

Did you know that you can end your enrollment with the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) by visiting the step.state.gov site? If you previously submitted a paper enrollment form to the U.S. consulate, you may end your enrollment by sending an email request to: ShanghaiACS@state.gov.

American Citizen Services (ACS) Contact Information

**U.S. Consulate General,
Shanghai, China
1038 West Nanjing Road,
8/F Westgate Mall
梅龙镇广场 (Méi Lóng
Zhèn Guǎng Chǎng)**

**Routine Services:
8:00am - 11:30am
Passport Pickups:
1:00pm - 3:00pm
Monday to Friday**

***Closed on Wednesday
afternoons, weekends,
and holidays.**

**Homepage:
[shanghai.usembassy-
china.org.cn/service.html](http://shanghai.usembassy-china.org.cn/service.html)**

**After Hours Emergencies:
(86-21) 3217-4650**

Inside this issue:

Upcoming Holidays	2
Travel Warnings and Travel Alerts	2
Shanghai to extend stays without visa to 72 hours	3
Top-class hospitals open suburban branches	4



Shanghai Consulate News for Americans

Issue 59

December 2012

Holiday Traveling Checklist

Winter break is just around the corner and many families will be taking advantage to explore new places in the region and around the world. You don't want bumps in the road to spoil your plans. Make sure your travel documents are in order and that you are well informed. If the answer to the following questions are "yes", then you are off to a good start. If not, then it might be time to make an appointment with us.

Do you have a valid passport?

Make sure you have a signed, valid passport, and a visa, if required, and fill in (in pencil) the emergency information page of your passport. It's a good idea to keep a copy of your passport data page with you while traveling.

Does your passport have a minimum of 6 months validity?

Check your passport expiration date. To enter, many countries require travelers to have at least 6 months validity on their passports beyond their planned duration of stay. If your passport expires in six months or less you need to renew it now. Don't wait until the last minute; the processing time for passport applications is 10 workdays. For complete information on how to renew a passport please visit of our webpage.

Does your passport have sufficient visa pages?

Check your passport to make sure you are not about to run out of pages for visas and entry/exit stamps. If your passport has at least one year validity and is in good condition, but you are running out of visa pages, then you can apply for extra visa pages to be added. Keep in mind that the Consulate may only add a maximum of 2 visa page inserts. For further information visit our webpage.

Are you are well informed about the local conditions and laws of the places you will be visiting?

Remember that while in a foreign country you are subject to its laws. Look up Country Specific Information about the places you plan to visit, as well as Travel Warnings and Travel Alerts. In addition, make sure to check with the embassies of your destination countries for information on prohibited items.

Have you enrolled in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)?

Sign up for the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program. It's easy and it's free! Doing so will help your family and friends get in touch with you in case of an emergency and the U.S. Embassy or Consulate contact you in case of a crisis in the places you visit.

Are your friends or relatives aware of your travel plans?

Leave copies of your itinerary, passport data page and visas with family or friends, so you can be contacted in case of an emergency. In addition, check out The Department of State's webpage on [Tips for Travelling Abroad](#).

Have a safe and wonderful vacation!
Happy Holidays!



Upcoming Holidays & Other Closures

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

December 25, 2012, Tuesday **Christmas Day** (圣诞节 Shèngdàn Jié)

January 1, 2013, Tuesday **New Year's Day**(元旦 Yuándàn)

January 21, 2013, Monday **Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday**



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:

Iran	12/07/2012
Mauritania	11/30/2012
Eritrea	11/29/2012
Congo, Democratic Republic of the	11/21/2012
Chad	11/21/2012
Honduras	11/21/2012
Mexico	11/20/2012

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.

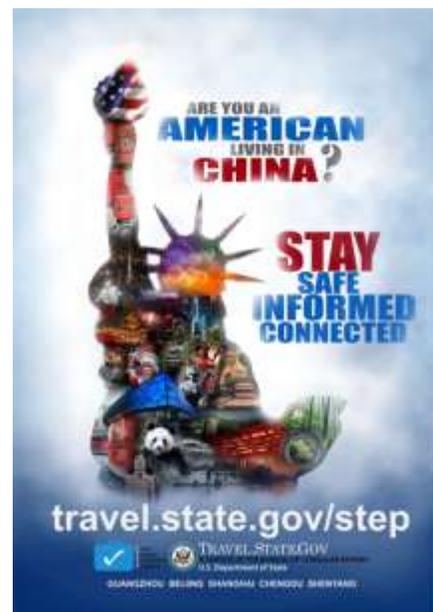
Travel Alerts are issued to disseminate information about short-term conditions generally within a particular country or region that pose imminent risks to the security of U.S. citizens. Natural disasters, terrorist attacks, coups, anniversaries of terrorist events, election-related demonstrations or 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/tw/tw_1766.html.

The most up-to-date information regarding permitted and **prohibited items** on flights can be viewed online at www.tsa.gov.

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.



Shanghai to extend stays without visa to 72 hours

(From Shanghai Daily) Air passengers from 45 countries will be able to enjoy an extended visa-free stay in Shanghai from next year.

The policy, which has been approved by the central government, extends the period of visa-free stay in the city from 48 to 72 hours for passengers passing through on their way to other destinations.

