



Shanghai Consulate News for Americans

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American Citizen Services (ACS) Contact Information

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Inside this issue:

Submit Your Registration & Ballot Request Form for Jan, Feb, Mar Primaries	2, 3
Travel Warnings and Alerts (Thailand Alert CANCELLED)	2
FVAP Hits Social Networking Sites	3
2012 Election Circle — Begins Now!	4
New USCIS Rule on Filing I-130 and I-600A Petitions	5
Foreigners Caught Without Work Visa	5
Holiday Travel Tips	6
Tips to Keep Your Belongings Safe	6

New Version of Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot Now Available

The online version of the revised Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB) is available now at the FVAP.gov web portal.

If you have registered to vote and requested a ballot from your state - but not received it by 30 days before the election you should use the FWAB to ensure your voted ballot gets back in time to meet your state's deadline. If your state ballot arrives after you have voted the FWAB, you should still vote and return the State ballot as it will offer a more complete set of choices. State procedures will ensure only one ballot is counted per election.

The online wizard allows you to make candidate choices for federal offices

beginning 30 days prior to the date of the election. The printed PDF package produced by the wizard includes the completed voter affirmation/signature page, the ballot with your choices printed and an envelope with postage free indicia in the US mail service (APO/FPO and DPO at military installations and US Embassies and Consulates).



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:

- December 26, 2011, Monday:** Christmas Day (圣诞节 Shèngdàn Jié)
- January 2, 2012, Monday:** New Year's Day (元旦 Yuán Dàn)
- January 16, 2012, Monday:** Martin Luther King's Birthday (马丁路德金日 Mǎdīng Lùdé Jīn Rì)
- January 23-25, 2012, Mon.-Wed.:** Chinese Lunar New Year (中国农历新年 Zhōngguó Nónglì Xīnnián)

Submit Your Registration and Ballot Request Form for Upcoming January, February and March 2012 Primaries

Register to Vote and Request Your Ballot

Submit your registration/ballot request form (FPCA) timed according to **your State's election date requirements** as listed below for the January, February and March 2012 Presidential Preference Primaries (P), and State Primaries (S):

The Following States allow you to submit a registration/ballot request form (FPCA) now for the 2012 Primary. NOTE: to ensure your request is valid for other 2012 elections, including the November General Presi-

dential election, you must submit ANOTHER FPCA after December 31st!

New Hampshire (P): January 10
South Carolina (P): January 21

The following States allow you to submit a registration/ballot request form (FPCA) now, which will be valid through the 2012 November Presidential election.

Florida (P): January 31
Missouri (Republican P): February 7 -
NOTE: No delegates to the Republi-

can National Convention will be selected based on the outcome of this primary.

Arizona (P): February 28
Georgia (P): March 6
Ohio (S): March 6
Oklahoma (P): March 6
Tennessee (P): March 6
Texas (P,S): March 6
Virginia (P): March 6
Alabama (P,S): March 13
Mississippi (P,S): March 13
Louisiana (P,S): March 24

(Continued on Page 3)

Travel Warnings And Alerts

Security reminder: It is advisable that you and your family review your personal security profile and 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>Syria</u>	12/21/2011
<u>Cote d'Ivoire</u>	12/16/2011
<u>Afghanistan</u>	12/01/2011
<u>Burundi</u>	11/25/2011

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.

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

<u>Senegal</u>	12/12/2011
<u>South Pacific Cyclone Season</u>	12/12/2011
<u>Congo, Democratic Republic of the</u>	12/09/2011

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 information is available at :

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/pa/pa_1766.html .

The Travel Alert issued for Thailand on November 16, 2011, has been cancelled, effective immediately.

Conditions in Thailand have greatly improved since the November 16 travel alert was issued. Transportation and essential services in the previously flooded areas of the country are effectively back to normal. Consumable goods, including food and water, are readily available. Conditions in Bangkok have largely returned to normal.

The limited areas of floodwaters remaining outside of Bangkok do not affect main tourist attractions or business zones. Suvarnabhumi airport, the primary international and domestic airport, continues to operate as normal. Airlines operating out of Don Mueang airport have relocated services to Suvarnabhumi.

Submit Your Registration and Ballot Request Form for Upcoming January, February and March 2012 Primaries

(From Page 2)

For the following States, the registration/ballot request form (FPCA) is valid only in the year it is submitted. To ensure your request is valid for all elections in 2012 submit a registration/ballot request form (FPCA) AS SOON AS POSSIBLE after December 31st.

