

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.

Shanghai Consulate News for Americans

Issue 58

November 2012

Holiday Travel Tips

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 (Mélóng
Zhèn Guǎng Chǎng)

Routine Services:
8:00am - 11:30am
and 1:30pm - 3:30pm
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

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

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: [shanghai.usembassy-
china.org.cn/appointment_system011309.h
tml](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/FraudAbuseNotic
e.aspx](https://pptform.state.gov/FraudAbuseNotice.aspx).

Do you need a new passport?

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 six months passport validity to enter or re-enter the country and airlines will deny boarding to those who do not meet this requirement or you may be refused entry by Chinese border authorities. Regular passports are processed in Washington and are usually available for pickup at the consulate within 10 business days.

Check our Country Specific Information Sheets to learn the Entry and Exit Re- quirements 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.

Upcoming Holidays & Other Closures

A full list of all of our holiday closings is online at [http://shanghai.usembassy-
china.org.cn/holidays.html](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)

Time Change For Passport Pickup Services

The American Citizen Services unit of the US Consulate General in Shanghai (China) has recently changed the time for passport pickup services for U.S. citizens. If you have received a notification that your or your dependent's new passport(s) is ready to be picked up, please come to our office located at 1038 West Nanjing Road, Westgate Mall (Mei Long Zhen guang -chang), 8th floor between 1:00pm and 3:00 pm, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.

ACS is closed on Wednesday afternoons, U.S. and local holidays: shanghai.usembassy-china.org.cn/holidays.html.

You do **not** need to make an appointment to pick up a passport. When you arrive at our office, you can wait in line at our Cashier's window without taking a number.

Please bring your current passport(s) and receipt(s) with you. If your passport was lost or stolen, please also

bring the police report(s). If you are picking up a child's passport, only one parent needs to come in; the child does not need to be present. If you are unable to pick up your own passport yourself, you can appoint a representative to pick it up for you. Please have the representative bring his/her own passport or identity card, your passport, and a signed authorization letter in English stating that this person is picking up your passport with your knowledge and consent.

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>Chad</u>	11/21/2012
<u>Congo, Democratic Republic of the</u>	11/21/2012
<u>Honduras</u>	11/21/2012
<u>Mexico</u>	11/20/2012
<u>Yemen</u>	11/19/2012
<u>Saudi Arabia</u>	11/19/2012
<u>Niger</u>	11/16/2012
<u>Cote d'Ivoire</u>	11/16/2012
<u>Burundi</u>	11/08/2012

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.

The U.S. Department of State has not issued any new **Travel Alerts**.

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.

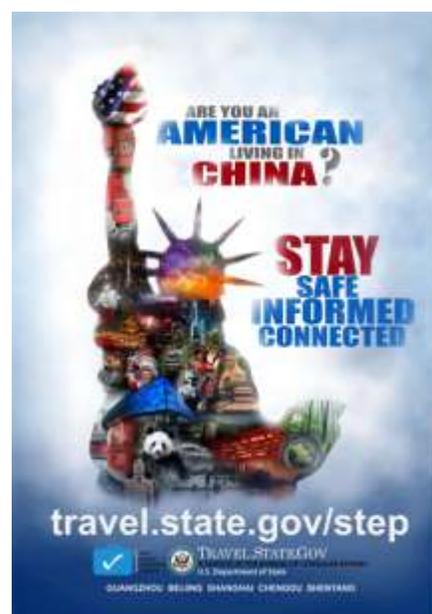
The most up-to-date information regarding permitted and **prohibited items** on flights can be viewed online at www.tsa.gov.

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.



Be Careful With Scooters, Foreigners Told

Nov. 7, 2012 (by Winter Zha, Shanghai Daily) -- City traffic police are reminding foreigners, especially students, to be careful while riding their two-wheelers and ensure that the scooters and mopeds they use are safe and licensed.

The warning comes after a foreign student on a scooter was injured in a collision with another rider in Yangpu District on Monday.

Police said it's quite common to see the students riding the scooters, usually without a license plate, in Yangpu which is home to several universities.

The district police declined to disclose details about the injured foreign student, saying the investigation is ongoing.

Both riders suffered slight injuries in the Monday accident, police said, adding the scooter had no plate.

"Many foreign students like to buy the scooters and drive them fast," said Li Bin, a squad leader with Yangpu traffic police. "It's very dangerous."

So far police have reported about 10 cases of such traffic violations involving foreign students riding scooters, which led to several accidents.

The unlicensed vehicles were confiscated by police.

