



# U.S. Embassy, Lusaka

## CONSULAR COMMUNICATOR



April – June 2013 Volume 2

### Consular Outreach by Rob Romanowski

Through social media, outreach events and the warden network, we try to provide accurate information on a broad range of topics – from passport instructions to travel alerts. The importance of good communication reminds me of a story about how subtle differences in messaging provoke different reactions.

The story goes like this: A guy and girl are in church and the guy asks the girl if she thinks the priest will allow him to eat his breakfast during the service. The girl suggests that the guy ask the priest himself. So the guy says to the priest, “Father, may I eat while I pray?” and the priest replies that it is strictly not allowed. The guy returns to the girl and tells her the priest’s answer. She then goes up to the priest and asks, “Father, may I pray while I eat?” and the priest answers, “Of course, most certainly.”

The point of the story (beyond the sly use of word manipulation) is that it is easy to confuse or misunderstand what others may need (or want) if the message is unclear or incomplete.

Effective communication is essential for information to be clearly understood.

We continually strive to improve communication with American visitors and residents and I would like to just highlight a few of our recent efforts. First, we revamped our website to make it easier to find relevant information quickly, including the addition of a Google map that shows major consular points of interest around Lusaka (such as the immigration headquarters, clinics, etc). Second, Vice Consul Brian Grandjean continued consular outreach with his visit to Mazabuka and Livingstone (Brian has a short article about his visit). Third, in February, Ambassador Storella hosted a town hall meeting for U.S. citi-

zens which attracted an impressive turnout of approximately 160 residents. We appreciated the strong participation and hope to organize another in the future (the children seemed to particularly enjoy the popcorn and bouncy castle). In this issue, we have included two of the meeting outcomes – a public list of volunteer wardens and instructions on how to obtain your Zambian driver’s license (provided by local resident Rena Geibel).

Zambia is a dynamic country and situations can sometimes change abruptly and unpredictably (recall the effect of the kwacha rebase on U.S. bank cards). Please continue to share your experiences which enable us to be a better hub and conduit of information.

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Ambassador Storella addressing U.S. Citizens during the Town Hall meeting.

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*Consular Outreach (continued from page 1)*



Consul Rob Romanowski with wardens from Luanshya and Kabwe after the Embassy town hall meeting



Ambassador Storella outlining embassy operations and objectives

## Southern Province Outreach by Brian Grandjean, Vice Consul

Thanks to all those who participated in our most recent consular outreach events for U.S. citizens- this time in Southern Province. We had quite a trip!

On March 18 Consular Assistant Alice Musonda and I met with U.S. citizens at the Polo Club in Mazabuka - a picturesque town where U.S. sugar farm owners and missionaries reside. It was a beautiful day and we enjoyed meeting everyone and were happy to provide routine yet important consular services that included passport renewals and extra pages. Actually, sitting under a shady tree while taking pleasure in the homemade treats provided made Mazabuka feel more like pleasure than work. Thanks again!

Then it was on to Livingstone for a second meeting with

U.S. citizens on March 20 where Alice and I provided various consular services and I facilitated an open and frank discussion on issues ranging from crime in Livingstone to Zambian driving regulations. For Alice and I, it was our first visit to Livingstone and the majestic Victoria Falls. While in Livingstone, we also met officials at clinics, police, and immigration offices to discuss issues affecting U.S. citizens.

I think our Southern Province trip was successful and worthwhile and we look forward to doing more outreach events soon. At the U.S. Embassy, our primary goal remains the protection and well-being of all U.S. citizens in Zambia and we are here to serve you. Stay safe!

Vice Consul Brian Grandjean and Consular Assistant Alice providing consular services to U.S. citizens in Mazabuka



The Vice Consul talking with U.S. citizens and their families in Livingstone

## American Citizen Services Corner

## Smart Traveler i-Phone

## Application

Smart Traveler, the official State Department app for U.S. travelers, invites you to see the world with easy access to frequently updated official country information, travel alerts, travel warnings, maps, U.S. embassy locations, and more.

To read reviews and access the free download please check out the following link:

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/smart-traveler/id442693988?mt=8>



## Attention Traveling Students:

Did you know that the State Department has a travel website especially for American youth traveling abroad?

