



# ACS Newsletter

VIETNAM

OCTOBER 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 American Citizen Services (ACS) unit in Ho Chi Minh City will offer consular services in October at the following locations:

**Vung Tau** on Thursday, October 15, 2015, from 9:00am to 12:00pm at the Imperial Hotel, 159 Thuy Van, Vung Tau City.

**Da Lat** on Thursday, October 22, 2015, from 9:00am to 12:00pm at the Da Lat Palace Hotel, 12 Tran Phu, Da Lat City.

No appointments are necessary. 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>

The ACS unit has planned services trips to the following areas between now and the end of the December: **Nha Trang, Da Nang, and Can Tho**. Please check our website for more information as it becomes available.

### **Important Notice Regarding Consular Systems Maintenance— October 9, 2015**

Due to planned, routine upgrades to consular systems worldwide, the American Citizen Services (ACS) Unit will temporarily suspend most services for U.S. citizens on Friday, October 9. The ACS Unit will remain open for emergency services, but will not be able to process emergency passport applications. The Consulate will be closed on Monday, October 12 for an American holiday. We apologize for any inconvenience this temporary suspension of consular services may cause.

## October Holiday Closures

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

**Monday, October 12th—Columbus Day+**

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

## Important Notice Regarding the Addition of Visa Pages

After **December 31, 2015**, visa pages can no longer be added to U.S. passports because such inserts pose vulnerabilities to both the security of the ePassport and the internal controls of the issuance process. Instead, **52-page passport books** are now issued at no extra cost to U.S. citizens applying from outside the United States. Please **renew your passport early** to make sure you have enough blank pages for visa stamps from other countries. Keep in mind that some countries require two blank pages for entry and exit.

You can visit <http://travel.state.gov> for more information on entry, exit, and foreign visa requirements.

## 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](http://vietnam.usembassy.gov/acs_appointmentsystem.html). For emergencies you can call the Embassy any time at (84-4) 3850-5000.



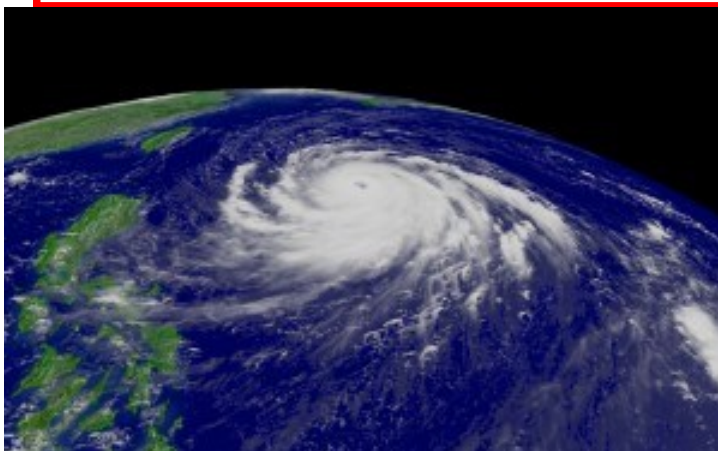
# Typhoon Season Tips

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.



*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/>)*

# Planning for Emergencies— Don't Forget Your Pets!



**Did you know?** A survey conducted after Hurricane Katrina found that 44% of those who chose to ride out the storm did it because they could not evacuate with their animals.

It's typhoon season in Vietnam. Are you prepared? Many people have great emergency plans but they forget to include pets in their planning.

U.S. Citizens have been evacuated from multiple countries in recent years due to a local crisis or other safety concerns. In general, the Department of State is not able to provide transportation assistance for your pets. In certain situations, if the pet can fit into an under-the-seat carrier, it can accompany the traveler. U.S. citizens traveling or residing abroad with pets should make alternate plans for their care or commercial transport if a crisis occurs abroad.