Li said some of the scooters, which are essentially low-power mopeds and therefore don't require a license, have been modified to be more powerful and therefore fail to pass police checks.

Traffic police said they had to go to the school campuses to educate the students and caution them against dangerous driving.

The incidents of drag racing, which had caused many sleepless nights for neighboring households, have since seen a decrease, police said.

However, foreigners seem quite used to not having a motorcycle plate.

"No one told me that you need a license plate for a scooter," Kim Joe-nam, a South Korea student at a local university, told Shanghai Daily. He had his scooter's structure refitted but did not change the engine. He was once caught by traffic police and fined 200 yuan (US\$32) because of the unlicensed vehicle.

The city now has more than 13 million mopeds, scooters and motorcycles.

Shanghai Adopts New Air Quality Standard

Nov. 6, 2012 (by Wenjun Cai, Shanghai Daily) -- Under a new national standard for air quality monitoring, Shanghai will rate local air quality based on six indicators instead of three starting from November 16, officials from the Shanghai Environment Monitoring Center said today.

The center's website will issue daily and hourly readings of PM10, sulfur dioxide, carbon dioxide, PM2.5, ozone and carbon monoxide. The six pollution indexes will be used to evaluate air quality and present a better picture of air pollution across the country.

Air quality will be indicated by six levels from excellent to severe pollution. Each level has a different color.

Currently, Shanghai rates its air quality only according to readings of PM10, sulfur dioxide and carbon dioxide.

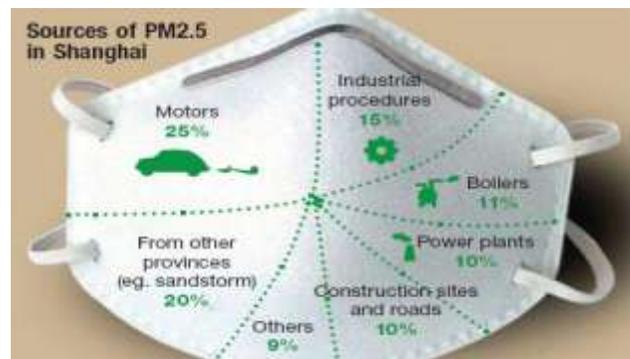
Lin Chenyuan, a worker at the center, said the number of days with excellent and good air quality may drop by 30 percentage points on an annual basis in the new system.

"Of the three new indicators, PM2.5 draws the biggest public concern as it can affect air quality and visibility and make people doubt about the air quality forecast," Lin said.

PM2.5 is a measure of airborne pollutants smaller than 2.5 microns in diameter, which are the main cause of urban smog and haze and are and are harmful to human health.

Air Quality Monitor at U.S. Consulate Shanghai

The U.S. Consulate General in Shanghai has installed a PM2.5 air quality monitor to measure fine particles in the air at its Huaihai Middle Road compound. Data from this monitor are used to calculate the Air Quality Index (AQI) which provides a health resource for the American community. If you would like to view our data, please look for us on Twitter (@cgshanghaiair) or view our website at <http://shanghai.usembassy-china.org.cn/airmonitor.html>.



Illegal Shanghai Taxi Driver Ran Over German, Twice

Oct. 24, 2012 (from Dongguang News) -- On July 15 this year, a German named Sasha and two friends were picked up by an unlicensed taxi on Fuzhou Road, near the Bund. The driver, Wang Mou, asked for 100 RMB so Sasha left the car in disgust while he friends continued to try and negotiate the price down. When Sasha approached the car again, the driver accelerated, running over Sasha and fracturing his leg. Rather

than stop to help, the driver ran over the fallen German *again* and fled the scene.

Wang has now been sentenced to three years and three months in prison, according to Dongguan News.

The American Citizen Services (ACS) of the U.S. Consulate General in Shanghai would like to remind U.S.

citizens to be careful of the dark purple (maroon) cabs, which are usually the unlicensed ones.



Reporting International Financial Scams & Resources for Victims

The State Department's information on international financial scams can help you report fraud to the appropriate U.S. authorities like the FBI, Secret Service, Federal Trade Commission, and U.S. Postal Inspector, or to the appropriate overseas authorities including the Nigerian Economic and Financial Crimes Commission and the United Kingdom's Metropolitan Police. Contact information can be found on the State Department's website that provides resources for victims.

http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/financial_scams/financial_scams_3155.html

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_4522.html

The first website includes steps that can be used to protect yourself against *future* identity theft because the fraud perpetrators can use your



personal information to open bank accounts or obtain credit cards in your name. Remember, some losses may be tax deductible, so consult a qualified tax advisor or the IRS to see if you qualify.

