



ACS Newsletter

VIETNAM

AUGUST 2015

The monthly newsletter of the American Citizen Services Units of the U.S. Embassy Hanoi and the U.S. Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City

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Upcoming U.S. Citizens Services Visits

Officials from the U.S. Citizen Services unit in Ho Chi Minh City will offer consular services in August at the following location:

Nha Trang on Thursday, August 27, 2015 from 9am to 12pm at the Intercontinental Nha Trang located at 32 - 34 Tran Phu, Trần Phú, Nha Trang.

Consulate officials will offer notarial services, deliver federal benefits checks, and U.S. citizens will be able to apply for U.S. passports. Federal benefits annuitants may sign in during the visit. At this time, officials will not be interviewing for consular reports of birth abroad.

Also, visa and immigration services will not be provided. Only the

services listed will be available during the visits.

For additional information concerning applying for U.S. passports and notary services please see our Website at: <http://hochiminh.usconsulate.gov/service.html>

Child Vaccine Shortage in Vietnam

We appreciate hearing directly from U.S. citizens who are impacted by the shortage of child vaccines in Vietnam as it helps our Consulate better inform U.S. citizens residing in or traveling to Vietnam. Our consulate will continue to monitor the situation and do what we can to promote awareness and visibility of this health and safety issue until the situation is resolved. If there is an immediate need for these vaccines, you might consider traveling to other countries in the region with advanced medical care options.

August Holiday Closures

The Embassy and Consulate will be closed on the following days:

None

A complete list of all of our holiday closings for 2015 is available on-line at <http://vietnam.usembassy.gov/holidays.html>

*Vietnamese Holiday
+American Holiday

Information on Current Vietnamese Immigration Law

On January 1, 2015, the new law on Entry, Exit, Transit, and Residence of Foreigners in Vietnam came into effect. The new law may affect procedures for obtaining and using Vietnamese visas by foreign citizens. Under the new law, individuals can only use their

Vietnamese visa for the purpose that it was granted (i.e., an individual may not enter Vietnam as a tourist and then seek to change their visa class to be able to work or study). Those intending to work in Vietnam must first obtain a work permit before applying for their work visa. For further information about these and other

changes under the new law, please contact local immigration authorities or the Embassy of Vietnam in Washington DC.

For more information about obtaining or renewing a Vietnamese visa you can go to the website for the Embassy of Vietnam in Washington DC at: <http://vietnamembassy-usa.org/>

Services for U.S. Citizens

The Consulate General in **Ho Chi Minh City** uses a service-by-appointment system. Please visit our Website at <https://evisaforms.state.gov/acs/default.asp?postcode=HCM&appcode=1> to make an appointment to apply for a U.S. passport, a Consular Report of Birth Abroad, as well as for notary services, authentications, and additional visa pages.

Those with genuine emergencies, such as the death, arrest, or life threatening illness of a U.S. citizen, can appear on a walk-in basis from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and from 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday (except Vietnamese and American public holidays) or call us any time at (84-8) 3520-4200.

Every day we have a number of no-shows for routine services. If you make an appointment and find you cannot keep it, please log back into the appointment system and cancel the appointment so that the appointment slot will be available to another client.

If you are *picking up passports or Federal Benefits checks/correspondence* you do not need to make an appointment and can walk in for assistance between the hours of 8:30 – 11:30 a.m., Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, excluding Vietnamese and American holidays. If you are submitting additional information related to a *Consular Report of Birth Abroad* case you can walk in for assistance between the hours of 1:00 – 2:00 p.m., Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, excluding Vietnamese and American holidays.

Hours for **Hanoi** are 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. All services in Hanoi are by appointment only. You may book an appointment by going to the website: http://vietnam.usembassy.gov/acs_appointmentsystem.html. For emergencies you can call the Embassy any time at (84-4) 3850-5000.



USAID Supporting Government of Vietnam Health Sector



Opening of Methadone Maintenance Treatment Site in Binh Thanh District

In Ho Chi Minh City, the USAID Office of Health administers the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and supports the Vietnam Country Development Cooperation Strategy objective of strengthening capacity in Vietnam's health sector and improving the country's overall health and well-being. Towards this end, the HCMC office coordinates closely with Government of Vietnam partners at the provincial and city levels in its target provinces in the south. USAID HCMC is comprised of four staff and coordinates closely with the USAID/Vietnam Mission in Hanoi.

