



Shanghai Consulate News for Americans

Issue 10

September, 2008

Mailing Options for Voting Materials

This newsletter is published by the American Citizens Services (ACS) Unit, U.S. Consulate General in Shanghai. If there are any particular topics you are interested in, please contact ACS at: ShanghaiACS@state.gov.

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Special points of interest:

- * New Chinese Visa Policies
- * "ESTA" (Electronic System for Travel Authorization)
- * College Students – Apply for a U.S. State Dept. Summer 2009 Internship

Voters in the Shanghai Consular District (Shanghai and the provinces of Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Anhui) have a number of options for mailing Federal Postcard Applications (FPCAs), voted state ballots, and/or Federal Write-in Absentee Ballots to their local election officials in the U.S.

Voters who are not yet registered to vote or have not yet requested an absentee ballot be sent to their China mailing address should consult the instructions in Prepare to Vote Now! (page 2).

"Express Your Vote" and Other Courier Options: The Overseas Vote Foundation and FedEx have partnered to offer voters in Shanghai express mailing of ballots **at no charge** through the "Express Your Vote" program. All states and territories **except Alabama** have agreed to accept ballots via the "Express Your Vote" Program. Voters using this method should logon to the Overseas Vote Foundation Website and print out a customized FedEx Airway Bill or label. Approved drop-off locations for the "Express Your Vote" program are listed below. These locations will have

hardcopy Airway Bills available onsite to be completed in person, but we strongly encourage voters using the Express Your Vote program to print the Airway Bill from the website to ensure it is complete and correct. Be sure to set your printer to landscape to ensure that all of the necessary data prints. Voters residing outside of Shanghai can also take advantage of the program if they can get their ballots to the Consulate. The "Express Your Vote" URL is: <https://www.overseasvotefoundation.org/overseas/ExpressYourVote.htm>

Other express couriers will also mail ballots, albeit at standard shipping rates.

UPS: www.ups.com (800-820-8388 or 400-820-8388)

DHL: www.dhl.com (800-810-8000 or 400-810-8000)

Express couriers generally do not deliver to PO boxes, so you will need to know the street address of your local voting office. The OverseasVoteFoundation.org website has detailed address information, including express mail addresses and phone numbers for local voting officials. **(Continued on Page 3)**

Upcoming Holidays and Other Closures

Please remember that the days just before and just after a holiday are often extremely busy and you can expect significantly longer waiting times. If you visit

us outside of these times, you should have a shorter wait.

The American Citizen Services Unit will be **CLOSED** all day on the following days:

September 30, Tues.
till October 5, Sun.
Chinese National Day

October 13, Mon.
Columbus Day

2008 General Elections: Are You Ready to Vote?

We strongly encourage Americans residing in the Consular District who are eligible to vote to ensure that you are registered to do so and have requested an absentee ballot from your home voting district. If you have not yet done so, we recommend taking these steps immediately as the November 4 general election is rapidly approaching. Every state has its own process, but in most cases, an absentee ballot must be requested, and then sent to you by mail, adding significant time to the process.

How Do I Request My Ballot?

Absentee ballots are requested by sending a Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) to the local Voting Registrar where you were last registered to

vote. FPCA's are downloadable online at www.fvap.gov (also www.fvap.com). Alternatively, if you can get to the Consulate, come in and fill out a hard copy. The Consulate can mail your FPCA at no charge via the US Postal Service, but at this late date, simply dropping it in China Post may be faster. If you choose to use China Post, make sure to attach the correct postage. Mailing addresses for your voting registrar can also be found on the FVAP websites or at the Consulate's American Citizen Services Center. Some states allow you to request your ballot electronically or by fax, but require you to follow-up by mailing a hardcopy. In all cases, the process requires a small investment of time to complete.

When Should I Request my Ballot?

Voters who have not yet requested their ballots, should do so immediately to allow sufficient time to receive them by mail. Deadlines vary by state and can be found at www.fvap.gov. In many states voting registrars need to receive your ballot request by early to mid October. Once you get your ballot, you should vote and return it as early as possible. Some states accept absentee ballots beyond Election Day, but better safe than sorry. See page 1 for mailing options.

More Questions?

The Consulate's Voting Assistance Officer can answer questions by e-mail at: VoteShanghai@state.gov.

