

Jul - Sep 2015

Red Seas, White Sands, Blue Skies: An American Citizens Services Newsletter

As my time in Riyadh is ending soon, I wish you all the best for your future endeavors here in the Kingdom. As I have said in several Town Halls, I know that you are all here for a reason – usually work or family. And I know that living in Saudi Arabia is seldom easy, especially for women.

I do hope that the support and service you are receiving from the U.S. Embassy has met your needs, and above all, that the information we provide is helping to keep you safe and secure in challenging times for the region. As we often say on our websites, please be sure that your passports are up to date, that you have contingency plans for emergencies, and that you have enrolled in our “STEP” service in order to receive this newsletter and other messages that we issue from time to time.

My goal over the past three years has been to make applying for passports and visas a positive and efficient process, whether you are using the services of Embassy Riyadh or one of our Consulates in Jeddah or Dhahran, and that when you come to your Embassy or Consulate, you receive service promptly, and with courtesy and respect. I will let you be the judge of whether we have succeeded in achieving those goals, and I encourage you to give us your feedback through our email addresses and in person. I for one am proud of the team of consuls and local nationals who work in our consular sections at our three facilities. I believe that their dedication to service and their experience and knowledge are exemplary.

You have all made my tour in Saudi Arabia a rewarding one. And as always, what I take with me as I depart is something I will always have with me – the friendships of many of you whom I have come to know and admire. Thank you for making my time in the Kingdom memorable and meaningful.

And I know that you will welcome my successor Virginia Ramadan with the same warmth you welcomed me with three years ago. Wishing you all good health, safety, and positive experiences in Saudi Arabia.

Warm regards,

David Tyler
Consul General



Consul General Message	1
Outreach / STEP / SSA	2-3
IRS / Kids Corner	4-5

Upcoming Holiday Closures

Jul 19 - 23, 2015 - Eid-Al-Fitr holidays
Sep 6, 2015 - Labor Day
Sep 22-28, 2015 - Eid-Al-Adha holidays

A complete list of all of our holiday closings for 2015 is available on-line at:

<http://riyadh.usembassy.gov/holidays.html>

How to Reach Us

The US Embassy is located in the Diplomatic Quarter, in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Public hours: Sunday through Thursday, 1:00pm-3:00 pm
Schedule an Appointment:
<https://evisaforms.state.gov/acs/default.asp?postcode=RID&appcode=1>
Phone: (966)(11)488-3800

US Consulate Jeddah
Public hours: Sunday through Thursday, 1:00–3:00 pm
Schedule an Appointment:
<https://evisaforms.state.gov/acs/default.asp?postcode=JDD&appcode=1>
Phone: (966)(12)667-0080

US Consulate Dhahran
Public hours: Sunday through Thursday, 1:00-3:30 pm
Schedule an Appointment: <https://evisaforms.state.gov/acs/default.asp?postcode=dhr&appcode=1>
Phone: (966)(13) 330-3200

Let's Stay in Touch!

In an effort to improve our ability to communicate with you, the American Citizen Services section is now on Twitter! Follow us online **@KSA_ACS**.



Stay tuned for tweets regarding security messages, appointment information, services to Americans, and events. Tell your fellow U.S citizens!

Please see Saudi Arabia's updated Country Specific Information

Nov 2014 : <http://www.travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/country/saudi-arabia.html>



Emergency and Security Messages for U.S. Citizens

Please see all messages for U.S citizens here:
<http://riyadh.usembassy.gov/amcitmessages.html>



Warden Wednesdays US Consulate General Dhahran

In June, Consulate General Dhahran began its monthly "Warden Wednesday" training. Wardens assist consular sections in disaster preparedness by alerting U.S. citizens to emergency situations and passing on information from the post or Department. Wardens are also a valuable asset that can provide post with key information, both about specific individuals and for situational awareness, from the local community or area. At our first meeting, a guest speaker from Saudi Aramco gave a lecture about the repatriation process for deceased American citizens. ACS will supplement the monthly "Warden Wednesday" gatherings with weekly emails to our warden network detailing our security messages, consular services, and best practices. Our next training will be held on **July 8th** and will focus on emergency preparedness. Wardens can take these trainings and materials back to the Americans in their consular district in the hopes of a better-prepared American citizen community.

In connection with these trainings, we are also focusing our efforts on expanding our warden system. We are working on creating a neighborhood-based warden system, focusing on assigning wardens in residential compounds that could serve as conduits in the case of an emergency. If you are interested in serving as a warden for your company or residential compound, please contact DhahranACS@state.gov

ACS beyond the Consulate Walls

Consulate General Dhahran continues its monthly outreach to Jubail, the largest industrial city in the Middle East and home to thousands of American citizens. During these monthly services, the ACS Unit travels to an off-site location in Jubail to provide American Citizen Services, including passport renewal, CRBA applications, and notary services. Additionally, the ACS unit has expanded its outreach with an inaugural visit to Ras Tanura, a city that is home to a major Aramco facility, in May. The date and location of these visits will be provided to American citizens when their appointment is confirmed.