Whether you or the young adult in your family plans to travel to another country for holiday, study, mission work or other reasons, your first visit should be to [www.studentsabroad.state.gov](http://www.studentsabroad.state.gov). The “[To Go](#)” tab on the site offers free printable travel tools, including “Go Guides” with advice about staying healthy, what to do if you are a victim of crime, tips for women travelers and other topics, “[Checklists](#)” to prepare and pack for your trip, a “[Wallet Card](#)” with key resources, and “[911](#)”-equivalent numbers to get local help for emergencies.


**Embassy Emergency Contact Info:**

Mobile: 0966 877 805 **Routine Contact Info:**

ACSLusaka@state.gov 0211 357 000 ext 7260

## FAQs SSA

**Q:** How can I estimate my retirement benefit at several different ages?

**Answer:** It’s easy! Use our *Retirement Estimator* at [www.socialsecurity.gov/estimator](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/estimator) to get a retirement benefit estimate based on current law and real time access to your earnings record. The *Retirement Estimator* also lets you create additional “what if” retirement scenarios to find out how changes in your situation might change your future benefit amount. Remember, Social Security is not sending out the yearly Statements any more, so this is a good way to keep track of your future benefit entitlement.

**Q:** If both my spouse and I are entitled to Social Security benefits, is there any reduction in our payments because we are married?

**Answer:** No. We calculate lifetime earnings independently to determine each spouse’s Social Security benefit amount. When each member of a married couple meets all other eligibility requirements to receive Social Security retirement benefits, each spouse receives a monthly benefit amount based on his or her own earnings. Couples are not penalized because they are married. If one member of the couple earned low wages or failed to earn enough Social Security credits (40) to be insured for retirement benefits, he or she may be eligible to receive benefits as a spouse based on the spouse’s work record. Learn more about spouse benefits at [www.socialsecurity.gov/retire2/yourspouse.htm](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/retire2/yourspouse.htm).

**Do you have other questions about Benefits or Social Security?**

You can contact Embassy London’s Federal Benefits Unit by email: [FBU.London@ssa.gov](mailto:FBU.London@ssa.gov).

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## We Want Your Skills in a Crisis

We do not expect disaster, but it pays to be prepared. We have been fortunate that Zambia and its people are so peaceful. Nevertheless, U.S. Embassies around the world have found it helpful to know about special skill sets and resources that exist in the American community. Maybe you were a firefighter, or undertaker, or structural engineer, in a former life. Maybe you are a surgeon specializing in spinal injuries. Perhaps you have a satellite phone or operate a radio station. Maybe you own a plane and could fly an evacuation mission, or have a dormitory with 20 beds that could serve as a safe haven. You might be surprised what skills and resources come in useful in a crisis.

If you are interested please let us know at [ACSLusaka@state.gov](mailto:ACSLusaka@state.gov). This is certainly not required, but it is one more way you can make a positive difference to your fellow citizens in Zambia.

### ***Spotlight: Eight Items You Will Never Get Through U.S. Customs***

The full Listing is available on [http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/id\\_visas/kbyg/prohibited\\_restricted.xml](http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/id_visas/kbyg/prohibited_restricted.xml)

After that 18 hour international flight, customs might be the last thing on your mind. So, instead of trying to juggle jet lag, kids, AND luggage declarations, read this easy guide to prohibited and restricted items before you go.

#### **1) Absinthe**

CBP regulations require that any absinthe brought to the US is “thujone free,” less than 10 parts per million of thujone (aka “wormwood.”). Also, the term “absinthe” cannot appear on the label and the artwork cannot display any psychotropic images. For more information about bringing absinthe and all other alcoholic beverages to the US, click on this link above

#### **3) Ivory (including jewelry made from ivory)**

Per the Endangered Species Act, any ivory brought into the country will usually require a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service permit. You can import an antique ivory item if you have special documentation showing it's more than 100 years old, but thanks to wildlife poaching, any object that's younger is generally not allowed. *Travel Tip:* Before you buy tortoise-shell, ivory, or whalebone, make sure you can bring home your new trinkets home by giving the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service a call at (800) 358-2104 or visit them at <http://www.fws.gov/endangered/>

#### **2) Certain plants (and crafts made from plants)**

If you're bringing any plant or plant products, including straw, into the United States, you will need to present it to a customs officer for inspection. Although cut flowers with berries attached, nursery stock, and seeds appear harmless, they require permits. "Noxious weeds," aren't allowed under any circumstances. *Travel Tip:* You can apply for a USDA Plant Protection and Quarantine permit or check if they're prohibited on [http://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant\\_health/](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant_health/) Permits take 30 days or more to process and are good for up to three years.



