



Shanghai Consulate News for Americans News for Americans

Issue 19

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Travel Hints

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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As the fall travel season approaches, please check the passports of all your family members to verify that they are all still valid and do not expire any time soon!

- **Check your passport's expiration date.** Some countries including China, the Philippines, and Indonesia require that a U.S. passport be valid for at least six months for visa issuance or visa-free entry. For information about a specific country's visa and entry requirements, the best source of information would be that country's Embassy or Consulate; however, you can also visit the State Department's website at www.travel.state.gov/travel/travel_1744.html to see country specific information about your destination.
- **Children's Passports.** Check the expiration date of your child's passport – remember that passports for children under 16 are only valid for 5 years.

- **Make an appointment.** All non-emergency consular services require an appointment. You can make an appointment online through our website: http://shanghai.usembassy-china.org.cn/general_information_acs.html. It typically takes 10 working days from the time you apply to receive a full validity passport. There is a high level of demand for appointment slots in the days and weeks before a holiday and during the summer school holiday.

- **To avoid a long wait,** try not to schedule your appointment for Mondays or the days immediately before or after a holiday when wait times are longest.

- **Check the website.** You can find the answer to many common questions, as well as useful forms and instructions, on the Consulate website at http://shanghai.usembassy-china.org.cn/general_information_acs.

Special points of interest:

- * Preparing for the Upcoming Flu Season
- * Pneumonic Plague
- * Avoid Delays in Receiving Refund Checks

Please remember that the days just before and just after a holiday are often extremely busy and you can expect significantly longer wait 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:

Sep. 7 Mon.
U.S. Labor Day

Oct. 1-6 Thur.-Tues.
Chinese National Day & Mid-Autumn Festival

Oct. 12 Mon.
Columbus Day

Upcoming Holidays and Other Closures

Reminder: Provide SSN on Passport Applications

Section 6039E of the Internal Revenue Code (26 U.S.C. S 6039E) requires applicants to provide their Social Security Number, if they have one, when they apply for a U.S. passport or renewal of a U.S. passport.

Form DS-11 Application and form DS-82 Application for a U.S. Passport



advise the passport applicant of the IRS requirements and the fact that there is a \$500 penalty for failure to provide the information enforced by the IRS.

Preparing for H1N1 and the Upcoming Flu Season

This spring we were confronted with an outbreak of a troubling flu virus called 2009-H1N1. As the fall flu season approaches, it is critical that we reinvigorate our preparedness efforts in order to mitigate the effects of this

virus on our communities both at home and abroad.

Taking precautions for this fall's flu season is a responsibility we all share. Visit Flu.gov to make sure you

are ready, learn how you can help promote public awareness, and learn what steps you can take to prepare and do your part to mitigate the effects of H1N1.

Security Situation - Travel Warnings and Alerts

Security reminder: It is prudent for you and your family to review your personal security profile and to be aware of your surroundings at all times.

The Department of State has issued a new Worldwide Caution to update information on the continuing threat of terrorist actions and violence against American citizens and interests throughout the world. This information is available at http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/pa/pa_1161.html.

Since our previous Newsletter for July 2009, the U.S. Department of State has issued new Travel Warnings for the following countries. This information is available at http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html.

Afghanistan 07/23/2009
Burundi 07/22/2009
Haiti 07/14/2009
Iran 07/01/2009
Kenya 07/24/2009
Nigeria 07/17/2009

Travel Warnings are issued to describe long-term, protracted conditions that make a country dangerous or unstable. A Travel Warning is also issued when the U.S. Government's ability to assist American citizens is constrained due to the closure of an embassy or consulate or because of a drawdown of its staff.

The U.S. Department of State also has issued new Travel Alerts:

Argentina 07/14/2009
China - H1N1 Quarantine Measures 07/09/2009
China - Security Concerns in the City of Urumqi 07/09/2009
Gabon 07/21/2009
Honduras 06/29/2009
Niger 07/24/2009

Travel Alerts are issued to disseminate information about short-term conditions generally within a particular country or region 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. This information is available at http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/pa/pa_1766.html.

The most up-to-date information regarding permitted and prohibited items on flights can be viewed online at <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: http://travel.state.gov/visa/americans/americans_1252.html. Students traveling abroad may wish to visit the State Department site designed for them: <http://studentsabroad.state.gov/>.

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.

Travel Alert to China: H1N1 Update

July 09, 2009

The Department of State alerts U.S. citizens to the quarantine measures imposed by the Government of China in response to the 2009-H1N1 pandemic that may affect travel to China. This Travel Alert updates the June 19, 2009 Travel Alert in order to address the potential for quarantine of unaccompanied minors. This Travel Alert expires on September 30, 2009.

