



# Shanghai Consulate News for Americans

Issue 41

June, 2011

This newsletter is published by the American Citizen 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](mailto:ShanghaiACS@state.gov).

## Looking for Emergency Response Team Volunteers

If you are living in East China and are interested in serving the American citizen community here the U.S. Consulate General in Shanghai has an opportunity to volunteer. We are looking for volunteers for our Emergency Response Team (formerly our Warden system). Volunteer ERT member **responsibilities include:**

Shanghai.

While there is no formal time commitment, we expect that volunteers are available via email and/or phone and willing to assist in the event of an emergency.

If you are interested in volunteering please send the following information to [ShanghaiACS@state.gov](mailto:ShanghaiACS@state.gov) and put "ERT volunteer" in the subject line.

1. In an emergency, the American Citizen Services Unit would reach out to ERT members to request assistance in contacting specific American citizens. This contact would be case-specific, based on the nature and location of the incident rather than a mass-list of all American Citizens in that district.
2. In an emergency the American Citizen Services Unit may need ERT members to share information with Americans in their area. The Consulate has no way to contact the many Americans who have not registered their presence at [travelregistration.state.gov](http://travelregistration.state.gov). We would look to our ERT members to share information with the U.S. citizens in their networks (social, professional, online, etc) in the event of an emergency.
3. Emergency Response Team volunteers must respect the privacy of individual Americans and not release any information concerning American citizens, except to the U.S. Consulate General in

- Your full name and U.S. passport number.
- Current address (if in Shanghai please include what district you live in)
- Preferred email address
- Current phone number (mobile and home if you have both)
- Current place of employment (name and address). This helps us know where our ERT members are in the event of an emergency.
- Current groups you are affiliated with (schools, local social networks, volunteer groups, blogs, housing complexes, etc). This helps us know who our ERT members may be able to get the message out to in the event of an emergency.
- Your Level of familiarity with Mandarin Chinese language.

On behalf of the U.S. Consulate General in Shanghai, we thank you for your service to the American citizen community in our consular district.

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### Special points of interest:

- \* Expats to Enjoy Social Security Benefit in China
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- \* ACS Address, Phone, Fax, Hours, and Website

## Upcoming Holidays And Other Closures

A full list of all of our holiday closings is online at <http://shanghai.usembassy-china.org.cn/holidays.html>. The Consulate will be **CLOSED** on the following days:

**July 28, Thursday: Administrative Day**

## New Consular Emergency Phone Number: 021-3217-4650

To our fellow U.S. citizens in Shanghai, Anhui, Jiangsu, and Zhejiang:

**U.S. Consulate's new consular emergency phone number** (American Citizen Services): 021-3217-4650.

We are pleased to announce that our afterhours phone number is now the same as our daytime phone number: 021-3217-4650. Please note that the phone options have changed as well. Please delete the old afterhours ACS number from your records (old: 6433-3936).

From 8am to 5pm, calls to the new phone number are answered by the small staff in our American Citizen Services (ACS) unit. Afterhours ACS

calls are routed to a central operator. Afterhours calls related to ACS matters requiring immediate assistance **will be forwarded to the Consulate's Duty Officer.**

Non-emergency ACS questions can be sent to us by email: [ShanghaiACS@state.gov](mailto:ShanghaiACS@state.gov). We hope that you will always check our website first, of course:

<http://shanghai.usconsulate.gov> or <http://shanghai.usembassy-china.org.cn>. Another great resource is <http://travel.state.gov>, which has travel advice, procedural instructions, information on conditions in every country on the planet, downloadable forms, and much, much more.

A quick reminder, too, that the American Citizen Services (ACS) unit of the **Consulate's Consular Section is not at** the same location as the main consulate building. The main consulate is at the corner of Huaihai Lu and Wulumuqi Lu, but the ACS office is at 1038 W Nanjing Rd - Westgate 8th floor - 梅龙镇广场8楼 (Mei'long'zhen guang'chang).



## Travel Warnings And Alerts

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

Since our previous Newsletter, the U.S. Department of State has issued new Travel Warnings for the following countries:

<u><a href="#">Israel, the West Bank and Gaza</a></u>	06/22/2011
<u><a href="#">Sudan</a></u>	06/22/2011
<u><a href="#">Cote d'Ivoire</a></u>	06/16/2011
<u><a href="#">Philippines</a></u>	06/14/2011
<u><a href="#">Burundi</a></u>	06/01/2011
<u><a href="#">Yemen</a></u>	05/25/2011

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. This information is available at

[http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/tw/tw\\_1764.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html).

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

<u><a href="#">Japan</a></u>	06/09/2011
<u><a href="#">Pacific Typhoon Season</a></u>	06/02/2011
<u><a href="#">Hurricane Season 2011</a></u>	06/01/2011

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 informa-

tion is available at :

[http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/pa/pa\\_1766.html](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](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.

