



# Shanghai Consulate News for Americans

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## Forewarned Is Forearmed — “Business Deal” Scam

### Leaving China?

Did you know that you can end your enrollment with the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) by visiting the [step.state.gov](http://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](mailto:ShanghaiACS@state.gov).

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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. One of the scam types, the “Business Deal”, listed in our report of [Common Scams in Shanghai](#), has recently re-appeared and caused financial loss to a victimized American business. We would like to re-introduce this type of scam as a reminder to all who may be targeted by such con-artists.

**“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 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 e-mail address and/or the person who has been contacting you left the company a month before.

Our full report of Common Scams in Shanghai is posted on our website at [here](#).

### Some 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 – distribute.
- Enter into your phone: 110 (police) and 962288 (bilingual assistance).

## 2014 Shanghai Job Fair for Expats

**Time:** 9:00-16:00, April 12th 2014 (Saturday)  
**Place:** 3rd Floor, Zurich Hall, Swissotel Grand Shanghai  
**Address:** 1 Yu Yuan Road, Jing An District, Shanghai

The Fair is free for all expatriate job seekers. This year, the organizer expects over 60 companies to be represented. The company list will be posted one week prior to the event. More information can be found at [Jobfair.chinajob.com](http://Jobfair.chinajob.com).

## Chinese Smog Insurance: Travel Agency Offers Air Pollution Policies

Source: Will Coldwell, [theguardian.com](http://theguardian.com) | March 19, 2014

China's largest online travel agency is now offering tourists "smog insurance", permitting travelers to claim financial compensation should their city break be blighted by bad air. Ctrip.com has created the "haze-travel insurance package" in collaboration with the Chinese insurance firm Ping An and has been selling the new product since Tuesday.

The insurance is focused on six cities including Beijing, Shanghai and Xi'an, all of which are popular with tourists – and also suffer from poor air quality. Pollution in China was recently described by scientists as like a "nuclear winter" and smog frequently grounds flights and keeps tourists at home. On one day during a recent bout of bad weather, Beijing's Forbidden City saw visitor

numbers drop to 11,200: a quarter of its usual daily draw.

Under the new insurance package, tourists who spend at least two days in the designated city while pollution levels are high will be able to file claims. The level of pollution that triggers an insurance claim varies between the cities but for visitors to Shanghai, claims can be made if the air pollution index exceeds 100. In the past month the city experienced 17 days over this level.

Evidently aimed at domestic rather than international tourists, the premium comes to 10RMB (£1) and travelers can claim 50RMB (£5) per day.

The data for the pollution will be measured using the China Air Quality Index app, which broadcasts the levels of all the country's major cities and is among the top 10 most popular

weather apps in China. The popularity of the app is in itself an indication of the lengths Chinese people will go to avoid pollution.

In Hong Kong, bad air quality and poor visibility has led visitors to pose for photos in front of a photo backdrop of the city's skyline. However, when it comes to smog insurance not all tourists in the country are convinced. Tian Yiyi, a sales representative with a Shanghai-based furniture company, told China Daily that despite travelling widely she would not be buying the premium. "The premium does not go directly to tackle the heavily polluted air," she said. "I would like the money to be put to better use."

Qian Yigang, 28, a technician at a Shanghai-based IT company told the paper: "People travel around for fun. If their mood is upset by poor atmospheric conditions, it cannot be fixed by money."

## China to Cancel Preferential IIT Policy for Foreigners

Source: China Briefing | February 14, 2014

To resolve income discrepancies in China, the State Council of China recently released opinions on deepening income distribution reform (*Guofa* [2013] No.6, hereinafter referred to as the "Opinions"). One of the goals laid out in the Opinions is strengthening tax collection on high incomes and improving the tax system, including cancellation of the preferential tax policy that exempted dividend and bonus incomes received by foreign individuals from individual income tax (IIT).

This preferential policy was originally enacted under the "Policy Issues Regarding Individual Income Tax (*Caishuizi* [1994] No. 020)" released by the Ministry of Finance (MoF) and the State Administration of Taxation (SAT) in 1994. Pursuant to the issuance of the Opinions, the MoF and the SAT are expected to draw up regulations in the upcoming months subjecting foreigners to the regular 20 percent IIT rate on income derived from investment in foreign-invested enterprises (FIEs) in China. Read the full story [HERE](#).

## The 10 Worst Tourist Scams in China

Source: Darryl Hall, [escapingthedesk.com](http://escapingthedesk.com) | February 21, 2014

Travelling should never be about keeping your guard up at all times. You've decided to travel because you want to be free to explore and enjoy your time on the road. However, keeping at least one eye open to your surroundings can save you a lot of bother.

