



Shanghai Consulate News for Americans

Issue 15

March, 2009

ACS Appointment System

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:

- * Leaving Consular District?
- * Criminal Record Checks or Certificates of Good

Warm spring greetings from the American Citizen Services (ACS) Section! In order to serve you better and reduce unnecessary wait time at our office for services, **on February 2nd, 2009**, US Consulate Shanghai's American Citizen Services (ACS) office implemented an appointment system.

We hope to provide even more timely response and assist you in planning ahead and budgeting your time for services offered including birth certificates, passport services, notaries, marriage-ability affidavits, and more. We have seen the success of this system in Hong Kong, Guangzhou, and Beijing, and would like to offer it to citizens coming to the Shanghai Consulate.

Customers are required to make an appointment via the ACS website http://shanghai.usembassy-china.org.cn/general_information_acs.html for all routine services, including:

- ** Obtaining a U.S. passport for minors and adults
- ** Adding visa pages to a U.S. passport.
- ** Applying for a Consular Report of Birth Abroad (CRBA) and first U.S. passport for children.
- ** Returning to submit additional documents for a pending CRBA application.
- ** Notarial Services.
- ** Marriage-ability Affidavit.

Our ACS business hours will remain the same: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday: 8:00 – 11:30 am , 1:30 – 3:30 pm

Tuesday: 8:00 – 11:30 am ONLY

Please keep in mind that ACS is closed for American and local holidays; please see our website for the most up-to-date information.

Visitors may receive several services during the same visit to American Citizen Services.

Please make a separate appointment for each individual service. In order to allow for sufficient time to clear security and enter the waiting room, please arrive at least (10) fifteen minutes before your appointment time.

Scheduled appointments will be automatically canceled for applicants who arrive more than (15) fifteen minutes after their scheduled time. Applicants who arrive late must make a new appointment via the ACS website.

No appointments are necessary to:

- ** Apply for Reports of Death
- * Report a passport lost / stolen when you are in urgent need to travel outside of China. Bring proof of pending travel to ACS
- ** Warden Registration may be done online
- ** Pick up passport and/or Consular Report of Birth Abroad (CRBA) upon notification when they are ready
- ** Pick up Social Security checks or ask questions about Social Security benefits
- ** Submit additional documents requested for a pending passport application
- ** Register to vote
- ** Attend Tuesday American Citizens' Visa Hour at 3-4pm
- ** Attend Wednesday Education Hour at 3:30-4:30pm

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. Please be sure to schedule appoint-

ments on-line at http://shanghai.usembassy-china.org.cn/general_information_acs.html

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

Apr. 06, 2009, Mon.

Tomb Sweeping Day
(Chinese Holiday)

May. 01, 2009, Fri.

International Labor Day
(Chinese Holiday)

Electronic Applications Now Required

Starting February 15, the Shanghai American Citizen Services Section will require use of electronic application forms for all passport services, including passport renewals and adding visa pages (Form DS-11, DS-82, DS-5504 or DS-4085). After filling out your application on-line, print and bring your application to your appointment.

You may fill out the required forms at the ACS website

<http://shanghai.usembassy-china.org.cn/passports.html#last>

Failure to fill out applications on-line, instead using handwritten applications, will delay processing of your application.

If your passport is ever lost or stolen, you can print out an Statement Regarding Lost or Stolen Passport (DS-64). And if you are applying for a minor's passport and both parents cannot sign the application together, you can print out a Statement of Consent (DS-3053). These applications can be handwritten.

Security Situation: Travel to Western China

The United States Consulate General in Shanghai informs American citizens of an increased security presence in many Tibetan areas of China, including the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR), Tibetan communities in urban centers outside the TAR, and areas near universities established for ethnic minorities. According to the Sichuan Foreign Affairs Office, Ganzi Prefecture, Muli Tibetan Autonomous County in Liang Shan Prefecture, and Aba, Hong Yuan, Ruo Er Gai, Ma Er Kang and Rang Tang Counties in Aba Prefecture have been closed to foreigners. According to the Sichuan Foreign Affairs Office, Jiuzhaigou County of Aba Prefecture will stay open to foreigners.

For the latest security information, Americans living and traveling abroad should regularly monitor the Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs web site at <http://travel.state.gov>, where the current Worldwide Caution, Travel Alerts, and Travel

Warnings can be found. Up-to-date information on security can also be obtained by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll free in the U.S. or Canada, or, for callers outside the U.S. and Canada, a regular toll line at 1-317-472-

2328. These numbers are available from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays). The U.S. Consulate General Shanghai can be reached 24 hours per day at 86-21-6433-3936.

