



# Shanghai Consulate News for Americans

Issue 26

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## Tax Information Available on the Internet

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](mailto:ShanghaiACS@state.gov).

### Inside this issue:

New ID Requirements to Enter Mexico from Mar.1	2
Travel Warnings and Alerts	2
Customs & Border Protection Global Entry Program	3
Visa Waiver Program Changes	3
Two Warnings on Internet Scams	4
The Next FSO Test in June 2010	4
Upcoming Election Information	5
Complete Passport Application Online	6

The most comprehensive resource for taxes on the web is the Internal Revenue Service website: [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov). There is a page on that site that is specifically designed for **U.S. Citizens and Resident Aliens Abroad**. Please visit here for that information: <http://www.irs.gov/businesses/small/international/article/0,,id=97324,00.html>. **Tax forms** can be obtained online at <http://www.irs.gov/formspubs/index.html>.

Please note that the IRS has just released the latest comprehensive **guide for your 2009 taxes** called Publication 17. You can read all about it and download it here: <http://www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,,id=216665,00.html>. Also useful is Publication 4732 which contains **specific tax information** for Americans living abroad and can be downloaded at: <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p4732.pdf>.

For more information on U.S. taxes, please consult the list of websites and telephone numbers below to help find the forms and answers you need.

Tax guidance for persons in the **military**: <http://www.irs.gov/individuals/military/index.html>

**Electronic payment** website: <http://www.eftps.gov/>

**Refund** information:

<http://www.irs.gov/individuals/article/0,,id=96596,00.html?portlet=4>

**Phone Services** Individuals: 1-800-829-1040\*  
Businesses: 1-800-829-4933\*  
(\* Please note: "1-800 numbers" are generally for use only within the U.S., but can be called using Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) services such as Vonage, Lingo or Skype. If you do not have access to one of these services, a direct dial phone number is listed next.)

International Taxpayer Help Line in Philadelphia: 1-215-516-2000 Refund Inquiries: 1-800-829-4477 \* TeleTax: 1-800-829-4477 ITINs after 6 weeks: 1-800-829-1040 \* Exempt Organization Help Desk: 1-877-829-5500 \* Tax Offset Program (TOP) Help Desk: 1-800-304-3107 E-Services Help Desk: 1-512-416-7750

**State Tax Returns:** For individual state income tax information, visit <http://www.taxadmin.org/>. The Consulate does not provide any state tax forms or state tax information.

**Overseas Taxpayers Get Automatic 2-Month FILING Extension**  
The deadline to FILE both your federal and state tax returns is April 15. If you live overseas, you qualify for an automatic extension to file. If you OWE tax, any tax due is still due by April 15. You will be assessed interest and penalties if you owe tax but do not pay by the April 15 deadline, but you can delay filing by two months.

### Special points of interest:

- \* Replacing a Lost or Stolen Passport
- \* Act Now to Vote in the 2010 Midterm Elections
- \* Leaving the Consular District?
- \* Q: How Do I Get a Job with the U.S. Consulate?

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.

A full list of all of our holiday closings is available online at <http://shanghai.usembassy-china.org.cn/holidays.html>.  
  
The American Citizen Services Unit will be

**CLOSED** on the following days:  
  
**April 5, Mon**  
**Tomb Sweeping Day**  
  
**May 1-3, Sat-Mon**  
**International Labor Day**

## Upcoming Holidays and Other Closures

## New ID Requirements for US Citizens and LPRs Entering Mexico from March 1

Effective March 1, 2010, the Government of Mexico has established new identification requirements for U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents entering Mexico.

1. U.S. citizens entering Mexico by air, land or sea will be required to present a **valid passport or "US Passport Card"** to prove their identity.
1. Lawful permanent residents in the United States of America entering Mexico by air, land or sea will be required to present one of the following valid documents to prove their identity:

- **Form I-551 (Alien Registration Card)**, or
- Expired **Form I-1551 (Alien Registration Card)** together with **Form I-797 (Notice of Approval)**, or
- **Immigration Visa issued by the United States of America**, or



- **Form I-327 (Permit to Reenter)**, or
- **Transportation Letter**, or
- **Alien Documentation, Identification & Telecommunications System (ADIT) stamp on the passport or Form I-94**, or
- **Form I-571 (Refugee Travel Document)**.

These requirements are designed to improve regional security in North America and will offer increased legal certainty to those U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents traveling to Mexico.

## 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.*

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

<u>Kenya</u>	03/16/2010
<u>Haiti</u>	03/15/2010
<u>Mexico</u>	03/14/2010
<u>Colombia</u>	03/05/2010
<u>Eritrea</u>	03/02/2010
<u>Central African Republic</u>	02/26/2010
<u>Yemen</u>	02/25/2010
<u>Iraq</u>	02/25/2010
<u>Saudi Arabia</u>	02/18/2010

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>Turkey</u>	03/19/2010
<u>Chile</u>	03/12/2010

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](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.

You may also visit the Consular Affairs twitter page at <http://twitter.com/TravelGov>.