## News: US Expats to Enjoy Social Security Benefit in China

(from chinadaily.com.cn) BEIJING – Beginning in July, Americans in China will enjoy the same social security rights as Chinese nationals but the new law means they will have to pay dual fees to both nations for separate coverage.

The Social Insurance Law will take effect on July 1 of this year and will for the first time apply to all foreigners living with a visa in China. "Foreign workers and employers will pay a similar rate of insurance contribution from their incomes to the government, as Chinese workers do," said Bai Liangze at the Chinese Academy of Personnel Science, who is familiar with social welfare regulations.

There are 71,493 US citizens working and living in China, which makes up about 12 percent of China's total foreign population, according to the sixth national census released by the National Bureau of Statistics in April. Up until now, employers of foreign workers in China have reimbursed employees for

their medical and maternity expenditures because it costs less for employers and employees each year. "Foreign employees who work in China for longer than six months must be included in the social security system," said Xu Yanjun, a deputy director at the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security. "They need to contribute to pension accounts for at least 15 years to collect a pension after retiring."

The new law will allow foreign employees to receive similar medical, work injury, disability, unemployment and maternity benefits in China. In the US, most Americans in most cases can only receive social security benefits after they retire, Chinese nationals are partially reimbursed for medical expenses through China's social security net. Shanghai-based law firm Haworth and Lexon estimated that a foreigner holding a working visa in Shanghai will pay a maximum 1,285 yuan (\$198) per month to the central government after the Social Insurance Law goes into effect. In Beijing, a

Chinese national pays between 1,000 yuan to 1,200 yuan a month. The new law's monthly payments, taken automatically from monthly paychecks, will be on top of existing income taxes. The Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security still has not released details about what foreigners will be paying to the central government each month but said it will do so after July 1.

Currently, Chinese nationals (depending on which province they live in) pay at least 14 percent of their monthly income to social security: 11 percent to pensions, 2 percent for medical and 1 percent for unemployment. In Beijing, employees don't pay part of their monthly salaries for maternity or disability benefits. In the US, the social security tax rate is 12.4 percent. But joining the Chinese social security system means a US citizen will have to pay two social security contributions, one fee in China and another in the US.

(Continued on Page 6)

## Safety & Security On The Streets Of Shanghai

### Tips to Stay Safe in the Traffic

- Wear a helmet on a scooter/motorcycle/electric moped
- Wear a bike helmet when you're on a bicycle
- Wear a seatbelt (the front seats of most taxis have a seatbelt)
- Cross streets carefully. Look both ways – often vehicles go the wrong way on one-way streets.
- Don't try to enforce traffic laws or traffic signals by putting yourself in the path of a vehicle
- Get a receipt from the taxi driver

Sure, traffic here often goes at a slower pace than in a lot of places back home. But whether your skull hits the pavement / vehicle / immovable object at 10 mph or 40 mph the effect is about the same! Please be safe!

### New Scam Targeting Expats

Although anecdotal evidence supports the following information, the PSB (Police Security Bureau) has not provided official notification regarding warnings listed here. This information is being provided to alert American citizens of potential criminal activities.

Recently multiple people from different parts of Shanghai have reported themselves to be the victims of a scam targeting expats. The victims were stopped by a "PSB officer" (sometimes more than one) on the road (usually near a spot like western styled restaurants frequented by expats) and asked to show their passports. When they couldn't produce them, they were asked to pay a penalty of 500 RMB.

Some victims have checked with the PSB and confirmed that the person who they had encountered were NOT real PSB officers. The following precautions are recommended in case you find yourself in the same situation:

1. If stopped by a "PSB officer", ask to see his/her police card (警官证 Jǐng Guān Zhèng). If the "PSB officer" cannot produce it, you will know that he/she is not real.
2. It is possible that one could be asked by a PSB officer who is checking passports. In this case, if there is an issue, they would take you to a PSB office and would definitely not ask you to pay a fine on the spot.
3. If they keep asking you to pay a penalty on-site, call 110 for the police. They have an expat service.

## News: Foreigners May Face Rail Ticket Delay

According to Shanghai Daily, foreign rail passengers may need more time to buy bullet train tickets in local booths once a "real-name" booking policy is introduced later this month.

Unlike Chinese passengers who can just show their personal identification (ID) cards, foreigners need to provide passports or other documents, according to the policy issued by railway authorities. "The information on these documents will require more time for the ticket booths to verify and input," a railway official, surnamed Dong, told Shanghai Daily at Shanghai Railway Station on May 13, 2011.

Dong added that not all railway staff, unlike their airline counterparts, are proficient in English and other foreign lan-



guages, which could lead to misunderstandings.