U.S. citizens residing or traveling in Shanghai, Jiangsu Province, Zhejiang Province, and Anhui Province are reminded to register with the U.S. Consulate General Shanghai by entering your travel itinerary and contact information at: <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs>. In case of difficulties registering online, please contact us via Email.

U.S. citizens residing or traveling in other parts of China can contact the closest U.S. Embassy or Consulate.

U.S. Embassy Beijing: Tian

Ze Road intersection of An Jia Lou Road, Chaoyang District. Telephone number during regular business hours and for after hours emergencies: 86-10-8531-4000, Email: amcit-beijing@state.gov.

U.S. Consulate General Chengdu: Number 4, Lingshi-guan Road, Section 4, Renmin Nanlu, Chengdu 610041, tel. 86-28-8558-3992, Email: consularchengdu@state.gov. For after hours emergencies, please call 86-1370-800-1422.

U.S. Consulate General Guangzhou: The Consular Section is located at 5th Floor, Tianyu Garden (II phase), 136-146 Lin He Zhong Lu, Tianhe District, Guangzhou 510133, tel. (86-20) 8518-7605, Email: GuangzhouACS@state.gov. For after hours emergencies, please call 86-20-8121-8000.

U.S. Consulate General Shenyang: No. 52, 14th Wei Road, Heping District, Shenyang 110003; tel. (86-24) 2322-1198, Email: ShenyangACS@state.gov. For after hours emergencies, please call 86-137-0988-9307.

Federal Tax Information for U.S. Taxpayers Living

American Citizen Services is happy to announce that the Internal Revenue Service has recently published a new IRS



brochure to assist taxpayers abroad.

Publication 4732, Federal Tax Information for U.S. Taxpayers Living Abroad was developed as a resource to assist taxpayers in locating useful tax information to help in the preparation of

their tax returns and/or in resolving tax account problems.

This publication is available on the Web at: <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p4732.pdf>

Tips For A Smooth Consular Visit

Please make sure you have read our location, hours of operation and have taken note of Chinese and American holidays before planning your visit.

Come early for passport renewal: Make appointment at least one month ahead of your Chinese Visa expiration date, since passport processing time is normally about 10 working days.

For passport applicants: Complete but don't sign passport applications ahead of time - this considerably shortens your visit.

For passport appli-

cants: Pay special attention to passport photographs. We will ask you to get other photos if they don't meet State Department's requirements.

For passport and additional visa page appli-

cants: Please remember to fill in your social security number. This is required by law.

For minor (below age 16) passport applicants: Parents - please remember to bring your child's original birth certificate when applying for a new or replacement passport.

For notary clients: Please make sure you have read your document(s) to be notarized and know the contents. **Do not sign your document**, but make sure that all other blanks are filled in before coming to the Consulate.

For notary clients: If your signature must be notarized and witnessed, you must bring witnesses and their IDs with you.

Please remember: The fewer items you bring to the Consulate (i.e. backpacks, laptops, cellphones, etc.), the more quickly the security check will be for everyone.

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.



Shanghai Consulate News for Americans

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Floor

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2142

Fax: (86-21) 6217-2071

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

Avoid Delays in Receiving Refund Checks for Tax Year 2008:

U.S. citizen taxpayers in the Shanghai Consular District are reminded that they can often avoid unnecessary delays in receiving their tax refund checks from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) <http://www.irs.gov/>. Taxpayers who have a checking, savings or IRA account with a bank or other financial institution in the U.S. are encouraged to fill in boxes 73(a)(b)(c) of Form 1040 with routing and account number information. This allows the IRS to electronically transfer any refund due to you directly into your account, a process that is much faster, safer and more convenient than the alternative. Non-electronic refunds must first be printed on checks, and then mailed to the Consulate in Shanghai where they must be re-addressed by hand and sent via registered mail to the taxpayer's home address – a process that can add many months to the waiting time for a refund. (Additional information can be found in Form 1040 Instruction booklets available at IRS website: <http://www.irs.gov/>.)

Criminal Record Checks or Certificates of Good

ACS has recently been contacted by many American Citizens who are being asked by authorities or employers to provide "certificates of good conduct" or "proof of no criminal record" from the United States.

The United States Department of State has a web page that lists with options on how to obtain proof of their lack of a criminal record, either

from local police departments or from the Federal Bureau of Information.

Please note that U.S. Embassies/Consulates do not generally provide fingerprint services.

Please visit [http://
travel.state.gov/travel/tips/
emergencies/
emergencies_1201.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/emergencies/emergencies_1201.html) for
more information.