**4) Ancient artifacts**

Be aware that U.S. law requires an export permit for any artifacts (pre-Columbian objects, Native American artifacts, Byzantine items, and culturally significant Iraqi property, etc). In addition, make sure that the export certificate you get is a real one--there are many fakes floating around! The U.S. National Stolen Property Act prevents individuals from legally owning a stolen item, regardless of how many people have since possessed it. *Travel Tip:* Even with an export permit, you could face U.S. import restrictions, depending on the item and the country. Take a look at the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs website for information on what's not allowed go to <http://exchanges.state.gov/>

**6) More than \$10,000 cash**

Smuggling "bulk currency" is strictly prohibited by U.S. Immigration and Customs. Money orders, travelers' checks, and foreign coins—not just paper bills—count too.

*Travel Tip:* To bring your money in legally, obtain a "Report of International Transportation of Currency of Monetary Instruments" from a customs officer. If you don't, you could face up to five years in jail.

**8) Some Haitian Goat Hide Drums**

Some goat-skin drums aren't treated properly, and have been linked to a cutaneous anthrax case, putting them on the Centers for Disease Control's restricted list. Same goes for some African drums. Make sure any drum purchases you make have been tanned, as that means it's non-infectious.

**5) Souvenirs from Cuba, Iran, Burma, or much of Sudan**

Embargoes against these countries mean that any merchandise you bring back will generally require a license. It is up to the Office of Foreign Assets Control to grant such licenses and you should be aware that they are rarely issued. *Travel Tip:* A few exceptions to this rule exist: Books, magazines, films, photographs, posters, art, and music are okay, as are small gifts worth less than \$100.

[www.treasury.gov/ofac](http://www.treasury.gov/ofac)

**7) Designer knockoffs and cartoon-character paraphernalia**

Finding a good fake Louis Vuitton may be the highlight of your trip but these items are subject to U.S. copyright and trademark protections. Disney and other cartoon knockoffs are included in this too. *Travel Tip:* If you just want one fake bag to use for yourself (NOT for resale) that's okay: You can be granted an exemption by the government. But be advised that you can only bring only one item of its kind into the country—so a pair of sunglasses, a purse, and a pair of jeans are okay, but three purses are not, regardless of whether they have three different labels. Another note: You can only get this exemption once every 30 days



[For general CBP inquiries, please call the CBP INFO Center Monday-Friday, between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. Eastern Time or email <http://www.cbp.gov/>](http://www.cbp.gov/)

**General Inquiries: 1-877-CBP-5511**  
**International Callers: (202) 325-8000**

# CONSULAR COMMUNICATOR

## Tips on Obtaining Drivers Licenses in Zambia

by Rena Geibel

### One American's insights to getting a Zambian driving license

At last week's town meeting, I felt a general consensus of annoyance over trying to obtain a Zambian driving license. My experience has been pleasant and fairly straight forward and I'm 90% of the way there!

However, as I write instructions in a step-by-step format, the process looks painfully long. Don't be turned off. If I can do this, anyone can!

*General tip: Be a RTSA early bird. I arrived at Lumumba Road by 8:30 and in Ridgeways by 7:30. Going later in the day may increase your waiting time.*

#### Step One: Medical Clearance Form

1. Obtain a RTSA Medical Certificate form from one of the RTSA offices.
  - Do not write on the form until you are in the presence of the medical examiner.
  - Take an ID with you (passport or driver's license of some kind)
2. The Medical Clearance form needs to be signed by the examining doctor at one of the approved facilities (government clinics). This cannot be done by the private hospitals.
  - A full list of the approved facilities is at RTSA. I know Chelston, Kalingalinga, UTH and Levy Mwanawasa General Hospital are on the list.
  - Present the form to the clinic and they will show you where to go to have to doctor examine you. Some facilities will only do these exams on certain days, but I was helped immediately at Chelston.
  - The government clinics, such as Chelston, Kalingalinga, do not charge you for the examination. UTH and Levy Mwanawasa have a set fee.
  - Examinations vary widely. I was asked to read an eye chart, others have simply been asked how long they have been driving and if they are fit, others have actually had their lungs and heart assessed

