

**U.S. Embassy in Singapore**

*Consular Section*

<http://singapore.usembassy.gov>

<http://www.travel.state.gov>

[SingaporeACS@state.gov](mailto:SingaporeACS@state.gov)

Tel: (65) 6476-9100

**American Citizen Services (ACS) Newsletter**

***February-March 2011***

The newsletter is our way of sharing topics of general interest as well as any changes in Embassy hours or procedures. We will continue to send time-sensitive announcements separately. If you need to update your registration (now called Smart Traveler Enrollment Program or STEP), please click [here](#). Please share your feedback with us at [SingaporeACS@state.gov](mailto:SingaporeACS@state.gov). *Thank you!*

If you no longer live in or travel to Singapore, please send us an email with your full name and your request for removal to [SingaporeACS@state.gov](mailto:SingaporeACS@state.gov).

The U.S. Embassy is now on **Facebook**. Please click [here](#) and become a "fan" today.

**Topics covered in this Issue:**

Upcoming Holiday and Administrative Closures

Updated Travel Information

Singapore acceded to the Hague Convention Treaty on International Child Abduction

IRS to Start Processing Delayed Returns on Feb. 14; Free Webinar on Filing

Have a son between the ages of 18-26? A must read.

New Call Center for Visa Questions

Expat Cold and Flu Research Study

American Organizations in Singapore

Topic of Interest: Explore Careers in the Foreign Service

### **Upcoming ACS Closures**

The Consular section will be closed on the following dates in February and March 2011. For an emergency during these holidays involving an American citizen, please contact the Duty Officer at 6476-9100.

<b>February 3-4, 2011 (Thursday and Friday)</b>	Singapore Holiday – Chinese New Year
<b>February 17, 2011 (Thursday)</b>	<b>Consular Administrative Day*</b>
<b>February 21, 2011 (Monday)</b>	U.S. Holiday – George Washington’s Birthday
<b>March 24, 2011 (Thursday)</b>	<b>Consular Administrative Day*</b>

Holidays: The Embassy observes certain local and American holidays. On these days, the Consular Section will be closed. For an emergency involving an American citizen, please contact the Duty Officer at 6476-9100.

\* We will be closed for all routine American Citizen Services such as passport renewal, extra passport pages and notarial services on these days **except passport pick up** which will be open only at 3:00 – 3:30pm. Regular services will resume the following working day. For emergency services at any time, please call 6476-9100.

### **Current Travel Alerts of regional interest:**

**Travel Alerts** are issued to disseminate information about short-term conditions, generally within a particular country, that pose imminent risks to the security of U.S. citizens. Below please find a link to a Travel Alert of regional interest. For a complete listing of Travel Alerts for all regions, please visit <http://travel.state.gov>.

[United Kingdom](#) January 31, 3011

### **Current Travel Warnings of regional interest:**

**Travel Warnings** are issued to describe long-term, protracted conditions that make a country dangerous or unstable. Below please find links to Travel Warnings for countries of regional

interest. For a complete listing of Travel Warnings for all regions, please visit <http://travel.state.gov>.

[Worldwide Caution](#) January 31, 2011

[Egypt](#) January 30, 2011

[Nepal](#) January 13, 2011

### **Current Warden Messages of regional interest:**

**Warden Messages** are notices sent directly to American citizens to provide important information about local conditions.

- [Queensland and New South Wales Flooding Australia January 2011](#)
- [General strike in Chittagong, Bangladesh 12/19/10](#)
- [UDD or Red-Shirts Demonstrations Planned in Bangkok, Thailand 12/17/10](#)
- [Taking Precautions at Beijing Bars and Nightclubs Beijing, China 12/17/10](#)
- [Explosion in Varanasi, India 12/8/10](#)

### **Country Specific Information Updates**

The Department of State maintains at all times Country Specific Information for every country in the world. This information is updated approximately twice a year or as necessary due to changing conditions. Recently, updates have been posted for the following countries in the region.

[Nepal](#) January 10, 2011

[India](#) December 16, 2010

[Indonesia](#) December 14, 2010

[Australia](#) December 3, 2010

[Vietnam](#) December 3, 2010

As you make your travel plans, don't forget to check [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) for the most current safety and security information.

### **Singapore acceded to the Hague Convention Treaty on International Child Abduction**

On December 28, 2010 **Singapore acceded to the multilateral Hague Convention Treaty on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction.** Procedures will be implemented starting March 1, 2011. The goal of this treaty is to protect children from the harmful effects of abduction and retention across international boundaries. The Convention does this by providing an avenue to bring about the child's prompt return to the country where he or she normally lives. Issues of custody and access to the child can be determined by the courts of that country.

Click on this [link](#) to learn more about this topic relating to:

- What is international child abduction?
- What constitutes a wrongful removal or retention?
- How does the Convention apply?
- Circumstances where a child is not returned

The Singaporean governmental agency that addresses this issue is the **Ministry of Community Development, Youth, and Sports.** Within this agency is the **Singapore Central Authority who handles all aspects of response to this treaty.**

For further information **click below** on a link.