If you are interested in receiving services in Jubail or Ras Tanura please contact DhahranACS@state.gov



"Get in STEP" to receive the ACS Newsletter - Spread the Word!



Please remind your American friends to enroll in the U.S. State Department's free Smart Traveler Enrollment Program <https://step.state.gov/step/> in order for them to be included on the ACS Newsletter mailing list. It is a great way to keep abreast of any public announcements on safety and security issues in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere.

In addition, the Newsletter is a helpful resource for the latest voting news, IRS changes, and other activities concerning Americans living in Saudi Arabia. Another benefit is that if you move to another country, updating your enrollment in STEP ensures you continue to get timely information for your new country of residence!

STEP is also an important tool that consular officers around the world use during crises to distribute up to date information on emergency situations so that travelers like you can make informed decisions regarding their safety.

The State Department's Role in a Crisis

TRAVEL.STATE.GOV

The actions we take depend on the nature of the crisis. In some instances, we may only need to provide information on conditions in the country, such as warning about areas of unrest, how and where to seek help, and other useful advice.

In more serious situations, we may recommend that U.S. citizens leave the foreign country, and, if commercial transportation is not available, provide departure assistance, as our resources permit.

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



Leaving Saudi Arabia?

If you no longer live in or travel to Saudi Arabia, or you need to update your registration status so that you no longer receive travel updates and our ACS Newsletter, please go to the [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#).

Updating your status in [STEP](#) will remove you from the mailing list for this newsletter and other Embassy Messages for U.S. citizens traveling to or living in Saudi Arabia .

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



Get your free personal online my Social Security account today!

You probably plan to receive Social Security benefits someday. Maybe you already do. Either way, you'll want a my Social Security account to:

- Keep track of your earnings and verify them every year;
- Get an estimate of your future benefits if you are still working;
- Get a letter with proof of your benefits if you currently receive them;
- Manage your benefits:
- Change your address;
- Start or change your direct deposit;
- Get a replacement Medicare card; and
- Get a replacement SSA-1099 or SSA-1042S for tax season.

Setting up an account is quick, secure, and easy. Join the millions and [create an account now!](#)

*With instant access to your Social Security Statement at any time, you will no longer receive one periodically in the mail, saving money and the environment. Thank you for Going Green!

If you would like to receive your Social Security Statement by mail, please [follow these instructions](#).

Overseas Citizen Voter

Overseas citizen voters face a specific set of challenges while voting absentee. Here we will provide you the information and contacts you need to successfully cast an absentee ballot.



Absentee Voting Overview

FVAP encourages the use of the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) to start the absentee voting process. The FPCA acts as both a registration and absentee ballot request form. FVAP encourages all overseas citizens to submit a new FPCA every year and when they move. You can complete an FPCA using our easy-to-use online assistant, by selecting your State or territory of legal residence on the map to get started. The online assistant will allow you to register to vote and request your ballot for upcoming elections. The assistant will guide you through the questions on the form and produce a printable form for you. Note, you must print the form, sign it, and send it to your State according to your State's rules. It is not an online registration tool.

Voter Registration and Ballots:

FVAP encourages the use of the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) to start the absentee voting process. The FPCA acts as both a registration and absentee ballot request form. As rules vary by State, FVAP encourages overseas citizen voters to submit a new FPCA every year and, most importantly, when they move.

Never Resided in the U.S.?

Click [here](#) to see if you're eligible to vote absentee. FVAP also offers [Additional Information](#) and [Resources](#) for overseas citizens.



Getting the Most Out of Your Shiny New Tablet

We know that you love your tablet and all the ways you can use it. Besides catching up with emails, chatting with your friends, or updating your social media accounts, it's also easy to use your tablet to visit our website to learn more about our many online services. The convenience of doing business online, even by tablet, is important to us, and that's why we make sure our technology will keep your information safe.

We take Internet security seriously; 'security' is our middle name, after all! Your tablet is just one of the many devices you can use to experience a safe transaction on our website. At www.socialsecurity.gov, you can do several convenient, safe, and secure things within minutes.

When you create a free my Social Security account, for example, you'll have access to your Social Security Statement at your fingertips. You can also use your account to verify your earnings record and find out what to expect in future monthly benefits. Once you begin receiving Social Security, it's a great tool to manage your benefits by changing your address, starting or changing your direct deposit, getting a replacement Medicare card, or getting a replacement SSA-1099 or SSA-1042S.

