

*U.S. Embassy Sarajevo
Consular Section*

American Community Newsletter



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January 2008

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Contact Information and Operating Hours

Address: Alipašina 43, 71000 Sarajevo

American Citizen Services Hours: Monday-Friday 14:00-15:30 and Friday 8:00-11:30
It is always preferable to call for an appointment!

Non-Immigrant Visa Hours: By appointment through **Visa Information Service** at
(387) 33 295 375

Immigrant Visa Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 8:00-11:30

Tel: (387) 33 445 700 ACS Ext. 2210, 2337. 2130
NIV ext. 2241, 2466. 2484. 2499
IV ext. 2453

Fax: (387) 33 221 837

E-mail: rws@state.gov (for registration)

E-mail: IVConsularSarajevo@state.gov (for immigrant visa questions)

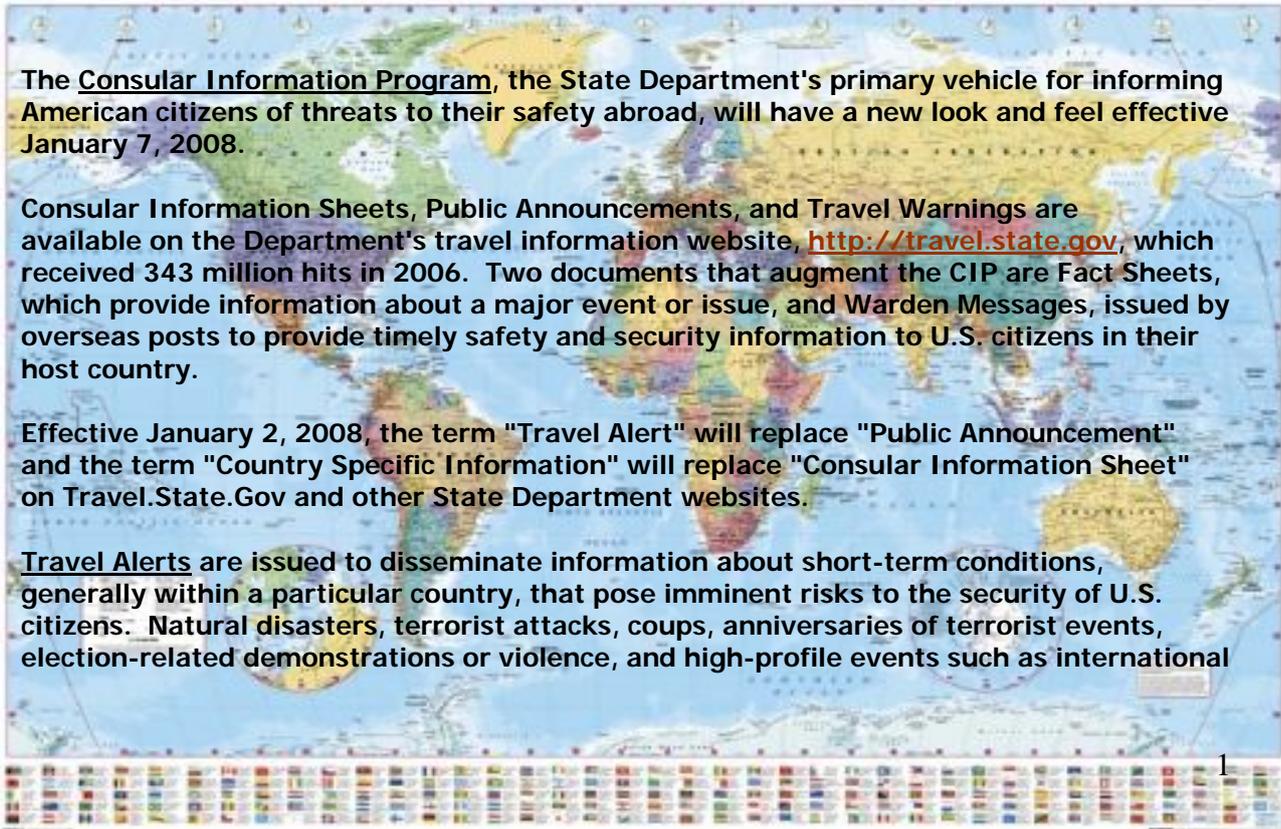
State Department's Travel Information Program

The Consular Information Program, the State Department's primary vehicle for informing American citizens of threats to their safety abroad, will have a new look and feel effective January 7, 2008.