Michigan (P): February 28
 Massachusetts (P): March 6
 Vermont (P): March 6
 Illinois (P,S): March 20

Go to FVAP.gov and get started! It only takes a few minutes!

All members of the U.S. Uniformed Services, their family members and citizens residing outside the U.S. who are residents from these States should submit an FPCA for these elections by going to the FVAP.gov web portal or by following the instruc-

tions in the Voting Assistance Guide, also available at FVAP.gov.

Be sure you include an email address, phone number, and/or fax number on your absentee ballot application in case your local election official needs to contact you. Remember, many States allow you to submit your form electronically, and deliver your ballot electronically or provide online ballot access. Go to FVAP.gov or your State's election website to see how you can return your form.

To find out the status of your registration/absentee ballot request, contact your local election office at <http://www.fvap.gov/shortcuts/wherese.pdfca.html>, or visit your State website.

Vote the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB)

Please find New Version of Federal

Write-In Absentee Ballot Now Available on Page 1.

Additional information

Check your State's election website for specific information on candidates, elections, contact information and links to your local election offices. Find your State's website via FVAP's web portal:
www.fvap.gov/reference/links.html.

FVAP can be contacted at 1-800-438-8683. Citizens may reach FVAP toll-free from 67 countries by using the toll-free numbers listed on the FVAP web portal, www.fvap.gov/contact/index.html. Questions regarding the above may also be referred to the Director, Federal Voting Assistance Program, Department of Defense, 1155 Defense Pentagon, Washington, DC, 20301-1155, vote@fvap.gov, and at FVAP.gov.

Voting News: FVAP Hits Social Networking Sites!

The year 2012 is set to be another very active year for American voters. If you're on Facebook, LinkedIn, or Twitter, then the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) can send you updates at the speed of light.

- FVAP Website - www.fvap.gov
- FVAP Facebook page - www.facebook.com/DoDFVAP
- FVAP Twitter page - <http://twitter.com/#!/FVAP>
- FVAP LinkedIn page - LinkedIn Sign In
- FVAP's Automated Online Ballot Wizard: This is a great, easy-to-use online resource that assists voters in completing the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) and the Federal

Write-in Absentee Ballot (FWAB). It also selects the correct mailing address for each voter's local election officials.

- FVAP's Voting News Releases: These news releases from provide you with updates on primaries and special elections around the country, changes to voting procedures, and useful guidance.
- FVAP's Toll-Free Telephone and Fax Lines: FVAP offers voting information over the phone. This is a toll-free service available to voters in several dozen countries. FVAP also has toll-free fax number that voters can use to fax in their ballot requests or voted ballots.

Please note that different states may have differing requirements and deadlines for registration. You can find your State's website at FVAP's web portal:

www.fvap.gov/reference/links.html.

VOTER ALERT: Recently, news for Arizona, Florida, Michigan, Missouri, New Hampshire and South Carolina voters was posted by FVAP here: www.fvap.gov/global/news/nr30-2011.html. For more news updates about voting overseas, visit: www.fvap.gov/global/news/index.html

A complete 2012 election calendar is available by clicking on this link: www.fvap.gov/vao/calendar.html.

2012 Election Cycle – Begins Now

Be an active voter. Start thinking about your participation in the U.S. 2012 elections today!

The American Citizen Services staff at U.S. Consulate General Shanghai is ready to assist with completing your Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) -- the form you need to complete **this year** to participate in the 2012 elections as an overseas absentee voter. Our purpose is to inform and educate you about your voting rights, to ensure you are able to exercise your right to participate in elections for federal offices (President, Vice President, Senator, and Representative), and to assist you with voting in state or local elections, if allowed by your state.

New absentee voting laws are in effect for the 2012 elections. You will no longer automatically receive ballots based on a previous absentee ballot request. All U.S. citizens outside the United States who want to vote by absentee ballot in the 2012 primary and general elections must complete a new Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) every year if they wish to vote from abroad. States are now required to send out ballots 45 days before an election. No matter what state you vote in, you can now ask your local election officials to provide your blank ballots to you electronically (by email, internet download, or fax, depending on your state). You can now also confirm your registration and ballot delivery on-line. Be sure to include your email address on the form to take advantage of the electronic ballot delivery option. This is the fastest and most reliable way to receive your ballot on time, and we strongly recommend every overseas voter take advantage of it. Learn more at the Federal Voting Assistance Program's (FVAP) website www.FVAP.gov.