Financial fraud can have an emotional impact on victims and their families. The Identity Theft Resource Center Victim Guide has information about the emotional impact of identity theft, and much of this advice is relevant to fraud victims.

http://www.idtheftcenter.org/v_resource/s/v_intro.shtml

Internet Dating and Romance Scams

U.S. citizens should be alert to attempts at fraud by persons claiming to live outside of the U.S., professing friendship, romantic interest, and/or marriage intentions over the Internet.

Typically, once a connection is made, the correspondent asks the U.S. citizen to send money or credit card information for living expenses, travel/medical expenses, or "visa costs." Sometimes, the correspondent notifies the U.S. citizen that a close family member, usually the mother, is in desperate need of surgery and begins to request

monetary assistance. Internet dating and romance scams have advanced to the point where several U.S. citizens have reported losing tens of thousands of dollars through such scams.

Correspondents who quickly move to expressions of romantic interest or discussion of intimate matters are likely scammers. A request for funds almost always marks a fraudulent correspondent. U.S. citizens are cautioned against sending any money to persons they have not actually met in person.

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/financial_scams/financial_scams_4554.html

Counterfeit and Pirated Goods

Do not buy counterfeit or pirated goods, even if they are widely available. Not only are bootleg and knock-off goods illegal in the U.S., if you purchase them, you may also be breaking local laws. Please remember that U.S. passports can only be issued by the U.S. Department of State.

Questions on how to obtain a U.S. passport or green card can be posed to your nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.

Forewarned Is Forearmed – SCAMS Endemic To Shanghai

The American Citizen Services (ACS) unit is regularly contacted by Americans victimized by scams that take advantage of their generosity or ignorance of local norms and culture. While petty theft remains the most prevalent type of crime Westerners encounter in China, the diversity and sophistication of scams is increasing. While the following list is not meant to be all-encompassing it does forewarn and forearm you against the most common scams encountered by Americans here.

General Safety Advice

- Shanghai is a big city with big city problems.
- If it is not a good idea at home; it is probably not a good idea here.
- If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.
- Always be aware of your surroundings. Look at the people close to you and watch out for “accidental” nudging and touching.
- Think about leaving valuables and extra cash behind in a safe place when you go out.
- Don’t carry all your valuables, cash, credit cards, etc. in one pocket or bag – spread it out.

“Mimicking Phone Numbers” – You receive a call on your mobile phone from someone claiming to be the police from the “Economic Crimes Bureau” in Beijing. You are told your bank account is involved with money laundering and that you are now being investigated. You are told that you may verify the incoming call by checking online or in a phone book for the number of the “Economic Crimes Bureau”. The caller is patient and tells you that he will hold the line while you check to verify the number. You check with different resources and confirm the phone number of the incoming call belongs to the police in Beijing. You then follow the caller’s instructions and provide him with detailed information about your bank accounts. You transfer the money to the safe account as instructed by the caller. You later find the money that you transferred is gone. How this Scam Works: To attract clients, telecom operators enable clients to set the incoming number they want to be displayed on the phone of someone they call. Bottom line, you cannot always trust that a phone call is truly coming from the number appearing on your phone. If you are concerned about your bank accounts, it’s best to contact your bank or the local authorities directly.

“Art Show / Art Student” scam – “Hi, I’m an art major at a Chinese university. We are showing our work nearby and would love for you to have a look. Don’t worry, entrance is free and there’s no need to buy anything.” If you follow this “art student” you will be pressured to purchase expensive, low-grade art prints.

“Tea Ceremony/English student” scam – “Hi, we are English students at a local university. Would you mind helping us practice our English? In exchange, we will treat you to a traditional Chinese tea ceremony.” After ordering tea and snacks they will excuse themselves. Soon the bill will arrive and very large man will force you to pay an exorbitant amount of money before allowing you to leave. Real English students will not mind going to a place of your choosing to practice their English for an hour.

“Bar tabs” – Better to pay as you go. Starting a tab makes it possible for a bartender to hand you a bar bill of \$500. If you decline to pay you could be threatened with physical violence until you pay (usually by credit card), before being escorted out.

“Injured Relative / Arrested Relative” scam – “Hi, I’m a friend of your grandchild here in China and she was just seriously injured (usually in a traffic accident) and/or arrested. In order for her to receive medical care in China you must pay all fees upfront. The American Consulate won’t help. Please wire \$2000 to my account so I can ensure your granddaughter receives the necessary medical treatment.” Always best to try and contact your relative directly, or call ACS to help you find out the facts, if someone tells you that they are in trouble and need you to wire them money ASAP. In China medical facilities will usually contact the U.S. Consulate if an American citizen is admitted without anyone to assist. We will never refuse to assist American citizens in need.