In May 2009, China implemented a policy that allows it to quarantine arriving passengers who exhibit fever or flu-like symptoms if they are arriving from a country which has cases of 2009-H1N1, including the U.S. Although the overall percentage of Americans being quarantined remains low, the seemingly random nature of the selection process makes it almost impossible to predict when a traveler may be placed into quarantine. Travelers with even a slightly elevated body temperature risk being placed into hospital quarantine, while passengers sitting in close proximity to another traveler with fever or flu-like symptoms may be taken to a specially-designated hotel for a quarantine of approximately seven days, even if they show no symptoms themselves.

The Department of State has received reports of minors traveling without a parent or adult guardian being taken into quarantine upon arrival. Some of the children were under 10 years of age. Parents considering sending their children unaccompanied to China are urged to consider postponing their travel until the quarantine policy ends or until 2009-H1N1 Influenza subsides. In addition, there have been some instances where children have been separated from their parents during quarantine because only the parent or the child tested positive for 2009-H1N1 or exhibited symptoms. Travelers are advised that Chinese health authorities have not issued a country-wide policy on keeping family members together in quarantine, and the practice of keeping young children with their parents or guardians varies by

Quarantine facility. In some hospitals, parents have been denied access to their children who were in isolated quarantine. In these situations, there exists the possibility of Chinese medical personnel administering medications to minors without parental permission.

The Department of State continues to receive reports about poor quarantine conditions, including the unavailability of suitable drinking water and food, unsanitary conditions, the lack of telephone access, the absence of English-speaking staff, and limited availability of English-language interpreters.

Travelers to China are reminded that all foreign travelers, including U.S. citizens, are obliged to follow local procedures regarding quarantines and any other public health-related measures. The U.S. Embassy is unable to influence the duration of stay in quarantine for affected travelers. The Chinese government will not compensate people for lost travel expenses. Travelers to China are urged to consider purchasing travel insurance to protect against losses in the event they are quarantined.

For more information on US Government policy during a pandemic, and for travel safety info, please see the State Department's "Pandemic/Avian Influenza" and "Remain in Country" fact sheets on www.travel.state.gov. Further information about 2009-H1N1 Influenza can be found at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control website at www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/, the US Government pandemic influenza website at www.pandemicflu.gov, and the WHO website at who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/en/index.html.

U.S. citizens are strongly encouraged to register with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate through the Department of State's travel registration website. By registering, American citizens can receive the Embassy's most recent security and safety updates during their trip. Registration also ensures that U.S. citizens can be reached should an emergency arise either abroad or at home. While consular officers will do

their utmost to assist Americans in a crisis, travelers always should be aware that local authorities bear primary responsibility for the welfare of people living or traveling in their jurisdictions.

Beijing: The U.S. Embassy is located at 55 An Jia Lou Road, Chaoyang Dist. American Citizen Services section can be contacted during regular business hours and for after-hours emergencies at (86-10) 8531-4000. The consular district includes the following provinces/regions: Beijing, Tianjin, Shandong, Shanxi, Inner Mongolia, Ningxia, Shaanxi, Qinghai, Xinjiang, Hebei, Henan, Hubei, Hunan, and Jiangxi.

Chengdu: 4 Lingshiguan Road, Section 4, Renmin Nanlu; tel. (86-28) 8558-3992, 8555-3119; after-hours emergencies (86-28) 1370 8001 422. This consular district includes the following provinces/regions: Guizhou, Sichuan, Tibet, and Yunnan, as well as the municipality of Chongqing.

Guangzhou: 5th Floor, Tianyu Garden (II phase), 136-146 Lin He Zhong Lu, Tianhe District; tel. (86-20) 8518-7605; after-hours emergencies (86-20) 8121-8000. This consular district includes the following provinces/regions of China: Guangdong, Guangxi, Hainan, and Fujian.

Shanghai: Westgate Mall, 8th Floor, 1038 Nanjing Xi Lu; tel. (86-21) 3217-4650; after-hours emergencies (86-21) 6433-3936. This consular district includes the following provinces/regions of China: Shanghai, Anhui, Jiangsu and Zhejiang.

Shenyang: No. 52, 14th Wei Road, Heping District; tel. (86-24) 2322-2374; after-hours emergencies (86-24) 137-0988-9307. This consular district includes the following provinces/regions: Liaoning, Heilongjiang, and Jilin.