1038 W. Nanjing Road 8th Fl, Shanghai
Window hours: AM 8 - 11:30, PM 1:30 - 3:30, closed Tuesday afternoons

Helpful Info Regarding New Chinese Visa Policies

*** Although anecdotal evidence supports the following information, the PSB (Police Security Bureau) has not provided official notification regarding changes listed here. This information is being provided because of numerous inquiries ACS has received. ***

The Embassy has been informed that the PSB recently issued guidelines to hotels and apartment management companies concerning the registration of foreigners in China. The rule states that all foreigners must be registered with the local PSB office within 24 hours of arrival. Both individual violators and hotels and apartment managers could be subject to fines for failing to adhere to the rule. For details, please see the July ACS newsletter at <http://shanghai.usembassy-china.org.cn/newsletter0708.html>.

VISA Problems

The Embassy has also anecdotal evidence that people are having difficulty renewing or changing their visas while in China. Please check that you have a valid visa as the PSB has been fining and in some cases, detaining people who remain in China with the incorrect visa or a visa that has expired. Under Chinese law, the PSB may ask to see your passport, so keep it handy when traveling. The Embassy recommends that you carry your passport with you, but be careful to keep it out of easy reach from pickpockets or where it can be easily lost or mislaid. You should keep a copy of the passport bio page and your valid visa in a



safe place at home. Do keep in mind that should you lose your passport, you need to have it replaced at the Consulate, and you also need to have a new visa placed in your replacement passport by Chinese officials. This process may take several days.

While visa policy and decisions are made by the Chinese government and ACS is not in a position to directly intervene in particular cases, below are several websites that might be helpful to you regarding new visa policies:

- <http://www.chinatravel.net/Forum/ForumTopicInfo.asp?Topic=403>
- http://www.shanghaiexpat.com/community/index.php/2008/04/25/guide_to_getting_your_z Visa_work_a_amp_r?blog=5
- <http://en.beijing2008.cn/spectators/beijing/links/n214102410.shtml>

Mailing Options for Voting Materials

(From Page 1)

China Post: Mailing your FPCAs or voted ballot to the United States through China Post requires appropriate international postage and takes approximately 10 days to reach the United States so please plan ahead. Mailing addresses for local election officials and state mailing deadlines can be found in the Voting Assistance Guide, available on-line at www.fvap.gov.

US Postal Service via the Consulate: Voters may also choose to return their FPCAs and ballots to the Consulate for mailing via US Postal Service first class mail free of charge. Alabama voters and those who return their ballots early enough could use this method without completing the FedEx Airway Bill. Consulate USPS mail averages 10 days to reach U.S. destinations so please plan ahead.

“Express Your Vote”

Shanghai FedEx Drop-off Locations

US Consulate American Citizen Services Center, 1038 West Nanjing Road 8th F 美国驻沪总领事馆, 南京西路1038号梅龙镇广场8楼 Hours: Mornings 8 - 11:30, Afternoons 1:30 - 3:30, closed Tuesday afternoons

FedEx Xuhui Station, No. 28, Lane 411, Shi Long Rd., Xuhui District 徐汇区石龙路411弄28号 Hours: 10:00 - 22:00 (Mon - Fri), 10:00 - 18:00 (Sat)

FedEx Changning Station, D3, No. 291, Sui Ning Rd., Changning District 长宁区绥宁路291号D3 Hours: 10:00 - 22:00 (Mon - Fri), 10:00 - 18:00 (Sat)

FedEx Zhabei Station, No. 39, Lane 709, Lin Shi Rd., Zhabei District 闸北区灵石路709号39号 Hours: 10:00 - 22:00 (Mon - Fri), 10:00 - 18:00 (Sat)

FedEx Jinqiao Station, No.615, Xin Jin Qiao Rd., Pudong 浦东新金桥路615 Hours: 10:00 - 22:00 (Mon - Fri), 10:00 - 18:00 (Sat)

FedEx Pudong Airport Gateway, Warehouse E, Int'l Express Center, No. 600 Hai Tian Wu Rd., Shanghai Pudong Int'l Airport 浦东国际机场海天五路600号国际快件中心E库 Hours: 9:00 - 24:00 (Mon - Sat)

*Please note that many FedEx outlets in Shanghai will **not** participate in the “Express Your Vote” program.*

State Ballot Return Deadlines

Below is a list of General Election Deadlines for Overseas Citizens and Military stationed in the U.S. and abroad. States appearing twice on the list are indicated with an asterisk. Please also be aware of states with postmark deadlines.