Consular Information Sheets, Public Announcements, and Travel Warnings are available on the Department's travel information website, <http://travel.state.gov>, which received 343 million hits in 2006. Two documents that augment the CIP are Fact Sheets, which provide information about a major event or issue, and Warden Messages, issued by overseas posts to provide timely safety and security information to U.S. citizens in their host country.

Effective January 2, 2008, the term "Travel Alert" will replace "Public Announcement" and the term "Country Specific Information" will replace "Consular Information Sheet" on Travel.State.Gov and other State Department websites.

Travel Alerts are issued to disseminate information about short-term conditions, generally within a particular country, that pose imminent risks to the security of U.S. citizens. Natural disasters, terrorist attacks, coups, anniversaries of terrorist events, election-related demonstrations or violence, and high-profile events such as international



conferences or regional sports events are examples of conditions that might generate a Travel Alert. Travel Alerts are issued for a specific period, usually 90 days or less.

Travel Warnings recommend that U.S. citizens defer or reconsider travel to a country due to a protracted situation that is dangerous or unstable. A Travel Warning is also issued when the U.S. Government's ability to assist U.S. citizens is constrained due to a drawdown or closure at an embassy or consulate, even if the underlying condition is expected to be of limited duration.

The Worldwide Caution (WWC) reminds Americans to maintain a high level of vigilance and to bolster their personal security while overseas. It also informs Americans of ongoing security concerns, including the continual threat of terrorist actions and violence against Americans and American interests overseas. The Worldwide Caution pays particular attention to regions of concern where there is a continued threat of terrorism. The Worldwide Caution is reviewed continually and is updated at least every six months to ensure the most current general and regional safety and security information is shared with the American public.

For more detailed information on staying safe in Bosnia and Herzegovina, please see the Bosnia and Herzegovina Consular Information Sheet i.e. Country Specific Information at: http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1070.html.

For the latest security information, U.S. citizens traveling abroad should regularly monitor the Department's Internet web site at <http://travel.state.gov> where the current Worldwide Caution, Public Announcements i.e Travel Alerts, and Travel Warnings can be found.

REGISTRATION WITH THE EMBASSY

If you would like to update your registration with the Embassy, please fax or e-mail us the Registration Form (available also at <http://sarajevo.usembassy.gov>). Americans registering for the first time should come to the Consular Section in person to present their passport. If you live far away from Sarajevo, you can fax (033 221 837) or e-mail (rws@state.gov) the form and a copy of your passport biographic data page to us, and come to the Consular Section later for the full registration.



*To receive
Warden Messages
by e-mail
you need to be
registered
with the Embassy !*

U.S. Embassy Sarajevo Begins Processing Immigrant Visas

As of October 1, 2007, the U.S. Embassy in Sarajevo has begun accepting and processing immigrant, fiancé and diversity visas for residents of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Applicants from Bosnia and Herzegovina who have opened cases at the U.S. Embassy in Zagreb may continue the process at that Embassy, or may have their cases transferred to U.S. Embassy Sarajevo. In order to transfer a case, applicants should submit case transfer requests to the Consular Section in Sarajevo (IVConsularsarajevo@gov). Further information is available by visiting the Embassy's webpage at: <http://sarajevo.usembassy.gov/>

Please note: In order to file an immigrant visa petition I-130 for alien relative (spouse, unmarried child under 21, parents), you need to prove that you have been a resident of the consular district of BiH for at least 6 months. Otherwise, you must file I-130 petitions at the USCIS Service Center having jurisdiction over your place of residence in the U.S. (as indicated on the USCIS website: <http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/i-130.pdf>)

