



Shanghai Consulate News for Americans

Issue 16

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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?
- * Travel Reminder

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:

There are **no holiday closures** in the month of April.

May. 01, 2009 Fri.
International Labor Day

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.

BUSINESS DISPUTES IN MAINLAND CHINA

Recently, incidents of foreign businesspeople, including American citizens, being detained against their will by workers or hired gangs for the specific purpose of extorting money or to intimidate have increased. Typically, the foreigner is threatened with violence and detained at a factory, hotel, or private residence until payment is negotiated and delivered. Sometimes the foreigner is physically assaulted or abducted.

Anyone entering into a contract in China should have it thoroughly examined both in the United States and in China. Contracts entered into in the United States are not enforced by Chinese courts. Additionally, Americans doing business in China should be aware that if they become involved in a busi-

ness and/or civil dispute, the Chinese government may prohibit them from leaving China until the matter is resolved. There are many cases of American citizens being prevented from leaving China for months and even years while their civil cases are resolved. Civil cases may sometimes be regarded as criminal cases and the defendant may be placed in custody.

Officers of the Department of State and U.S. Embassies and Consulates abroad are prohibited by law from acting as agents or attorneys on behalf of U.S. citizens in legal disputes abroad.

The Consulate General cannot recommend a particular foreign attorney, but may furnish names of several attorneys, [list of law firms in Shanghai](#).

The U.S. Government, including the U.S. Consulate General in Shanghai, does not assume responsibility for the professional ability or appropriateness of any attorneys, lawyers, legal counsel and/or legal institutions/companies on the attached lists. These lists are provided only for the reference of U.S. citizens seeking legal assistance overseas.

For detailed information on the law firms list, please check our website at http://shanghai.usembassy-china.org.cn/law_firms.html



U.S. TAX INFORMATION

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) office serving all U.S. taxpayers living or working overseas is located in Austin, Texas. This office provides U.S. Federal tax assistance to Americans in China, and is also the destination for all returns filed from abroad. The IRS Home Page, www.irs.gov, provides a lot of

useful information for taxpayers and should be your first stop for tax questions and forms. In particular, the [IRS Publication 54, Tax Guide for U.S. Citizens and Resident Aliens Abroad](#) is an invaluable resource for anyone living abroad or with income from a foreign source.

One point that all international

taxpayers should keep in mind is that the United States taxes its citizens on their worldwide income. Even if you are eligible to exclude a certain amount (or all) of your earned income in a given year, you must file a U.S. tax return in order to claim that exclusion. Also, the foreign income exclusion does apply to self-employment tax.

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.



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

Registration of New Born Baby in China

It is important to start this process as soon as possible after your child is born. China local law requires that your child must be registered locally within one month of birth. When applying for the registration of your child's birth, you should supply: parents' passports, local birth certificate from the hospital in which the baby is born. Please contact:

The Exit and Entry Administration of Shanghai Municipal Public Security Bureau

No.1500 Minsheng Road, Pudong New Area, Shanghai

Monday-Saturday 9:00-17:00

Information Telephone: 28951900, Supervision Telephone:
68547109

You need to register with the Exit and Entry office of cities where the baby is born.

In the case of urgent, unexpected travel, your child will need a passport. In addition, you may need to secure a visa for your child, which also requires a passport. As soon as a U.S. passport is issued, the baby's parents must apply for a Chinese visa to ensure that they don't have problems leaving the country.

Travel Reminder

TAIWAN

We would like to remind all U.S. citizens entering or transiting Taiwan that they must be in possession of a valid U.S. tourist passport with a minimum of 6 months validity. U.S. citizens should not attempt to enter Taiwan using Official or Diplomatic U.S. passports, and military service members can not enter using their DOD issued ID card and orders.

Travel outside China for May Holiday

Please make sure you apply for your passport early. We recommend you check the entry/exit and visa requirements for all countries prior to booking your trip. Many countries in the Asian region, including China and most South-east Asian nations, require that a traveler's passport have at least six (6) months validity beyond the dates of the planned trip. Airlines usually will not allow travelers to board if this requirement is not met, and immigration officers will deny entry to travelers at the port of entry in these countries if a traveler

arrives without the required six months validity.

You can find this information under **Country Specific Information** on the State Department's website.