Beijing announced a similar measure last week.

The foreign countries include the **United States**, Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, France and Russia, and the **policy will apply to passengers who hold transit plane tickets to a third nation or region.**

Shanghai border inspection authorities said special check areas will be set up at **Hongqiao** and **Pudong** international airports.

The current 48-hour visa-free policy is available to 32 countries.

Zhang Chaomei, director with Shanghai Port Office, said that the extended period would boost passenger volume and "greatly benefit passengers."

The visa-free policy is also expected to be introduced to port and railway borders as the city promotes the liner and cruise businesses.

Local travel agencies see the policy as a golden opportunity to boost tourism and plan to offer more travel products.

"Not only visitors but those business passengers will have plenty of time to get a good tour around the city," said Zhong Xin, a vice general manager with Shanghai China Youth Travel Service.

The extra time will enable the visitors to get a better feel for the city and that should boost its tourist industry, Zhong said.

The 48-hour visa-free policy was first introduced in 2000 at the city's two international airports.

Police said 2,923 people took advantage of the service last year, a 78.5 percent increase on the previ-

ous year.

Entry and exit authorities have been boosting Shanghai's plans to build itself into a major international transport hub with a series of policies.

The latest, introduced in March, saw passengers transferring between international flights at Pudong within 24 hours given exemption from double border inspections.

It's the first time the practice has been used at airports on the Chinese mainland.

More than 93,000 passengers enjoyed the benefits of that policy from March to July, authorities said.

The city's airports saw a slower increase in passenger volume and cargo transport last year amid the global economic slowdown and weakened trade growth.

This year, in the first six months, more than 11.95 million travelers went through Shanghai's airports and ports, an 11 percent increase on the same period in 2011.

About 44.8 percent were foreign travelers, officials said.

The 45 countries which will be covered by the 72-hour visa-free policy are: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Brunei, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Holland, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, New Zealand, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Russia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, South Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, the UK, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates and the US.



Top-Class Hospitals Open Suburban Branches

(From Shanghai Daily) Fewer residents in the city's outskirts will need to travel downtown for more sophisticated medical treatment as two of the biggest public hospitals in Shanghai announced yesterday that they have established branches in outlying areas.

Ruijin Hospital has set up a branch in Jiading District and Huashan Hospital has opened up in Baoshan District, officials said.

The announcement marked a major step toward completion of plans begun in 2008 for one city-level health facility, the most sophisticated level, in each of nine outlying regions like

the Qingpu, Jiading and Nanhui areas and Chongming County by 2012.

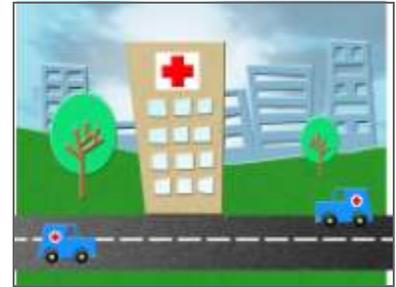
The plan also facilitates the goal of redistributing population from the crowded downtown to new towns in the outskirts, officials said.

Five hospitals are branches of the city's leading downtown hospitals, three are upgraded from the original district-level hospitals and one was moved from another area.

Nearly 5,000 new beds are expected to be added in the outlying hospitals to give residents top-level health services within a short distance.

Five new hospitals have started operation, three have been built and are awaiting approval and one is being built.

The project can greatly benefit people living in the outskirts and make it convenient for them to see top medical experts, said Vice Mayor Shen Xiaoming.



Over 80% of Water Dispensers Had Excessive Bacteria

(From Shanghai Daily) The city's consumer rights protection watchdog is reminding people to disinfect drinking water dispensers more regularly after it found over 80 percent of 30 machines tested were contaminated with excessive bacteria.

A total of 25 water dispensers were found to contain excessive level of CFU (colony-forming units), 20 at alarming levels, the Shanghai Consumer Rights Protection Commission warned yesterday.



The amount of bacterial colonies found in these 20 machines reached more than 300 CFU (colony-forming units) per milliliter, far exceeding the national limit of 20 per milliliter. The machine samples were collected at an office building in Shanghai.

Experts said machines' liners are the most likely spot for bacterial contamination due to their structure.

Air enters bottles every time the drinking water flows out because of atmospheric pressure. If the air is not clean, the water inside the bottles will be tainted, leading to rapid bacterial growth. A little water may be left in the inner tank of machines, where bacteria such as dangerous E. coli can adhere.

There is no standard on the sterilization of drinking water dispensers, and the problem is commonly ignored by administrative staff members of companies and residents.

Eileen Zhu, who works for a public relations company in Xuhui District, said

the water dispensers at her company are cleaned every six months, which should be once every three months.

"I feel concerned over sanitation problems as the inner tank of the machines are dipped in water for a long time, which certainly leads to bacteria," Zhu said.

Chen Jie, secretary general of the Shanghai Beverage Association, said people should become more aware of the need to disinfect the machines. They can call drinking water delivery companies to clean them.

The consumer rights protection commission reminded people to clean water dispensers every three months, and consume water in a new bottle within one week.

It is also recommended that water be heated before drinking as hot water can kill bacteria, and the remaining water inside the machine should be emptied before bottles are changed.