Passport News

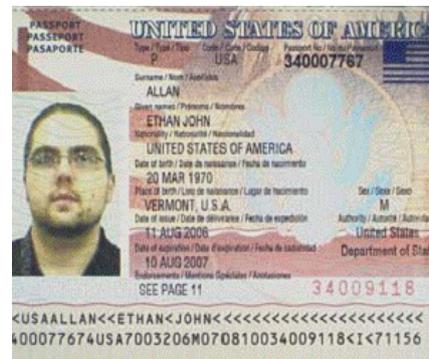


The EPDP is a 12-page book resembling the new e-passport, but without an electronic chip. It is created by printing the digitized photo of the applicant, along with the biodata and the machine-readable zone, on a foil, and the required endorsements on a second foil. The foils are inserted into the blank book, and the biodata foil sheet is laminated with a sewn-in laminate.

Emergency Photo-Digitized Passport

As of January 2007, Emergency Photo-Digitized Passport (EPDP) has replaced the old style glue-pot emergency passport that the embassies throughout the world had been issuing for many years. This constitutes a great security enhancement.

These passports are issued for emergency travel (when the applicant cannot wait to receive a full-validity, U.S.-issued passport in the regular procedure), and can be valid for up to 12 months. If you apply for a regular passport before the 12 months expire, and submit the emergency one, you do not have to pay the passport fee again.



*Biodata page of
Emergency Photo-Digitized passport*

Emergency passport fee:

USD 97 for adults

USD 82 for children under 16

*The Consular Section also accepts
Bosnian KM and U.S.-issued credit
cards.*

No Amendments in Valid Passports

Effective September 26, 2005, as an additional security enhancement, the Embassy no longer amends valid passports. Citizens requesting name changes, extension of validity or correction of a printing error must apply for a replacement passport.

Non-Immigrant Visa News

Visa Appointments through Visa Information Service

On September 21, 2006, Embassy Sarajevo switched to an appointment system for Non-Immigrant Visa applications. All non-immigrant visa applicants must use the call center (Visa Information Service - VIS) to obtain visa information and to schedule interview appointments. VIS is the only official source of general visa information from the U.S. Embassy via telephone and is the only authorized method to schedule a personal interview for a non-immigrant visa. The Visa Information Service can be accessed by calling the following number: **(387)33 295 375**. The Visa Information Service will provide Bosnian speaking agents who will:

- Schedule appointments for nonimmigrant visas
- Answer caller's questions on how to apply for non-immigrant visas
- Inform non-immigrant applicants about the types of visas available and the documents required for each type.

In order to use the VIS services, the applicant must first buy a PIN (USD 13) available at any Raiffeisen Bank in BiH. The PIN will be active the next working day. It provides the applicant with 7 minutes of calling time, in which to get the information and schedule an appointment (for up to 5 members of immediate family living in the same household).



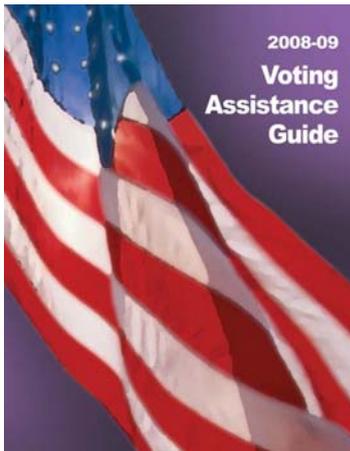
Electronic Visa Application Form (EVAF)

As of November 2, 2006 the Visa Application Form DS-156 must be completed **electronically**. Visa applicants can find the form at: <http://evisaforms.state.gov>

Some important details on notarial services

- Please be reminded that consular officers can only notarize documents **intended for use in the United States**. The Embassy does not have authority to notarize, for example, local car sales agreements, or documents concerning property transactions in BiH. The Bosnian authorities have the sole jurisdiction over such transactions.
- Please remember that any U.S. **school record** that you intend to use in BiH, as a country of the Hague Convention on Legalization of Foreign Public Documents, must be certified by an **apostille**, which must be obtained in the U.S. The same applies to birth, death or marriage certificates, as well as any notarial acts (powers-of-attorney, etc.). More information on apostille is available at <http://travel.state.gov> – Judicial Assistance/Notarial and Authentication Services.
- Please keep in mind that embassies, as agencies of the Federal Government, do not have jurisdiction over state matters such as **driver licenses** and **car registrations**. If the Bosnian authorities request from you any document explaining the class of your driver license, you will have to get it directly from your state DMV. The Embassy cannot provide any "certificate" or "explanation" of a U.S. driver license or car registration for any purpose.