You'll save time and energy thanks to how easy it is to go online, especially if you're already on your tablet. Sign up for your own my Social Security account today before you beat the high score on your favorite game! After your great experience, spread the word! You can tell your friends, and even tell us about your satisfying transaction on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. You can find all the ways you can connect with us online here. Your information is safe with us when you go online using your tablet. When you use it wisely, there's nothing better than seeing everything you can accomplish on your favorite device!

<http://blog.socialsecurity.gov/2015/06/22/getting-the-most-out-of-your-shiny-new-tablet/>

NOTE: Due to audience feedback, we wanted to clarify that Social Security is not giving away tablets. If you already have a tablet or are thinking about purchasing one, please consider doing business with us online – thanks!

Taxpayers with Foreign Assets May Have FBAR and FATCA Filing Requirements in June



IR-2015-86, June 10, 2015 WASHINGTON—The Internal Revenue Service today reminded all taxpayers with an FBAR filing requirement to report their foreign assets by the June 30 deadline. FBAR filings have risen dramatically in recent years as FATCA phases in and other international compliance efforts have raised awareness among taxpayers with offshore assets. The IRS encourages taxpayers with foreign assets, even relatively small amounts, to check if they have a filing requirement. Separately, certain taxpayers living abroad may also have to file the FATCA-related Form 8938 with their tax returns by the June 15 deadline. (Domestic filers may also be required to file Form 8938, which would have been due by April 15 with their tax returns.) "The vast majority of taxpayers pay their fair share. The FBAR and FATCA filing requirements make it tougher for that relatively small number of taxpayers trying to hide assets and income offshore," said IRS Commissioner John Koskinen. "Taxpayers are encouraged to review the rules and disclose their offshore assets."

FBAR Requirements

FBAR refers to [Form 114](#), Report of Foreign Bank and Financial Accounts, that must be filed with the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN), which is a bureau of the Treasury Department. The form must be filed electronically and is only available online through the [BSA E-FilingSystem website](#).

Who needs to file an FBAR? Taxpayers with an interest in, or signature or other authority over, foreign financial accounts whose aggregate value exceeded \$10,000 at any time during 2014 generally must file. For more on filing requirements, see [Current FBAR Guidance](#) on IRS.gov. Also see the [one-hour webinar](#) explaining the FBAR requirement.

The FBAR filing requirement is not part of filing a tax return. The FBAR Form 114 is filed separately and directly with FinCEN.

FBAR filings have surged in recent years, according to data from FinCEN. FBAR filings exceeded 1 million for the first time in calendar year 2014 and rose nine of the last 10 years from about 280,000 back in 2005.

FATCA Requirements

[FATCA](#) refers to the Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act. The law addresses tax non-compliance by U.S. taxpayers with foreign accounts by focusing on reporting by U.S. taxpayers and foreign financial institutions.

In general, federal law requires U.S. citizens and resident aliens to report any worldwide income, including income from foreign trusts and foreign bank and securities accounts. In most cases, affected taxpayers need to complete and attach [Schedule B](#) to their tax returns. Part III of Schedule B asks about the existence of foreign accounts, such as bank and securities accounts, and generally requires U.S. citizens to report the country in which each account is located.

In addition, certain taxpayers may also have to complete and attach to their return [Form 8938](#) Statement of Special Foreign Financial Assets. Generally, U.S. citizens, resident aliens and certain nonresident aliens must report specified foreign financial assets on this form if the aggregate value of those assets exceeds certain thresholds. See the [instructions](#) of this form for details.

The FATCA Form 8938 requirement does not replace or otherwise affect a taxpayer's obligation to file an FBAR Form 114. A brief [comparison of the two filing requirements](#) is available on IRS.gov.

U.S. Income Tax Obligations

U.S. citizens and resident aliens, including those with dual citizenship who have lived or worked abroad during all or part of 2014, may have a U.S. tax liability and a filing requirement in 2015.

A filing requirement generally applies even if a taxpayer qualifies for tax benefits, such as the [foreign earned income exclusion](#) or the [foreign tax credit](#), that substantially reduce or eliminate their U.S. tax liability. These tax benefits are not automatic and are only available if an eligible taxpayer files a U.S. income tax return.

More Information Available

Any U.S. taxpayer here or abroad with tax questions can refer to the [International Taxpayers landing page](#) and use the online [IRS Tax Map](#) and the [International Tax Topic Index to](#) get answers. These online tools assemble or group IRS forms, publications and web pages by subject and provide users with a single entry point to find tax information.