## U.S. Customs and Border Protection Global Entry Program

Global Entry is program designed by U.S. Customs and Border Protection to expedite international air travel by allowing pre-approved travelers the use of an automated kiosk to clear passport control. This means no more waiting in line upon arrival and



no forms to fill out on the plane. Participation in the Global Entry pilot is voluntary. Membership is currently limited to U.S. Citizens, U.S. Nationals and U.S. Legal Permanent Residents, as well as to citizens of the Netherlands via a joint arrangement as "FLUX."

A \$100 non-refundable application fee is charged at the time of application and membership is valid for 5 years. There are Global Entry automated kiosks at airports such as Washington

Dulles (IAD), Los Angeles International (LAX), John F. Kennedy (JFK), Honolulu International (HNL), and many more. Currently, 20 airports are participating in Global Entry. If you are a frequent traveler and often need additional pages in your passport, Global Entry is for you since stamping the passport is not required. For more details and to sign up for Global Entry, visit the following website:

[http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/trusted\\_traveler/global\\_entry/](http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/trusted_traveler/global_entry/)

## Visa Waiver Program Changes

As many of you will be aware, the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) came into effect on 12 January 2009. After a year of optional use, it is now mandatory for all passengers travelling to the United States under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) to apply for an Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA), 72 hours prior to departure. Passengers will not be accepted for travel to the US if they do not have a valid ESTA. This also applies to passengers in transit to a third country.

Travelers should log onto the ESTA website at <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov> and complete the online application form. The US Department of Homeland Security recommends that applications be submitted no less than 72 hours prior to travel.

If details on an approved ESTA are not exactly the same as the details in the traveler's passport, the two data sets cannot be reconciled and U.S. authorities will deem that the passenger does not have a valid ESTA. They

will need to reapply.

We welcome Greece to join the 35 nations already participating in VWP. Greek citizens will be permitted to travel to the United States for up to 90 days without obtaining a visa.

For further information, the US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) has a comprehensive list of frequently asked questions regarding ESTA available on their website: <http://www.cbp.gov/ESTA/>

## Replacing a Lost or Stolen Passport

If your passport was lost or stolen during this holiday season, please follow the procedures to apply for a replacement passport:

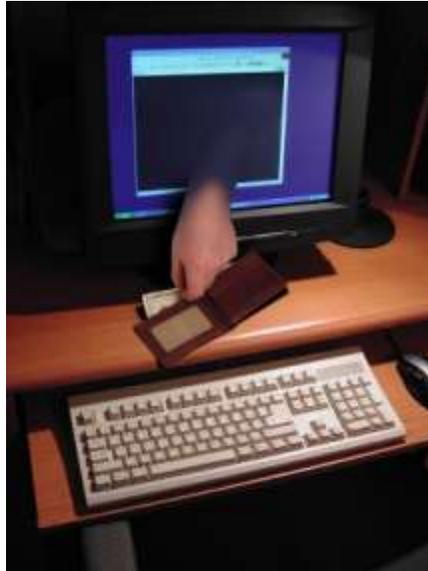
- 1) Obtain a lost passport report from your local Chinese Entry/Exit Bureau (EEB). (In Shanghai, it's located at 1500 Min Sheng Road, Pudong, Shanghai, Tel: (86-21) 2895-1900, press 2 for the operator). This report is necessary to ensure your smooth departure from China after we issue a new passport.
- 2) Come to our office to submit a passport application form (DS-11), affidavit (DS-64), proof of your Identity (ex: a copy of the lost/stolen US passport, your US drivers license, U.S. state ID and/or Military ID), and two 2" X 2" (5 cm X 5 cm) photos. We also need to see your EEB lost/stolen passport report. The fee for a replacement passport is U.S. \$100.00 for adults and \$85.00 for children (or RMB equivalent), cash or credit card.
- 3) Take your new passport and the EEB lost/stolen passport report back to the EEB to obtain a new Chinese visa.

\*\*For applicants under age 16, both parents should also come to the Consulate, or one parent may apply with the notarized written consent of the other.

## Two Warnings On Internet Scams

### **FBI issues warning on Internet Scams following Haiti earthquake**

The FBI reminds Internet users who receive appeals to donate money in the aftermath of the earthquake in Haiti to apply a critical eye and do their due diligence before responding to those requests. Past tragedies and natural disasters have prompted individuals with criminal intent to solicit contributions purportedly for a charitable organization and/or a good cause. Information on Internet scams is available at the following link: <http://www.fbi.gov/cyberinvest/escams.htm>



### **Internet pal in trouble?**

The Department of State encourages all American citizens to be vigilant against the potential for e-mail financial scams. To learn more about the warning signs for such scams, please see our financial scams information page at: [http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/financial\\_scams/financial\\_scams\\_3155.html](http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/financial_scams/financial_scams_3155.html) or watch the YouTube video entitled "Scamnet: Lonely Hearts Scam Division?". The video may be found at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tqEENj-0KPKQ>

## Consulate Will Host The Next FSO Test in June 2010



Firm dates of testing are still TBD, but the next Foreign Service Officer test will be offered at the U.S. Consulate in Shanghai sometime in June, 2010. Stay tuned for more information.