November 3rd: Mississippi*, Overseas Citizens and Stateside Military, 5pm North Carolina, 5pm

November 4th: Alabama, 12pm; American Samoa, 1:30pm; Arizona, 7pm; Colorado, 7pm; Connecticut, COP; Delaware, 8pm; Florida*, Stateside Military, 7pm; Guam, 8pm; Hawaii, COP; Idaho, 8pm; Indiana, COP; Kentucky, COP; Louisiana; Maine, 8pm; Massachusetts*, Stateside Military, 8pm; Michigan, 8pm; Minnesota, COP; Mississippi*, Overseas Military, 7pm; Missouri, 7pm; Montana, 8pm; Nebraska, COP; Nevada, 7pm; New Hampshire, 5pm; New Jersey, COP; New Mexico, COP; Ohio*, Stateside Military, COP; Oklahoma, 7pm; Puerto Rico, 3pm; Rhode Island, 9pm; South Carolina, COP; South Dakota, COP; Tennessee, COP; Texas*, Stateside Military, COP; Virginia, 7pm; West Virginia; Wisconsin*, Overseas Citizens, COP; Wyoming, COP

November 7th: Georgia, postmarked by Nov. 4; North Dakota

November 10th: Iowa, 12pm, postmarked by Nov. 3; Texas*, Overseas Citizens and Stateside Military, in delivery by Nov. 4

November 11th: New York*, Overseas Citizens, postmarked by Nov. 3 Pennsylvania, postmarked by Nov. 3

November 14th: Alaska*, Stateside Military; Arkansas, 5pm; District of Columbia; Florida*, Overseas Citizens and Overseas Military, 7pm Ohio*, Overseas Citizens and Overseas Military Virgin Islands Wisconsin*, Military, 5pm, postmarked by Nov. 4 Massachusetts*, Overseas Citizens and Overseas Military, postmarked Nov. 4

November 17th: New York*, Military, postmarked by Nov. 3

November 18th: Illinois, postmarked by Nov. 3; Utah, 12pm, postmarked by Nov. 3

November 19th: Alaska*, Overseas Citizens and Overseas Military

November 25th: Washington, oath signed/dated by Nov. 4

Note - "COP" stands for "Close Of Polls"

FVAP's 2008 Post-Election Survey

Please be aware that you may be contacted by the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) as they are conducting the 2008 Post-Election Survey of uniformed services personnel, local election officials, voting assistance officers, and official and private American citizens overseas. The survey results will be reported to Congress and the White House.

The first surveys will be sent at the end of October as notification of selection. The survey itself will be sent out on/around November 5 and will include survey instructions, a link to the online survey, and an individual access code. All e-mails sent to selected survey participants will come from votinginfo@state.gov. Americans who have difficulty completing the online survey

may request a paper version be mailed to them.

If you want to participate in the FVAP Post-Election Survey, you must be registered with the Consulate via the U.S. Department of State's Internet Based Registration System (IBRS). For information about IBRS, visit the following website: <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/>

Security Situation - Worldwide Caution July 16, 2

On July 16, 2008, the U.S. Department of State issued an updated Worldwide Caution Public Announcement. It supersedes the Worldwide Caution dated January 17, 2008. Please view the full text online at http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/pa/pa_1161.html.

The U.S. Department of State has recently issued four Travel Warnings for the following countries:

[Yemen](#) 09/17 [Bolivia](#) 09/15
[Iran](#) 09/15 [Georgia](#) 09/10
[Afghanistan](#) 09/10

[Lebanon](#) 09/10 [Algeria](#) 08/22
[Kenya](#) 08/22 [Colombia](#) 08/07

The U.S. Department of State also has recently issued one Travel Alert for the following country:

[Comoros](#) 08/12

Please review them online here: <http://travel.state.gov/>.

The most up-to-date information regarding permitted and

prohibited items on flights can be viewed online here:

<http://www.tsa.gov/travelers/airtravel/prohibited/permitted-prohibited-items.shtm>.

For additional information, please visit "Americans Traveling Abroad" on the U.S. Department of State website. To obtain up-to-date information on security conditions, please call 1-888-407-4747 (toll free in the United States), or +1-202-501-4444 if you are outside the United States.

Leaving Shanghai Consular District?

If you are departing from Shanghai consular district after a long stay here, and you formally registered your stay with the U.S. consulate, please be sure to "cancel" your registration when you leave.

You can deregister yourself by visiting the travelregistration.state.gov site if you were previously registered through this site.

If you previously submitted your registration at the U.S. consulate, you may deregister

yourself by sending an email request to ShanghaiACS@state.gov.



"ESTA" (Electronic System for Travel Authorization)

The Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) is an automated system that will assist in determining eligibility for foreigners to travel to the United States under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP), and whether such travel poses any law enforcement or security risk. Upon completion of an ESTA application, a VWP traveler will be notified of his or her eligibility to travel to the United States under the VWP.