The vast majority of Chinese people are honest and hard-working individuals. But given the growing popularization of the country for foreign tourists, there are bound to be some individuals (like most countries) who will prey on travelers' vulnerability and naivetés. One thing to note about the people in China, is that culturally, they are very reserved in their approach to strangers and foreigners (laowai) alike. So acting with a pinch of caution on those that go against the grain may be sometimes prudent.

Stereotypically, there are a few things that can sum up the average Mainland Chinese person..

- Chinese hold a lot of respect for family, friends and connections. The opposite is true to strangers, who they can reserve a great deal of suspicion, distrust, impatience and occasional hostility towards. This goes much the same towards foreigners, as other Chinese people.
- Rarely do Chinese people smile to strangers in public, compared to Americans who smile at all

opportunities given. It's just not a common courtesy normally given to people you don't know in China.

- Opening up a conversation with a foreigner they pass on the street is rare. The Chinese generally acknowledge that westerners have little to no knowledge of Chinese social etiquettes. Which also means occasionally you will find they do strike up a conversation with you, mostly to try out their English. Whilst staying in Ningbo, a young girl sat next to me on a bus one day, and I could see she kept glancing at me and tapping at something on her phone. Then after a few minutes she showed me her phone screen, with the words 'welcome to China' written in English. That might be the most you get sometimes! But it's still nice to hear (or at least read).

***On the flip-side of this,*** foreigners in China are very stereotypically similar, regardless of nationality..

- We are much more open with strangers. We are conditioned with the mind-set that ignoring people is very rude, so we avoid that wherever possible.
- Having a local approach you to chat is greatly appreciated.. We are just happy to have a genuine encounter with them most of the time!
- We openly trust strangers until they give us a reason not to any more.

And this is precisely where con-artists gain their opportunities with foreigners. We are incredibly

lacking when it comes to the common scams in China, to the point it probably baffles the Chinese Police how foreigners keep getting scammed. Crying about being scammed in China is not going to solve your issues either, these con-artists work on the principle of 'foreigners are easily fooled' and will show very little emotions to what they are actually doing.

Read the full story of The 10 Worst Tourist Scams in China at [HERE](#).

### ***Our last words on avoiding problems with scams in China...***

- It's safest not to follow anyone suggesting you join them with an activity in China. They may end up being genuine, but popular opinion and traveler experiences say otherwise. If they are genuine, they won't mind doing something with you elsewhere, and of your choosing.
- Overly friendly people who speak with ease to you and suggest something you do together should ring alarm bells. They've clearly done this before, it comes out almost like a script.
- Listen to your gut instinct, don't get involved with anything illegal or anything you feel uneasy about.
- Stay sharp, keep an eye on your valuables in crowded spaces.
- If somewhere seems overly tailored mostly towards foreigners, then usually its a tourist scam.
- Read the notice boards in your hostel for warnings on local scams aimed towards tourists, or ask reception.

## Travel Warnings And Alerts

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.

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.

The list of current Travel Warnings and Travel Alerts can be found at

<http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/alertswarnings.html>.

*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** and new **Travel Alerts** for the following countries:

3/21/2014	<a href="#">Ukraine Travel Warning</a>
3/21/2014	<a href="#">Mali Travel Warning</a>
3/18/2014	<a href="#">Egypt Travel Alert</a>
3/14/2014	<a href="#">Russian Federation Travel Alert - Events in Ukraine</a>
3/12/2014	<a href="#">Mauritania Travel Warning</a>
3/12/2014	<a href="#">Haiti Travel Warning</a>
3/06/2014	<a href="#">Iraq Travel Warning</a>

## Upcoming Holidays & Other Closures

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

<b><u>April 2, 2014, Wednesday</u></b>	<b>Administrative Closure</b>	行政管理日	Xíngzhèng Guǎnlǐ Rì
<b><u>April 7, 2014, Monday</u></b>	<b>Tomb Sweeping Day</b>	清明节	Qīngmíng Jié
<b><u>April 18, 2014, Friday</u></b>	<b>Administrative Closure</b>	行政管理日	Xíngzhèng Guǎnlǐ Rì
<b><u>May 1, 2014, Thursday</u></b>	<b>International Labor Day</b>	国际劳动节	Guójì Láodòng Jié

## 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)

To Make Or Cancel An Appointment:

<https://evisaforms.state.gov/acs/default.asp?postcode=SHG&appcode=1>

Mon - Fri \*Closed on Wednesday afternoons, weekends, and holidays.

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

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