Aiming to that objective, USAID has been working directly with many implementing partners to support the Government of Vietnam's strategy for health sector service delivery development.

In the USAID Sustainable Management of HIV/AIDS Response and Transition Technical Assistance (SMART-TA) project, USAID and their partners provide training and technical assistance to the public sector and civil society organizations that manage and sustain the country's HIV response. SMART-TA also helps these institutions and organizations build management and administrative capacity to help enable them to take on more of a leadership role in the sector, with the eventual transition of all service delivery functions to local organizations being the end goal.

Healthy Markets is another USAID/Vietnam project focused on supporting the country's response to the HIV epidemic. Healthy Markets is designed to build incentives to increase domestic demand for locally-manufactured condoms, needles, and syringes, all of which reduce HIV transmission. The project also works with local commodity manufacturers to increase supply and investment in the market for condoms and other HIV-related goods and services.

USAID also manages the HIV Community Link-Southern activity that helps strengthen community-based HIV/AIDS services in support of a sustainable national HIV/AIDS response. This project also acts as a platform for networking and coordination among key stakeholders in the HIV/AIDS sector at the provincial and national levels.

As of 2014, PEPFAR projects have provided services for People-Living-with-HIV (PLWH) in 8 HIV/AIDS treatment sites, with 7827 AIDS patients receiving Anti-retroviral (ARV) therapy and 579 clients receiving Methadone Maintenance Treatment (MMT). In addition, 6,700 individuals from key populations have been reached and provided with prevention services through SMART-TA and the HIV Community-Link Project.

For more information on USAID in Vietnam, please see their website at: <http://www.usaid.gov/where-we-work/asia/vietnam>.

Safety and Security Information

Pick pocketing and bag snatchings are a constant threat in Vietnam. When on the streets be mindful of your possessions. Keep them close, and don't let them out of your sight. An unattended bag can be gone in an instant. Do not carry unnecessary IDs (such as your U.S. driver's license) nor all of your credit cards with you. If you need to carry a credit card, carry just one. Leave the others in your hotel safe, hotel safe-deposit box, or at home. It is also wise not to carry all of your cash with you.

Do not carry your passport with you unless you absolutely have to. Carry a copy of your passport and visa and leave the passport in your hotel safe or at home. A current trend we are seeing is thieves on motorbikes hanging out near hotel entrances. When a passenger is getting out of a taxi and is distracted with paying the driver, retrieving bags, etc., the thief grabs the handbag or backpack and flees.

This newsletter is also available on the U.S. Consulate's website at: <http://hochiminh.usconsulate.gov/service/monthly-newsletters.html>

Please pass this newsletter on to any other U.S. citizens in Vietnam and encourage them to enroll in STEP (<https://step.state.gov/step/>) to receive the newsletters in the future.

July 28th - World Hepatitis Day

"Hepatitis" means inflammation of the liver. The liver is a vital organ that processes nutrients, filters the blood, and fights infections. When the liver is inflamed or damaged, its function can be affected. Hepatitis is most often caused by a virus, but heavy alcohol use, toxins, some medications, and certain medical conditions can also cause hepatitis. In the United States and Vietnam, the most common types of viral hepatitis are Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, and Hepatitis C.

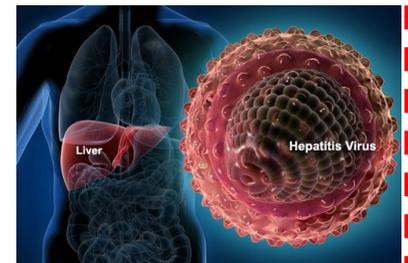
Hepatitis A is a liver disease spread by contaminated food and water. It can also be spread from the hands of a person with hepatitis A. Symptoms include a sudden onset of fever, tiredness, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, stomach pain, and jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes). Some people have no symptoms, while others have symptoms that last 1-6 months. Most people recover with no lasting liver damage.

Hepatitis B is a contagious virus that is transmitted through blood, blood products, and other body fluids, such as semen. Individuals can become infected through unprotected sex with an infected person, injection drug use, and transfusions with unscreened blood. Symptoms include a sudden fever, tiredness, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, stomach pain, dark urine, joint pain, and yellowing of the skin and eyes (jaundice). Symptoms may last from several weeks to several months. Between 2%–6% of individuals infected with hepatitis B develop lifelong (chronic) hepatitis B. This can cause people to die early from liver disease and liver cancer.