The real-name ticket buying system, which is aimed at curbing rail ticket scalping and improving security, came into effect on June 1 throughout China.

All bullet train services prefixed by the letters "G", "D" and "C" require passenger identification (ID) to buy a ticket.

There are 23 types of documents recognized by the ID system. Foreigners can buy tickets using their passports, temporary residence permits, exit-entry permits or diplomatic certificates as identification (ID).

One certificate can only buy one ticket for one trip, rail officials said. Passengers should also show the certificates and tickets when boarding the trains.

To speed up the process, Dong ad-

vised foreign passengers to use **residence permits**, which are issued by local police and easy to recognize, instead of passports, which vary from country to country.

At one rail ticket outlet in downtown Jing'an Temple, staff said they may input the numbers of foreigners' certificates, instead of names which may be "hard to spell."

If foreigners fail to carry their certificates, they need a letter from their consulate to prove their identities and go to railway police for temporary certificates, authorities said.

Rail officials stressed that automatic ticket machines at railway stations will only recognize Chinese residents' ID cards. But passengers with passports can book tickets via a hotline at 95105105.

*(From Zha Mingjie and Zhao Wen, Shanghai Daily)*

## Smart Traveler i-Phone Application

Smart Traveler, the official State Department app for U.S. travelers, invites you to see the world with easy access to frequently updated official country information, travel alerts, travel warnings, maps, U.S. embassy locations, and more.

To read reviews and access the free download please check out the following link: <http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/smart-traveler/id442693988?mt=8>.



## Leaving Shanghai Consular District?

If you are departing the Shanghai consular district after a long stay here and you formally joined the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP), please do not forget to end your enrollment when you leave.

You can end your enrollment by visiting the <https://travelregistration.state.gov> site if you previously enrolled through this site.

If you previously submitted a paper registration form to the U.S. consulate, you may unregister yourself by sending an email request to:

[ShanghaiACS@state.gov](mailto:ShanghaiACS@state.gov).

## Reminder: Appointments Mandatory For Routine ACS Services

As the number of U.S. citizens residing in and visiting our Consular District (Shanghai, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Anhui provinces) has grown rapidly in recent years, the number of people who come to the Shanghai ACS office for consular services has grown just as quickly. In light of this and our limited physical space, we must strictly enforce our mandatory appointment policy for non-emergency services. The objective of this policy is to reduce customers' wait time (especially during high demand periods) and to reduce crowding in our waiting room.

The ACS unit has had a mandatory appointment policy since 2009. Visitors may receive multiple services during the same visit -- please make a separate appointment for each service (e.g., to apply for passports and obtain a notary service, make two appointments). Arrive a few minutes before your appointment to allow time to go through security.

ACS appointments must be made using our website: <http://shanghai.usconsulate.gov> or <http://shanghai.usembassy-china.org.cn>

We have a one-in/one-out system to accommodate a limited number of people who are unable to make an appointment or who need a service prior to the first available appointment. Each person who arrives without an appointment must wait outside our office until the previous person without an appointment departs. We try our best to accommodate as many customers as we can each day. Because the time required to serve a customer varies widely (depending on factors like the complexity of the service, amount of data-entry and data-verification required, etc.), it is not possible to predict how long a person without an

appointment will wait to be served. If you come without an appointment, your wait might be twenty minutes or more than two hours. If you arrive without an appointment and there are already many others without an appointment waiting ahead of you, you may be asked to return to our office at another time/day. This helps explain why we much prefer that every customer make an appointment (even though we allow one person without appointment at a time to come into the section for a non-emergency service).

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

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The following services do not need an appointment:

- Report an emergency or urgent matter (e.g., death, hospitalization, or arrest of a U.S. citizen)
- Report a passport lost / stolen / damaged when you urgently need to travel outside of China -- bring proof of impending travel. (Note: lost/stolen passports must **immediately** be reported to the Exit-Entry Bureau, a unit of the Chinese police.)
- Register with the Consulate or Register to vote (both easy to do online)
- Pick up passports, Consular Reports of Birth Abroad (CRBA) and/or Re-Entry Permits
- Pick up Social Security or tax refund checks
- Follow up on a case for which you have already paid -- Must present your receipt and/or your "Please Note Checked Items" letter.
- American Citizens' Visa Hour at 4pm on Tuesday.

## News Release From IRS Targets Overseas Taxpayers

IRS announced on February 8th, a new initiative to provide another opportunity to taxpayers who are still hiding money offshore to come forward and settle their tax obligations with their government. The IRS is offering people with undisclosed income from offshore accounts an opportunity to participate in a new, voluntary disclosure initiative in order to get current on their tax returns. The 2011 Offshore Voluntary Disclosure Initiative (OVDI) will be available only through Aug. 31, 2011.