Here is a checklist ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)) that may help you in your evacuation planning:

## DOCUMENTS

- \* Photocopied veterinary records
  - Vaccinations
  - Medical summary
  - Rabies certificate
  - Prescription for medications
  - Most recent FeLV/FIV test result (cats)
  - Most recent heartworm test result (dogs)
- \* Photocopied registration information (ex: proof of ownership or adoption records)
- \* Pet description(s) (ex: breed, sex, color, weight)
- \* Recent photographs for each of your pets
- \* Waterproof container for documents
- \* Microchip information (ex: microchip number, name and number of the microchip company)
- \* Your contact information (phone numbers and addresses for your family and friends or relatives you may be staying with)

## WATER, FOOD, MEDICATIONS

- \* 2-week supply of food for each animal stored in waterproof containers
- \* 2-week supply of water for each animal
- \* Non-spill food and water dishes
- \* Manual can opener
- \* Feeding instructions for each animal
- \* 2-week supply of any medications (if applicable)
- \* Medication instructions (if applicable)
- \* One month supply of flea, tick, and heartworm preventative

## OTHER SUPPLIES

- \* Collar with ID
- \* Litterbox and litter (cats)
- \* Pet first aid book and first aid kit
- \* Appropriate-sized pet carrier with bedding, blanket, or
- \* Cleaning supplies for accidents (paper towels, plastic bags, disinfectant)

**For more information, see the following websites:**

<http://www.ready.gov/caring-animals>

<http://www.cdc.gov/features/petsanddisasters/>

<http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/emergencies/crisis-support.html>

# Helmets and Road Safety in Vietnam



Road Safety is a public health concern in Vietnam and in the United States. Approximately 14,000 people die every year in Vietnam due to road traffic accidents. Motorcycle accidents are the number one cause of death in young adults aged 15-29 and almost 80% of those deaths include head injuries. Many of these injuries and deaths are preventable. Wearing helmets that meet the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) standard is the single most

effective means of reducing the number of people who get injured or die from motorcycle crashes.

In 2007, Vietnam passed a motorcycle helmet law (Resolution 32) mandating all drivers and riders wear a helmet. Resolution 32 increased fine for not wearing a helmet by 10-fold, now approximately between 100,000-200,000 VND. CDC-supported studies have shown a 20-35% decrease in head injuries and hospitalizations during the year following the laws implementation in HCMC. Additional work still needs to be done to increase compliance for those under age 16 and to increase the quality and correct wearing of helmets.

Whether you are a driver, passenger, cyclist, or pedestrian, take the following steps to stay safe on the road:

- Always use age- and size-appropriate helmets, car seats, booster seat, and seat belts.
- Be alert when crossing streets.
- Ride only in marked taxis and try to ride in those that have seat belts.
- Avoid riding in overcrowded, overweight, or top-heavy buses or minivans.
- Avoid drinking before driving, even in small amounts.
- Avoid activities that distract you from driving, like texting or talking on a cell phone.

Additional information can be found at [CDC's Global Road Safety](#) and [Injury Prevention and Control](#) websites.

***What's your head worth?***

***Wear a helmet. It's the law and it could save your life.***



# 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 Syria, Pakistan, Tunisia, Turkey, Tanzania, Chad, Iraq, Libya, Sierra Leone, Venezuela, Burkina Faso and Saudi Arabia.

For information regarding all travel alerts and warnings, please go to this site: <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/alertswarnings.html>

On July 29, 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](mailto:CASTEP@state.gov)

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

## Contact Us

### Hanoi

American Citizen Services  
U.S. Embassy in Hanoi  
170 Ngoc Khanh, Ba Dinh District  
Hanoi, Vietnam

Email: [acshanoi@state.gov](mailto:acshanoi@state.gov)  
Telephone: (84-4) 3850-5000  
Fax: (84-4) 3850-5010

### Ho Chi Minh City

American Citizen Services  
U.S. Consulate General in Ho Chi Minh City  
4 Le Duan, District 1  
Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

For routine inquiries, submit your question via: [http://hochiminh.usconsulate.gov/contact\\_acs.html](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