For more information about the VWP, visit the following website:

http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/id_visa/business_pleasure/vwp/vwp.xml

Effective January 12, 2009, all nationals or citizens of VWP countries who plan to travel to the United States for temporary business or pleasure under the VWP will be required to receive an authorization through ESTA prior to boarding a U.S.-bound airplane or

vessel. Accompanied and unaccompanied children, regardless of age, will be required to obtain an independent ESTA approval. A third party, such as a relative or travel agent, will be permitted to submit an ESTA application on behalf of a VWP traveler.



ESTA will be implemented as a mandatory program for all VWP travelers 60 days after publication of a notice in the Federal Register. DHS antici-

pates that the Secretary of Homeland Security will issue that notice in November 2008, with ESTA becoming mandatory for all VWP travelers on January 12, 2009.

Beginning August 1, 2008, the system became available in English only to process voluntary applications. By mid-October, 2008, the system will be available in a variety of languages to facilitate the voluntary application process for the overwhelming majority of VWP travelers.

NOTE: Though the information and questions on the ESTA web site will be translated into different languages, the ESTA application must be completed in English.

For more information about ESTA, visit the following website:
http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/id_visa/esta/esta_faqs.xml

College Students - U.S. State Dept. Summer 2009 Internship

What could a student internship mean to you at the U.S. Department of State? It's an opportunity for you to get an inside look at the different types of positions and responsibilities available in foreign affairs. You can also gain valuable work experience that will help you in virtually every endeavor, whether you choose to work in government or in the private sector.

At the U.S. Department of State, we like to say we're the face of America to the world. As an intern, you will be, too. Some of our students work in Washington, DC, and others have the opportunity to work at an embassy overseas. Positions are both paid and unpaid, and many are available during spring, summer or fall.

U.S. citizens who are still in college and have completed at least 60 credit hours may apply for a Summer 2009 internship.

The application deadline is November 1, 2008. Visit the following website for details:

<http://careers.state.gov/students/programs.html#SIP>.

NOTE: The registration process opens during the beginning of September 2008. In the meantime, sign up to receive email notifications by clicking the email update icon on the webpage.

Shanghai Consulate News for Americans

U.S. Consulate General,
Shanghai, China

1038 West Nanjing Road,
Westgate Mall, 8th Floor

Tel: (86-21) 3217-4650 ext.
2102, 2103, 2114, 2142

Fax: (86-21) 6217-2071

After Hours Emergencies:
(86-21) 6433-3936

Open 8:00am - 11:30am
and 1:30pm - 3:30pm
Monday to Friday.

*Closed on Tuesday
afternoons, weekends
and holidays.

[http://shanghai.usembassy-
china.org.cn/](http://shanghai.usembassy-china.org.cn/)

Someone Asked the Consul:

Do I need the new U.S. Passport Card?

The U.S. Department of State produces the new U.S. Passport Card, which is a convenient, wallet-sized document (similar to a driver's license in size and shape) to be used for re-entry into the U.S. at land-border crossings and sea ports of entry for U.S. citizens arriving from Mexico, Canada, the Caribbean and Bermuda.

The U.S. Passport Card is being issued in response to the needs of U.S. border resident communities. The card has the same period of validity as a passport book: ten years for adults, five years for children 15 and younger. Adults who already have a full-validity U.S. Passport Book may apply for the U.S. Passport Card as a passport renewal and pay only \$20. First-time applicants pay \$45 for adult cards and \$35 for children.

Please note that the U.S. Passport Card cannot be used for international air travel. Otherwise, it carries the rights and privileges of the U.S. Passport Book and is adjudicated to the exact same standards.

http://travel.state.gov/passport/ppt_card/ppt_card_3926.html

Links of Interest to Overseas Citizens

If you have difficulty accessing the official Federal Voting Assistance Program website, you may also try the following links to get voting information.



Association of
Americans
Resident Overseas (AARO)

<http://aaro.org/>



Federation of
American
Women's Clubs
Overseas

<http://www.fawco.org/>



Expatriate Exchange
www.expatsexchange.com/



American Citizens
Abroad (ACA)

<http://www.aca.ch/>



Overseas
Vote Founda-
tion

www.overseasvotefoundation.org



Democrats Abroad

Tel (202) 863-8177

Fax (202) 863-8063

www.democratsabroad.org
info@democratsabroad.org



Republicans
Abroad

Tel: (202) 608-1423

Fax: (202) 608-1431

www.republicansabroad.org
chair-
man@republicansabroad.org

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