The 2011 initiative has a higher penalty rate than the IRS's previous voluntary disclosure program, which ended on

Oct. 15, 2009, but offers clear benefits to encourage taxpayers to disclose foreign accounts now rather than risk IRS detection and possible criminal prosecution. In addition, the 2011 initiative includes new guidelines to provide fairness to people with smaller amounts of undisclosed assets or unusual situations.

For general details on the initiative, see <http://www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,,id=235695,00.html>

For more details on the 2011 initiative, including contact points, mailing addresses, please go to <http://www.irs.gov/compliance/enforcement/article/0,,id=205909,00.html>.

## Shanghai Consulate News for Americans

**Starting in May, our offices will be closed on Wednesday afternoons instead of Tuesday afternoons. Our new office hours are: 8:00 - 11:30am and 1:30 - 3:30pm Monday to Friday \*Closed on Wednesday afternoons, weekends, and holidays.**

**U.S. Consulate General,  
Shanghai, China**

**1038 West Nanjing Road, 8/F  
Westgate Mall 梅龙镇广场**

**(Méi lóng zhèn guǎngchǎng)**

**Tel: (86-21) 3217-4650**

**Fax: (86-21) 6217-2071**

**After Hours Emergencies:**

**(86-21) 3217-4650**

**Open 8:00am - 11:30am  
and 1:30pm - 3:30pm**

**Monday to Friday \*Closed on  
Wednesday afternoons,  
weekends, and holidays.**

**<http://shanghai.usconsulate.gov>**

## Preparing For Summer Travel

Summer holiday time is almost here. If you are planning to travel please read the following suggestions to help ensure a stress-free trip.

### Know your passport expiration date.

The passport validity of a child under 16 years of age is only five years compared to an adult passport's 10-year validity. **Some countries (including China) will not allow a traveler to enter the country if the traveler's passport will expire in the next six months.** Airlines will deny boarding to those who do not meet this requirement. For further details about visas and the entry and exit requirements of the countries you plan to visit, please visit [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov).

### Plan ahead to renew your passport.

Citizens may, of course, apply for passports at the U.S. Consulate in Shanghai. However, the passports are actually printed in the United States and not at the Consulate. For this reason, a new passport is usually ready for pick-up at our office about **10 business days** after the application was submitted. This does not include the time to secure a visa from China or another country, or other unexpected delays. Please visit our website at [http://shanghai.usembassy-china.org.cn/u.s.passport\\_renewals.html](http://shanghai.usembassy-china.org.cn/u.s.passport_renewals.html) for information regarding passport renewal requirements, and to make an appointment with the Consulate. It's never too early to renew your passport; most people find it best to apply at least 6 to 12 months before expiry.

### Register with the Embassy/Consulate in the country where you will be visiting.

The Department of State encourages U.S. citizens living overseas or planning to travel abroad to enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) at <https://travelregistration.state.gov>. By enrolling in STEP, we can keep you up to date with important safety and security announcements and will also make it easier for the Embassy/Consulate to contact you in the event of an emergency. You should remember to keep all of your information in STEP up to date; it is particularly important when you enroll or update your information to include a current phone number and e-mail address.

### Inform Your Family/Friends of Your Travel Plans:

Tell those you trust about your travel plans, including your transportation, hotel, and local contact information, so that they know how to reach you in the event of an emergency. Keep a copy of your passport and China visa not in the same place you keep your passport.

## News: US Expats to Enjoy Social Security Benefit in China

(From Page 3) The fortunate thing is that a foreign employee who is eligible to enjoy a pension but has left China can make arrangements with a Chinese embassy to continue receiving the Chinese pension after they've moved. The Chinese law will also permit the balance of an individual's pension account to be inherited by his or her offspring. Bai Liangze said the law gives equal treatment to foreigners working in the country and follows international practices. But he pointed out that the public housing fund (where employers help pay toward future housing for employees) will not be available to foreign workers at the moment. Target groups include foreigners employed by Chinese and foreign-owned companies, factories, public institutions, foundations, social groups, schools, accounting and law firms that register in China, as well as foreign employees assigned to China by overseas companies.

According to Chinadaily.com.cn, at least one American is delighted about the new law. An engineer at a renewable energy company said the regulation would benefit Americans working in China. But the China Daily website reported that some US companies think the new law may result in a decrease of a company's net savings and an increase in their personal management costs in China.

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For other assessments, see <http://tmagazine.ey.com/new-social-security-law-potentially-affects-foreign-nationals-working-in-china/> or <http://www.towerswatson.com/newsletters/global-news-briefs/4873> or <http://www.troutmansanders.com/foreigners-caught-by-chinas-new-social-security-law-06-24-2011/>.

(By Zhong Nan And Li Aoxue, chinadaily.com.cn)