Information” drop-down box on the left-hand side, and *voila!* - you are ready to make an appointment.

Emergency services to American citizens are available 24/7.

For emergencies after public hours please call +(40-21) 200-3433.

If you require additional clarification regarding the online appointment system, please, email us at [ACSBucharest@state.gov](mailto:ACSBucharest@state.gov)

