



Shanghai Consulate News for Americans

Issue 27

Apr, 2010

Shanghai Expo 2010

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.

Inside this issue:

Country Specific Information	2
Travel Warnings and Alerts	2
Customs & Border Protection Global Entry Program	3
Visa Waiver Program Changes	3
The Next FSO Test in June 2010	4
Leaving the Consular District?	4
Tax Information on the Internet	5
Does Your Service Require an Appointment?	6

Special points of interest:

- * Replacing a Lost/Stolen Passport
- * Attention Voters — Re-Register To Vote
- * Overseas Taxpayers: Automatic 2-Month FILING Extension
- * Q: Are Americans living overseas counted in the Census?

The Shanghai Expo 2010 will take place from May 1 through October 31, 2010. The Expo will feature national, themed, and corporate pavilions (building-sized exhibitions) over a two-square-mile (5.28-square-kilometer) area on both sides of Shanghai's Huangpu River. The organizers of Shanghai Expo 2010 expect tens of millions of visitors from all over the world.

The United States of America is an official participant in the Shanghai Expo 2010, joining more than 240 other national, regional, international organization, and corporate exhibitors. The USA Pavilion is made possible through a public/private partnership: the Pavilion's design, construction, and op-

eration are the result of a partnership with the private sector, and Pavilion funding comes from the private sector and other partners. Several U.S. companies and state and local governments are exhibitors at the Expo. National Days and other special celebrations for exhibitors will occur throughout the 184 days of the Expo. Friday, July 2, has been assigned as the USA National Day at the Expo.

The Expo 2010 web site (<http://en.expo2010.cn>) provides information about events, tickets, and transportation. The USA Pavilion web site (<http://www.usapavilion2010.com>) provides information about the USA National Pavilion.

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 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:

May 1-3, Sat-Mon

International Labor Day

June 16, Wed

Dragon Boat Festival

Country Specific Information Available

Country Specific Information is available for every country of the world on the State Department's travel information website.

These pages include such information as the location of

the U.S. embassy or consulate in the subject country, unusual immigration practices, health conditions, minor political disturbances, unusual currency and entry regulations, crime and security in-

formation, and drug penalties.

Visit the following site to view information for any country in the world:

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1765.html

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>Congo, Democratic Republic of the</u>	04/21/2010
<u>Kyrgyz Republic</u>	04/20/2010
<u>Mexico</u>	04/12/2010
<u>Philippines</u>	04/02/2010
<u>Algeria</u>	04/02/2010
<u>Lebanon</u>	03/29/2010
<u>Iran</u>	03/23/2010
<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.

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

<u>Thailand</u>	04/22/2010
<u>India</u>	04/16/2010
<u>Ethiopia</u>	04/13/2010
<u>Kyrgyz Republic</u>	04/09/2010

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.

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.

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 a 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/

Visa Waiver Program

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.

Attention Voters — Re-Register To Vote

Another federal election year is about to begin. Make sure you take part!

Per new regulations, states are no longer required to mail you a ballot for upcoming elections, even if you voted in the last one. The State Department now recommends that all American overseas voters re-register each year. If you have not yet re-registered this year, you may not get a ballot and you may NOT be able to vote.

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. 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!

For more information, please visit the following website and click on the news release for your state:

<http://www.fvap.gov/global/news/index.html>

The following states will hold Primary Elections during the months of May and June, 2010, on the following dates:

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

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>, 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, 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 site if you 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.



Tax Information Available on the Internet

The most comprehensive resource for taxes on the web is the Internal Revenue Service website: www.irs.gov. There is a page on that site that is specifically designed for U.S. Citizens and Resident Aliens Abroad: <http://www.irs.gov/businesses/small/international/article/0,,id=97324,00.html>.

Federal 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 people 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*

For routine tax return and preparation questions, you may call the International Taxpayer Help Line in Philadelphia at 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

(* 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.)

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

Overseas Taxpayers Get Automatic 2-Month FILING Extension

U.S. income tax returns were due on April 15th. If you reside overseas, however, you are given an automatic two month extension to file. However, any tax money you owe must be paid by April 15th to avoid paying interest and possibly penalties. **Note:** Payments are not considered received until the date of actual receipt by the IRS, not the postmark date.

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.usembassy-china.org.cn/>

Someone Asked the Consul:

Do Americans living overseas count in the Census?

Recently, an American citizen e-mailed the ACS section and asked if Americans living abroad are counted in the official U.S. Census. We found the answer in the official 2010 U.S. Census website:

<http://2010.census.gov/partners/pdf/ConstituentFAQ.pdf>

The 2010 Census counts will include federal employees (military and civilian) and their dependents living overseas with them that can be assigned to a home state. These data are provided to the Census Bureau by the employing federal departments and agencies through their administrative records. However, private U.S. citizens living abroad who are not affiliated with the federal government (either as employees or their dependents) will not be included in the overseas counts. These overseas counts are used solely for reapportioning seats in the U.S. House of Representatives. Please visit the website listed above for more details.

Does The Service You Need Require An Appointment?

The Shanghai American Citizen Services Unit now uses an on-line appointment system for all non-emergency services. We hope that this tool will assist you in budgeting your time and that it will reduce the wait time during traditionally high-traffic hours.

Appointments are necessary to:

- Obtain a U.S. passport for minors and adults
- Add visa pages to a U.S. passport
- Apply for a Consular Report of Birth Abroad (CRBA) and first U.S. passport for children
- Submit additional documents for a pending CRBA application
- Obtain notarial services
- Complete a Marriage-ability Affidavit

Visitors may receive several services during the same visit to American Citizen Services. Please make a separate appointment for each individual service.

Please arrive at least 10 minutes before your appointment time, to allow time to clear security.

Scheduled appointments will be automatically canceled for applicants who arrive over 15 minutes after their scheduled time.

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
- Register with the Consulate
- Pick up passport and/or Consular Report of Birth Abroad (CRBA) upon notification

cation

- Pick up Social Security checks or ask questions about SSA benefits
- Submit additional documents for a pending passport application
- Register to vote
- Apply for a Travel Letter (applies to Legal Permanent Residents only)
- Pick up re-entry permits (applies to Legal Permanent Residents only)
- Abandon permanent resident status
- Attend Tuesday American Citizens' Visa Hour at 3-4pm
- Attend Wednesday Education Hour at 3:30-4:30pm