Travelers may obtain up-to-date information on security conditions by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll-free in the U.S. or outside the U.S. and Canada on a regular toll line at 1-202-501-4444.

Warden Message: Pneumonic Plague

According to Associated Press and Xinhua news reports, there has been a small outbreak of pneumonic plague in the rural town of Ziketan, in Qinghai Province's Hainan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture. Xinhua and other official Chinese news media have reported that the town and its vicinity have been closed off. The media further reports that there have been three deaths and nine other individuals infected to date, most of whom are relatives of the first patient.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), plague recurs yearly in many parts of the world, including the United States and China. Plague is caused by a bac-

terium found in rodents and fleas and is usually spread from rodents to humans through flea bites, and through inhalation of coughed droplets containing the plague bacteria. Transmission requires close proximity with an ill person or animal. As the CDC website states, symptoms of pneumonic plague include high fever with shortness of breath, chest pain, cough and sometimes bloody sputum.

Travelers to the area are advised that although pneumonic plague transmission beyond close contacts is rare, World Health Organization (WHO) guidance states it is prudent to avoid contact with people or animals suspected of being ill with pneumonic plague, and to

limit exposure to flea bites, poor sanitary conditions as well as enclosed spaces with poor ventilation.

According to the CDC, travelers exhibiting symptoms should seek immediate medical attention, as early treatment with antibiotics within 24 hours is essential to treatment success.

Additional information on infectious diseases, including pneumonic plague, can be found at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/content/diseases.aspx, and the World Health Organization (WHO) website who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs267/en/.

Tips For A Smooth Consular Visit

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

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

For passport applicants: Pay special attention to passport photo-

graphs. We will ask you to get other photos if they don't meet State Department's requirements.

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.

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



California to Hold a Special Primary Election

On Tuesday, September 1, 2009, there will be a special primary election in the 10th Congressional District of California to determine the political parties' candidates to appear on the ballot for a special general election to be held on Tuesday, November 3, 2009, to fill the seat vacated by Representative Ellen O. Tauscher. If one candidate receives a majority of the votes (50% + 1) in the special primary election, no special general election will be held.

To determine if your legal residence is in the 10th Con-

gressional District, click on <http://www.fvap.gov/reference/electoff.html> and then on "United States House of Representatives." If you qualify to vote in this special primary election please go to www.fvap.gov and request a ballot for this special election by completing and submitting a registration and ballot request, Federal Post Card Application (FPCA). County Election Office information is available at http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/elections_d.htm.



DEADLINES:

For September 1, 2009 Primary-Absentee Voter Registration: August 17, 2009 Ballot Request for Registered Voters: August 25, 2009 Ballot Return: September 1, 2009

For November 3, 2009 General-Absentee Voter Registration: October 19, 2009 Ballot Request for Registered Voter: October 27, 2009 Ballot Return: November 3, 2009

Faxes claiming to be from the IRS are not legitimate

We have recently received many phone calls and emails regarding a bogus faxed IRS letter and Form W-8BEN (Certificate of Foreign Status of Beneficial Owner for United States Tax Withholding) asking non-residents to provide personal information such as account numbers, PINs, mother's maiden name and passport number. The legitimate IRS Form W-8BEN is sent to the recipients by their financial institutions, not the IRS and is used to establish appropriate tax withholding for foreign individuals.

This scam has been around for about 5 years circulating mainly in South America, Europe, and the Caribbean and it has now surfaced in Japan. For more information on this specific scam please go to the IRS webpage.

The IRS generally does not send faxes or emails to taxpayers, nor does the IRS discuss tax account matters with taxpayers via email or fax. Moreover, the IRS never requests security-related personal information, such as PIN numbers from taxpayers. Please be suspicious of any fax, email or phone call asking for any security-related personal information.

Those who have received questionable faxes or emails claiming to come from the IRS may forward it to the following address: phishing@irs.gov. You may also forward suspicious faxes or e-mails to the Federal Trade Commission at spam@uce.gov or call 1-877-IDTHEFT (438-4338). For information about other scams and what you can do to protect yourself (or what to do if you are the victim of a scam), visit the U.S. Department of State website.

Shanghai Consulate News for Americans

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Shanghai, China
1038 West Nanjing
Road, Westgate Mall, 8th
Floor

Tel: (86-21) 3217-4650

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

Avoid Delays in Receiving Refund Checks

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/>.)

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](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 ap-

plication together, you can print out a Statement of Consent (DS-3053). These applications can be handwritten.