“Please Hold the Line for the Police” – You receive a phone call from someone claiming to be from your bank or the police station and you are told that someone assumed your identity and used your credit card to commit credit card fraud, which is now under investigation by the Public Security Bureau (PSB). You are informed that the PSB requires your bank account information to complete their investigation. After providing your personally identifiable information over the phone that included your savings account information, your account is liquidated. You later find out that the person who called you was not from your bank or the police. If you receive a call from the police asking for personal information you should ask them to wait, and contact your nearest police station to inquire into the situation in person.

“Business Deal” – You have been doing business with a Chinese company for some time and receive an email asking you to send the next wire transfer to a new account number. After wiring the money you are asked to resend

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the payment because it never arrived. After rewiring the payment you are again notified that the payment did not arrive and that you should try sending it to another account number. At which time you become extremely suspicious and discover the email address is slightly different from the company's real email and/or the person who has been contacting you left the company a month before.

"IRS scam" – You received an email from the IRS claiming they cannot process your recent tax return because you did not include a photocopy of your state or federal ID. The IRS does NOT generally initiate fax or emails to taxpayers, nor does the IRS discuss tax account matters with taxpayers via email or fax. The IRS never requests security-related personal information, such as your SSN or PIN numbers.

"Diversity Visa" – You receive an email congratulating you because you've won a Diversity Visa (DV) and although the DV participation was free, U.S. law and regulations require every DV winner to pay a visa processing fee of \$819. The email goes on to state the fee must be paid using a Western Union money transfer and will be processed by the U.S. Embassy in the United Kingdom. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES should money be sent to anyone to participate in the DV Lottery. The State Department's Kentucky Consular Center does not send email notifications to DV entrants informing the winning entries.

"Real Estate" scam – You sign a contract for an apartment you want to rent and hand over the deposit and first few months rent to who you believe is the landlord. All seems legitimate until you return home one night to discover the real landlord in the apartment demanding to know

who you are and why you have moved into his apartment. You find that the person you signed the contract with has skipped town with your money and the real estate agent has no recollection of you.

"Black Taxi" – "Where do you want to go?" "Taxi?" If you get in, make no mistake, you will be grossly over charged and potentially robbed in a secluded area by the driver's friends. The same goes for motorcycles charging for transportation.



"Fake Police" – You are stopped on the road (usually near an area frequented by expats) and asked to show your passport to a person claiming to be a police officer. When you cannot show your passport, you are asked to pay an on-the-spot fine of RMB500. First, if they are real police they will have no problem with showing you their I.D. when asked. Moreover, real police officers will go with you to their station where you will be issued a receipt for the fine.

"Pickpockets" – Typically, a single man or a pair of women with babies strapped to their chests approach you from behind during your walk near a popular tourist area (Nanjing Rd). Unbeknownst to you, they unzip your bag and quickly steal everything that looks expensive. Remember to keep your bags in front of you and do not place valuables in your back pocket.

"Child Beggars & Flower Sellers" – "Money, money!" or "Flowers, Flowers!" Money dropped into their cup will be taken by their adult handler (perhaps even their kidnapper) who is exploiting the child and your humanitarian nature. If you want to help, consider offering food instead.

"Buy a Car" scam – A Chinese based website states you can pay 30% of the total cost of the car now through Western Union and the balance upon delivery. In the end you never receive your car or see your money again.

"Black Money" – In order to prevent the theft of U.S. currency being shipped overseas, the U.S. government has a process to coat \$100 bills with a special ink (usually black). I have intercepted one shipment but need your help purchasing a special solvent to "clean" the bills. I am happy to share the proceeds with you. Of course, the process is bogus, and you will lose whatever money you invest.

"Stolen Wallet" – "Hi, my wife and I (dressed nicely) are tourists and had our wallets stolen. Could you loan us RMB100? When we return home we will send it back to you." You will not receive any money back and have just been victimized by a con artist.

"Dropped Metro Card" scam – The taxi driver drops your transportation card as he attempts to hand it back to you in the backseat. The next time you go to use it you find the card has a zero balance. What happened? The taxi driver saw that you had a lot of money on your card and dropped it by his feet to quickly switch it for an empty one. Circumvent this scam by placing a sticker or other clear identifying marker on your card to confirm the card handed back to you is indeed your own.