Overseas Voting



Voting. There is possibly no civil right Americans cherish more than the right to vote; there have been five separate amendments to the U.S. Constitution addressing voting rights. As the most recent presidential elections have proven, every vote counts. Americans living overseas have an equal right to vote in federal elections, but voting from overseas requires a few extra steps. Since, by some estimates, as many as 20% of absentee ballots are rejected, it's vital that expatriates understand those steps.

Register to Vote:

Each state has its own rules and policies for voter registration, with special requirements for Americans living overseas. There are different rules for members of the uniformed services, and for civilians in some states. The simplest way to find out what your state's specific requirements are is to go to www.fvap.gov and find the link for your state. Many states now offer on-line voter registration verification, so you can check to see if a previous registration is still valid. Federal law requires states to keep voters on the registration roles for two

federal election cycles (four years), but it's never wise to assume that you're still registered.

The Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) can be used to register **and/or** request an absentee ballot.

Every state now accepts the on-line version of the form, or has its own version available on line. You may also request the postcard version of the form from the Embassy. An informal poll conducted by the Overseas Vote Foundation

showed that problems with voter registration were the largest contributor to ballots being received too late, or not at all. The critical elements to using the online or federal post card registration form are:

- Follow your state's specific instructions, and provide all the information requested;
- Write legibly;
- Sign and date the form;
- Mail it to the correct address;
- Include your current mailing address.

Consular Officers' Role:

We will notarize your documents for you free of charge, if it is required by your state. If you do not have access to a printer or you are a resident of American Samoa or Guam (these two territories don't accept the on-line form), please call or email our Consular staff. We'll be happy to mail you the Federal Post Card Application for Registration and Absentee Ballot Request. And, we can send your ballots to the United States, using our postal system.

Request an Absentee Ballot:

Do not assume, just because you are registered, that you will automatically receive absentee ballots. Most states require a request to the voter's local Supervisor of Elections.

In some states, all this takes is a phone call or email request if you're already registered; others require a written, notarized document. The Consular staff at the U.S. Embassy can notarize these requests for free – normal Consular fees are waived for election materials.

Voting by Citizens Who Have Never Lived in the United States:

Many states have provisions for this contingency, and allow voters to register if a parent or a spouse is eligible to vote in the state. Some of those states restrict voter registration to only federal elections. Again, the www.fvap.gov website has a special section concerning this topic.

Vote:

When you receive your balloting materials, read the instructions carefully to make sure your ballot will not be discarded on a technicality. Return the ballot by mail, by your state’s deadlines.

Worst case: If you’ve registered **and** requested balloting materials within your state’s time limits, but haven’t received your balloting materials within 30 days of the election, you may still vote in federal elections using the “Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot for General Elections.” This form is also available online, or from the Embassy. Complete instructions are on the form.

Mail Your Ballot:

You may mail your ballot from your home here in BiH, using the international postal system, or at no cost through the Embassy’s postal system. Again, it’s important to check your state’s individual deadline requirements, and to make sure you mail your ballot so it arrives in time.

You can find more information at www.republicansabroad.org and/or www.democratsabroad.org. Younger voters and older teens might find the information at www.RocktheVote.com appealing and informative. Another very useful link on voting is <http://usinfo.state.gov/politics/elections/>, and answers to voting-related FAQ’s can also be found at Sarajevo Embassy’s web page <http://sarajevo.usembassy.gov/>.

Embassy Closures:

- **January 1 (Tuesday):** **New Year’s Day**
- **January 2 (Wednesday):** **New Year’s Day**
- **January 21 (Monday):** **Martin Luther King Jr.’s Birthday**
- **February 18 (Monday):** **Washington’s Birthday**
- **March 24 (Monday):** **Easter Monday**

There is always an Embassy duty officer available to assist U.S. citizens with serious emergencies. The duty officer can be reached at (033) 445 700.