#### Step Two: Provisional License (approx. 2 hours at RTSA Lumumba Road)

Even though you are converting a valid USA driver's license to a Zambian one, you will be issued with a provisional license first. The provisional license is valid for 3 months. You **MUST** carry your valid USA driver's license with you, as the provisional license is not an acceptable license to show at traffic police check points.

1. You will need copies of the following:
 

Throughout the process you will need these documents at least 2 times, so make 3 copies while you are at it, to be on the safe side!

  - Passport
    - i. Including page with your employment/dependent stamp
  - Work Permit or Dependent Pass
    - i. Sorry, you cannot get a provisional license with only the immigration letter approving the work permit. You must wait until the work permit booklet has been issued by immigration.
    - ii. If you are a dependent, you must have a copy of your spouse's work permit, including the page with your name on it.
  - Valid USA state driver's license, copy front and back

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## Step Two : *Continued from page 6*

2. Memorize the 10 Basic Rules of Driving (found in the Highway Code)
  - Know the highway code by heart and put into practice
  - Concentrate all the time on your driving and you will avoid accidents
  - Think before you act
  - Exercise patients and ‘hang back’ when necessary
  - Drive with care and overtake quickly
  - Drive only in the right places
  - Develop your care sense and you will reduce wear and tear
  - Use your car horn considerately and give proper signals
  - Make sure your car is road worthy and know its limitations
  - Perfect your road craft and acknowledge courtesies shown to you by other road users
3. Carry all [copies and originals](#) with you to RTSA on Lumumba Road
  - When you enter there is a little computer screen – hit Provisional License. You will be issued a number. Approach the appropriate counter when your number is called.
  - Here, the clerk will look through your papers and tell you to wait in line for room 2.

*I really wonder if I needed to do step A, or simply get in line for room 2, where the interview took place.*

  - Waiting in line for Room 2
    - i. While you wait in line you will be issued a driving application form to complete.
  - Room 2, The Interview
    - i. Present all your completed application form, original documents, and copies. Remind the officer you seek a conversion license.
    - ii. The officer will ask you some driving questions, focusing on the 10 Basic Rules of Driving, listed above.
    - iii. If you pass the test, you will proceed.
  - Take a new number for Provisional License and wait.
    - i. Documents will be looked through one more time.
    - ii. Directed to new window where they will take your photo.
    - iii. Directed to pay for the provisional license, 63K

## Step Three: Conversion to a Temporary Driver’s License (approx. 1.5 hours at RTSA Government Road)

1. Carry originals and copies to RTSA on Government Road, Ridgeways
  - Passport, work permit/dependent pass, USA driver’s license, provisional license
2. Everything starts and ends in Room 12 J.
3. In room 12 explain you seek a [conversion](#) and present your provisional license
  - Pay 46.80K for the driving test.
4. You will be directed to Room 7
  - Here your original documents will be reviewed and copies collated.
5. Directed to Room 1, Driving Test
  - Relax, you will not need to take the driving test! The officer will automatically complete the exam form as ‘passing’, as you are an experienced driver with valid USA license. This is a conversion, after all.
6. Back to Room 7
 

*Honestly I can’t remember what was done here, an official stamp perhaps?*
7. Go back and wait in the long queue for Room 12 to pay 77.95K for your license.
8. You will be issued a Temporary Driver’s License. This is valid for only one month

**Step Four: Collecting My License** I was told to pick up my license from RTSA Kamwala, on Dedan Kimathi Road, near the Central Police Station, after 3 weeks.

*After nearly 4 weeks (approaching expiration date of temporary license), I went to RTSA Kamwala to collect license. The license was not ready, temporary license expiration date was extended for an additional month. The story is to be continued...*

### **Contact Information for RTSA**

**Email: [rtsa@zamnet.zm](mailto:rtsa@zamnet.zm)**

**Web: [www.rtsa.org.zm](http://www.rtsa.org.zm)**