Taxpayers who are looking for return preparers abroad should visit the [Directory of Federal Tax Return Preparers with Credentials and Select Qualifications](#). To help avoid delays with tax refunds, taxpayers living abroad should visit the [Helpful Tips for Effectively Receiving a Tax Refund for Taxpayers Living Abroad](#) page.

More information on the tax rules that apply to U.S. citizens and resident aliens living abroad can be found in, [Publication 54](#), Tax Guide for U.S. Citizens and Resident Aliens Abroad, available on IRS.gov.

More Information: <http://www.irs.gov/uac/Newsroom/Taxpayers-with-Foreign-Assets-May-Have-FBAR-and-FATCA-Filing-Requirements-in-June>

Applying for a passport? Is your photo correct?

Before you apply for a new passport, make sure that your photo meets the photo requirements.



Your passport photo must be:

- In color
- Printed on matte or glossy photo quality paper
- 2 x 2 inches (51 x 51 mm) in size
- Sized such that the head is between 1 inch and 1 3/8 inches (between 25 and 35 mm) from the bottom of the chin to the top of the head. View the [Photo Composition Template](#) for more size requirement details.
- Taken within the last 6 months to reflect your current appearance
- Taken in front of a plain white or off-white background
- Taken in full-face view directly facing the camera
- Taken with a neutral facial expression (preferred) or a natural smile, and with both eyes open

Photo examples and frequently asked questions can be found at this website: <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/passports/photos/photo-examples.html>



Does your family know how to react in an emergency? Do you have copies of your wills, power of attorney, or school/medical records?

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) maintain a great website with helpful tips on how to prepare for natural disasters, samples of family evacuation plans, document checklists and much, much more!

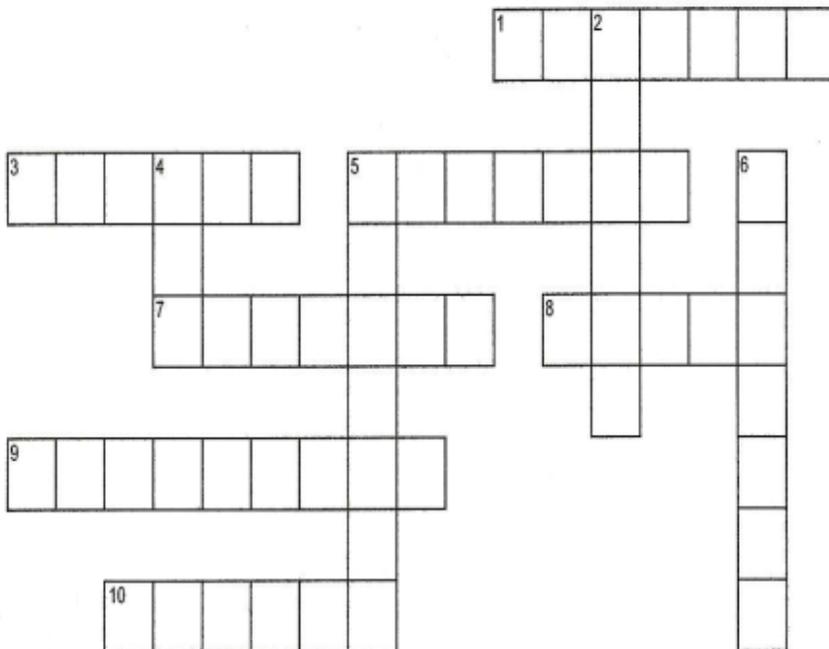
Check out <http://www.ready.gov/> to learn what protective measures to take before, during, and after an emergency. There are also resources on how to create a family communication plan as well as school and workplace plans.



LABOR DAY Labor Day is an American Federal holiday observed on the first Monday in September that celebrates the economic and social contributions of workers.

Labor Day pays tribute to the contributions and achievements of American workers. It also symbolizes the end of summer for many Americans.

Labor Day Crossword Puzzle



Find the Labor Day words by using the clues below.

Across

1. Labor Day weekend provides a great opportunity for families to go _____
3. Labor _____ helped to organize Labor Day.
5. The Labor Day holiday gives people a long _____ for fun family time.
7. Labor Day is a _____ holiday.
8. _____ Day is a day to recognize the effort of American workers.
9. Many people like to have _____ on Labor Day, to cook hamburgers, steaks, and other delicious meals.
10. Some people enjoy Labor Day by taking a _____ basket and heading somewhere fun.

Down

2. Labor Day always occurs on this day of the week.
4. Labor Day provides workers with a well earned day ___ from work.
5. America's _____ are productive and efficient.
6. It is fun to have _____ with the family on Day.

Answers: Across 1. camping 3. unions 5. weekend 7. Federal 8. Labor 9. barbeques 10. picnic
Down 2. Monday 4. off 5. workers 6. parties