Additional detailed information can be found at <http://careers.state.gov/officer/testinfo.html>

[officer/testinfo.html](http://careers.state.gov/officer/testinfo.html)

where you can also register to take the test.

If candidates have any technical questions or issues with the registration process, they should contact ACT, Inc. at [fsot@act.org](mailto:fsot@act.org), or call (800) 205-6358.

## Leaving Shanghai Consular District?

If you are departing the Shanghai consular district after a long stay here and you formally registered your stay with the U.S. Consulate, please do not forget to cancel your registration when you leave. You can unregister yourself by visiting the [travelregistration.state.gov](http://travelregistration.state.gov) site if you were previously registered 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).



## Act Now To Vote In The 2010 Midterm Elections

Another federal election year is about to begin. Every seat in the House of Representatives and at least 36 Senate seats will be contested this year. Overseas voter participation this year could determine the outcome of many elections. Make sure you take part!

New regulations are in effect for 2010. All overseas voters must re-file the official registration/ballot request form.

Go to

[www.overseasvotefoundation.org](http://www.overseasvotefoundation.org)

to register and request your ballot today or visit the U.S. Consulate General Shanghai to register and request your ballot. You will also find helpful voter services at this site:



## Military and Overseas Voters, Submit your Ballot Request for the May and June State Primaries!

The following States will hold Primary Elections during the months of May and June, 2010 on the dates indicated.

May 4, 2010: Indiana, North Carolina, Ohio

**May 11, 2010:** Nebraska, West Virginia May 18, 2010: Arkansas, Kentucky, Oregon, Pennsylvania

**May 25, 2010:** Idaho

**June 1, 2010:** Alabama, Mississippi, New Mexico

**June 8, 2010:** California, Iowa, Maine, Montana, Nevada, New Jersey, North Dakota, South Carolina, South Dakota, Virginia

**June 22, 2010:** Utah

### **Register and Request Your Ballot Now!**

All members of the U.S. Uniformed Services, their family members and citizens residing outside the U.S. who are residents from these States and have not yet submitted a registration and ballot request (FPCA) for the 2010 calendar year, should do so as soon as possible.

The FPCA ballot application and instructions for the above States are available at [www.fvap.gov/FPCA](http://www.fvap.gov/FPCA). Click on your State on the map and follow the instructions to register and request an absentee ballot. Some States allow submitting the FPCA by fax or email in addition to regular mail.

Send your FPCA NOW to your election office to ensure you have enough time to receive, vote, and return the ballot!

### **Additional information**

For more information, go to the visit FVAP at: [www.fvap.gov](http://www.fvap.gov).

### **We want your feedback!**

If you'd like more information on the Federal Voting Assistance Program or need help with the absentee voting process, please contact FVAP at [www.fvap.gov](http://www.fvap.gov), 1-800-438-8683, DSN (312) 425-1584, or at [vote@fvap.ncr.gov](mailto:vote@fvap.ncr.gov). Toll-free phone numbers from 67 countries are listed at: [www.fvap.gov/contact/tollfreephone.html](http://www.fvap.gov/contact/tollfreephone.html). With your feedback, we can make this even more helpful for the next election.

## Shanghai Consulate News for Americans

U.S. Consulate General,  
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/)

## Someone Asked the Consul:

### How Do I Get a Job with the U.S. Consulate?

Occasionally, Americans living in China will ask us either in person or by e-mail how they can get a job working for the U.S. Consulate.

There are two basic ways you can be employed by the Consulate. The first is for qualified local Americans and citizens of China who are hired locally to perform various jobs within the U.S. diplomatic mission in China. Those opportunities are advertised on our website: [http://shanghai.usembassy-china.org.cn/job\\_opportunities.html](http://shanghai.usembassy-china.org.cn/job_opportunities.html). The other way to get a job with the Consulate is to become a member of the U.S. Foreign Service, which is a longer process and would not necessarily mean getting the chance to work in China. For more information about careers with the State Department, visit: <http://careers.state.gov>.

## Want Faster Service? Fill out Passport Application Online BEFORE Coming to the Consulate

The Shanghai ACS Section strongly encourages all applicants to use electronic application forms for all passport services, including passport renewals and adding visa pages (Forms DS-11, DS-82, DS-5504 and DS-4085). After completing your application online, print the application and bring it to your appointment.

Failure to complete these applications online will delay the processing of your application, and in-

crease your wait-time.

You can access the required forms at the ACS website [http://shanghai.usembassy-china.org.cn/passport\\_forms.html](http://shanghai.usembassy-china.org.cn/passport_forms.html) or [http://travel.state.gov/passport/forms/forms\\_847.html](http://travel.state.gov/passport/forms/forms_847.html).

**Note:** For applicants without social security numbers (ex: newborn babies), enter 000-00-0000 as the SSN on the online form.

If your passport is lost or

stolen, you can print out a 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 special forms do not need to be filled out online.