Beginning in January 2012, presidential primaries will be held in the states of New Hampshire (January 10), South Carolina (January 21), Florida (January 31), Missouri (February 7), Wisconsin (February 21), Arizona (February 28), and Michigan (February 28). Other states will follow

throughout the spring and summer. Voter registration deadlines for primaries are as early as January 3, 2012. Note: Participation in party presidential caucuses by overseas voters is not protected by federal law and requires in-person attendance in most cases. If the party you are affiliated with selects presidential nominees by caucus in your state contact state party officials for further information.

You can obtain a Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) at [FVAP's website](#). The FPCA is accepted by all local election officials in all U.S. states and territories. It allows you to register to vote and request absentee ballots for all elections for federal offices (presidential and state primaries, run-off, special, and the November general elections) during the course of the year. An online wizard will help you complete the form. Depending on your state's voting requirements, you then either send in the FPCA electronically or mail it to your local election officials. To mail it, print out the completed FPCA and the (U.S.) postage-paid envelope containing the address of your local election officials. If you bring in your forms or ballots to us we will mail them back home for you without you having to pay for international mail. If it's easier for you to use China's postal system, be sure to affix sufficient postage and allow sufficient time for international mail delivery.

To submit your forms and ballots you may come to our office at West 1038 Nanjing Rd. 8th Floor, Shanghai during routine service hours 8:15-11:30/1:30-3:30 Monday – Friday (please note we are closed Wednesday afternoons). You do not need an appointment to drop off voter registration forms or ballots. We will mail your forms/ballots back to the U.S. This takes one month from the date you drop your documents with us and mail service can be delayed by both Chinese and U.S. holidays so please plan accordingly.

Even if your state does not have a presidential primary in the early

months of 2012, it is important that you submit a new Federal Post Card Application this and every January to receive all absentee ballots for which you are eligible. By applying early, you also allow enough time for election officials to contact you and resolve any questions or problems with your registration/ballot request.

Remember that your vote counts, and that many U.S. elections within the past ten years have been decided by a margin of victory of less than 0.1%. All states are required to count every absentee ballot as long as it's valid and reaches local election officials by the absentee ballot receipt deadline.

Be an Educated Voter. Check out the FVAP links page for helpful resources that will aid your research of candidates and issues. Non-partisan information about candidates, their voting records, and their positions on issues are widely available and easy to obtain via numerous websites such as [Project Smart Voter](#). You can also read national and hometown newspapers on-line, or search the Internet to locate articles and information. For information about election dates and deadlines, subscribe to FVAP's Voting Alerts (vote@fvap.gov). FVAP also shares Voting Alerts via [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

If you have any questions about registering to vote overseas, please contact U.S. Consulate General Shanghai's Voting Assistance Officer at 021-3217-4650, or at VoteShanghai@state.gov.



New USCIS Rule on Filing I-130 or I-600A Petitions

News from the USCIS office in Beijing: effective from Monday, November 7, 2011, petitioners wishing to file the I-130 or I-600A (Non-Hague adoption) applications with the USCIS Beijing or Guangzhou offices must secure an appointment with them to file the petitions **in person**. Or they may mail their petitions to the Chicago lockbox. The U.S. Consulate General in Shanghai can no longer collect the fee for the I-130 petitioners.

Form I-130 petitions filed with the Chicago Lockbox will be routed to and adjudicated at the appropriate USCIS Service Center. This routing will be based on the petitioner's place of residence. Important filing tips, as well as additional information on fees and customer service, are listed

on <http://www.uscis.gov/lockboxtips>.



News: Foreigners Caught Without Work Visa

(from *Shanghai Daily*, Dec. 21, 2011, by Ni Yinbin)

SHANGHAI police are warning expats without work permits not to find jobs in the city, which will cause them to be fined or deported if they're caught.

The Exit-Entry Administration Bureau of Shanghai police said yesterday that they had found some foreigners with travel visas illegally working as English teachers in the city's language institutions.

"We'll crack down on the illegal working of foreigners in Shanghai, as always," an officer surnamed Li said yesterday.

The bureau did not say how widespread the problem of illegal employment of foreigners is, but it's known that the city's expat population is growing quickly.