Hepatitis C is a contagious liver disease that ranges in severity from a mild illness lasting a few weeks to a serious, lifelong illness that attacks the liver. It results from infection with the Hepatitis C virus, which is spread primarily through contact with the blood of an infected person. Hepatitis C can be either "acute" or "chronic." Today, most people become infected with the Hepatitis C virus by sharing needles or other equipment to inject drugs. Approximately 70%–80% of people with acute Hepatitis C do not have any symptoms. Several different blood tests are used to test for Hepatitis C and there are several treatments available for acute and chronic hepatitis. There is no current vaccine available for Hepatitis C.

For most travelers to Vietnam, CDC recommends the hepatitis A vaccine because you can get hepatitis A through contaminated food or water in Vietnam, regardless of where you are eating or staying. As hepatitis B is spread through sexual contact, contaminated needles, and blood products, CDC recommends this vaccine if you might have sex with a new partner, get a tattoo or piercing, or have any medical procedures.

More information about Hepatitis can be found at the CDC website: <http://redirect.state.sbu/?url=http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/abc/index.htm>, And for more health information for travelers to Vietnam: <http://redirect.state.sbu/?url=http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/vietnam>



Typhoon Season Tips

The typhoon season in Vietnam runs from approximately July through November. With this year's season now underway, we would like to pass along some severe weather preparation tips to U.S. citizens residing or traveling in Vietnam.

During the approach of a typhoon or severe storm, U.S. citizens are encouraged to monitor the storm's path by listening to the radio, watching television, or monitoring the U.S. [Joint Typhoon Warning Center](#), the Vietnam [National Center for Hydro-Meteorological Forecasting](#), or [Tropical Storm Risk](#).

If you are in the path of a typhoon or severe tropical storm, please take the following precautionary measures to ensure minimal disruption or damage. You should also contact friends and family in the United States with updates on your whereabouts.

- Locate shelter and follow all official instructions, including evacuation if ordered.
- Carry your travel documents at all times (i.e., U.S. passport, birth certificate, picture ID's, etc.) or secure them in a safe, waterproof location.
- Secure loose outdoor items (limbs, roofing material, windows (coverings), doors, debris (trash), etc.).
- Fill vehicle, generator, and water tanks.
- Check and charge radios.
- Charge cell phones and carry your charger.
- Have bottled water; make ice.
- Gather flashlights, tools, and first aid supplies.
- Have fresh batteries, candles, matches, water, groceries (canned and/or dry foods), and pet supplies.
- Assure an adequate supply of first aid materials and prescription medications.
- Stay home and let your family and office know how you plan to weather the storm, especially those family members in the United States.



Travel Alerts and Warnings

The U.S. Department of State regularly issues travel alerts or travel warnings for various countries and regions. Travel warnings and alerts issued in the last month or so include Iraq, El Salvador, Republic of South Sudan, Nepal, Kenya, Tunisia, Ukraine, Niger and Djibouti.

For information regarding all travel alerts and warnings, please go to this site: http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html

On January 9, 2015, the Department of State issued a Worldwide Caution on the continuing threat of terrorist actions and violence against U.S. citizens and interests throughout the world.



U.S. citizens are reminded to maintain a high level of vigilance and to take appropriate steps to increase their security awareness.



For the current advisory please visit <http://www.travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/alertswarnings/worldwide-caution.html>

How to Subscribe/Unsubscribe to this Newsletter

The U.S. Embassy in Hanoi and U.S. Consulate General in Ho Chi Minh City are sending this monthly newsletter via the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) as a public service to U.S. citizens in Vietnam.

If you are departing Vietnam after a long stay, please be sure to update your status in STEP: <https://step.state.gov/step/>

Updating your status if you move away from Vietnam will remove you from the mailing list for this newsletter and other Embassy and Consulate Messages for U.S. citizens in Vietnam.

If you encounter any difficulties or have any questions about the travel registration website, please send an e-mail to CASTEP@state.gov

Please note: Inclusion of Non-U.S. Government links or information does not imply endorsement of contents.

Contact Us

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Ho Chi Minh City

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For routine inquiries, submit your question via: http://hochiminh.usconsulate.gov/contact_acs.html
Telephone: (84-8) 3520-4200 (for urgent assistance involving an arrest, death or life threatening illness)
Fax: (84-8) 3520-4244