[Contact Us](#) (Singapore Central Authority of MCYS)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

### **IRS to Start Processing Delayed Returns on Feb. 14; Free Webinar on Filing**

The IRS reminds taxpayers affected by the delay of last month's tax law changes, that they can **begin preparing their tax returns immediately.** Beginning Feb. 14, the IRS will start processing both paper and e-filed returns claiming itemized deductions on Schedule A, the higher education tuition and fees deduction on Form 8917 and the educator expenses deduction.

The IRS needed the extra time to update its systems to accommodate the tax law changes without disrupting other operations tied to the filing season. The delay followed the Dec. 17 enactment of the Tax Relief, Unemployment Insurance Reauthorization, and Job Creation Act of 2010, which extended a number of expiring provisions including the state and local sales tax deduction, higher education tuition and fees deduction and educator expenses deduction.

Click [here](#) to view the IRS website and download forms or review online services.

## **January IRS Live Webinar Focuses on Filing Season**

WASHINGTON — The Internal Revenue Service's next IRS Live Webinar, **"Getting Ready for Filing Season 2011 - Individuals and Businesses,"** is **Wednesday, Jan. 26, at 2 p.m.** This special, **100-minute program** will give tax preparers a head start on the 2011 filing season.

The extended program **will include updates to tax forms, the latest tax law changes and information about e-File, e-Pay and Direct Deposit.**

Viewers must register online at [Internal Revenue Service Webinar Registration](#).

The event will be archived for later viewing, approximately three weeks after the date of the event on the [IRS Video Portal](#).

### **New Call Center for Visa Questions**

Individuals seeking general information about U.S. visas or needing to schedule a visa appointment should visit <http://www.ustraveldocs.com/sg> or you may utilize our new call center by dialing 800 8523 800 (8:00am to 8:00 pm) from Singapore. If calling from within the United States dial 214 571-1600. You may also email your questions to [support-singapore@ustraveldocs.com](mailto:support-singapore@ustraveldocs.com). We hope you find this increased service of great benefit to your colleagues.

### **Have a son between the ages of 18-26? A must read.**

All United States citizen males within the ages of 18-26 are required to be registered with Selective Service in the U.S. Males are asked to do this within 1 month of their 18<sup>th</sup> birth date. What also is very important to note as a parent, is that males **must have obtained a Selective Service number before they can apply for financial aid at any institution of higher learning** in the United States. This number is requested by the school financial aid office before consideration is given to financial aid eligibility. You can take care of this online but be aware it may take several months to obtain the Selective Service number. To register with the Selective

Service or to read more on this topic, please go to the link below. You must use Internet Explorer as your browser to access the PDF file at this website. [www.sss.gov](http://www.sss.gov)

## **Expatriate Cold and Flu Research Study**

Fever . . . tired . . . runny nose . . . sneezing . . . coughing . . .

### **Do you have a Cold or Flu?**

It could be the flu, or the common cold virus, or one of many different respiratory viruses or bacteria which makes us miserable throughout the year.

Scientists are interested in identifying acute respiratory infections in expatriates living in Singapore and are looking for volunteers to participate in this joint investigational study.

If you are an expatriate living in Singapore, over 5 years of age, and would like to participate in this free study please call **9657-6238** (Mon to Fri 9am-6pm) or send an email to [help@myrunnynose.org](mailto:help@myrunnynose.org)

**You do not have to be sick to enroll.**

## **American Organizations in Singapore**

### **Am Cham** (American Chamber of Commerce)

AmCham Singapore is the **largest foreign business chamber in Singapore**. With 4,200 members from 700 companies, they are one of the most influential and active chambers. Learn more about them and what they can do for your company. Click [here](#).

### **American Association of Singapore**

Since their founding in 1917, the American Association of Singapore has served as the bridge to the expat community and the cross-roads to our geographic region. Their **dynamic organization welcomes all expats** to promote multiculturalism through resources, publications and networking. For their main website, click [here](#). Check out a posting of jobs in their **Career Resource Center for Expats** by clicking [here](#).

### **American Women's Association**

AWA is a vibrant and active women's group for all nationalities. They **provide a wide variety of activities and events** for approximately 1200 members, and join with the wider Singapore community through social and volunteer programs. Check out their website [here](#).

### **Topic of Interest: Explore Careers in the Foreign Service**

The U.S. Department of State employs adventurous, adaptable, well-rounded strategic problem-solvers, from diverse educational, geographic and cultural backgrounds and perspectives, who want to make a contribution to our global society. If you have the desire to live and work in any country in the world, including those with unstable governments or infrastructures – or both - and have the ability to integrate into culturally diverse environments, we have an opportunity for you. To explore more about a career in public service please go to the link below.

<http://careers.state.gov/index.html>

Interested in being a Foreign Service Officer? The **Foreign Service Exam** is offered 3 times a year all over the world. The **next exam is available February 5, 2011**. To see where test sites are being held both in the U.S. and abroad, click [here](#) and scroll down to number 3.