In a recent case, a 19-year-old man from the United Kingdom visiting Shanghai on a travel visa was caught by the police while teaching English to Chinese children in a local foreign language institution, police said.

Officers said the Briton looked very young and attracted their attention, so they checked his passport. The man said he was traveling from Britain and had no qualifications to teach, according to the police. He did not even go to college, police added.

Through the investigation, the institution was also found unqualified. The names of the man and the institution were not disclosed.

The exit-entry bureau reminded that foreigners have to get a residence permit from it and a work permit from the city's labor authority before they are allowed to work here. For those who want to teach, they have to apply for a foreign expert certificate from the foreign experts bureau of the city and they must have at least a bachelor's degree, two years or more of teaching experience and the certificate of TESOL or TEFL, police said.

Shanghai has the largest population of foreign nationals among all mainland cities and provinces in China, with more than 143,000 expats living in the city, the Shanghai Statistics Bureau announced this week. Nearly one in every four foreign residents in the country lives in Shanghai.

The city is home to a total of 208,300 overseas residents, which adds people from Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan to the foreign nationals population. The overseas population constitutes nearly 1 percent of the city's 23 million residents.



Holiday Travel Tips

For those planning holiday travel, we offer a few tips to make your holiday travel smoother.

Check our Country Specific Information Sheets to learn the Entry and Exit Requirements for your destination.

These information sheets are available online at <http://travel.state.gov/>. Please keep in mind that if visas are required, you will need to visit the respective embassies or consulates of your destination countries. In addition, some visas may take several days or weeks to be processed, so plan ahead and make your visa appointments early.

Do you need a new passport or additional visa pages?

Please carefully review the validity of your current U.S. passport. Many governments require US travelers to have at least six months validity left in their passports for entry into their countries. China also requires 6 months passport validity to enter or reenter the country and airlines will deny boarding to those who do not meet this requirement or you may be

refused entry by Chinese boarder authorities.

Regular passports are processed in Washington and are usually available for pickup at the consulate within 10 business days. More information about the passport renewal process can be found at <http://shanghai.usembassy-china.org.cn/passports.html>.

Only two sets of additional pages may be added to a passport; after that, you must replace the passport, even if it has not yet expired. Additional pages cannot be affixed to a limited validity passport.

Make an appointment.

With the holidays approaching, ACS is likely to become increasingly busy. Passport services are by appointment only so as you plan holiday schedules and activities, please remember to book appointments early. See our website for further details: http://shanghai.usembassy-china.org.cn/appointment_system011309.html.

Shorten your wait time at the Consulate: Fill out your forms in advance!

When applying for passport services at U.S. Consulate Shanghai, you can help to shorten your time in the Consulate waiting room by bringing your completed forms with you. (Please ignore the part of the form that instructs you to mail the form to the U.S. If you mail the form to the U.S., your application will be considerably delayed.) Forms can be completed and printed out online at <https://pptform.state.gov/FraudAbuseNotice.aspx>.

Register with Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP).

If you are traveling abroad, register your trip online with Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) at: http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/registration/registration_4789.html. The registration information is used to communicate with US citizens and assist them in case of an emergency.

You can find more information about international travel on the Department of State website at travel.state.gov/.

Two Tips to Keep Your Belongings Safe

Pickpockets and Bag-snatchers!!

Please keep your eyes (and/or hands) on your belongings. It's easy to be lulled into a false sense of security here in East China (Shanghai, Zhejiang, Anhui, Jiangsu). The level of crime, even here in Shanghai, is generally lower than in comparably-sized cities elsewhere. However, Shanghai is still a "Big City" with its share of unbelievably talented pickpockets and bag-snatchers. We receive frequent reports from residents and visitors about the theft of wallets and bags from various locations – restaurants, hotels, clubs, etc – that they would have otherwise considered quite secure.

Always get a receipt from your taxi driver!!

Ever taken a "black taxi" - unregistered or off-license taxi before? If it hasn't happened to you, it's likely happened to someone you know. You may be charged non-standard (outrageously expensive) rates or some belongings may go missing, or in the worst cases you may be outright robbed. The best way to distinguish a real taxi from a "black" one, is to ask for a receipt. A real taxi driver will be able to provide an official receipt with the taxi company's name and a number for complaints.

So, take the extra 10 seconds to get the receipt from your taxi driver.

If you find yourself in trouble you may call the police at 110 for help. If you don't speak Chinese very well, you can also call 962288 for free multi-lingual assistance.

