

Welcome to the October newsletter!
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Upcoming Holidays

The Embassy and Consulates will be closed for the following holidays:

Columbus Day – Monday, Oct. 9

Culture Day – Friday, Nov. 3

Veterans Day – Saturday, Nov. 11 (Observed Friday, Nov. 10)

Thanksgiving Day – Thursday, Nov. 23

Christmas Day – Monday, Dec. 25

Please remember that the days just before and just after a holiday are often extremely busy and you can expect significantly longer waiting times. Visit us outside of these times and you should have a shorter wait.

A full list of all of our holiday closings is online here. American citizens who require emergency assistance during holidays should contact the office serving their part of Japan.

If you do come to see us at the Embassy in Tokyo, note that we have two lines to enter the building; a (usually) longer line for visa applicants and a much shorter line for customers coming for American Citizen Services help. Please locate signs by the Embassy entrance, which will direct you to the appropriate line. Please also note that we are now using a new customer ticketing system; so upon entering the Consular section, you can select the type of service you require (e.g. Passport, Notary, etc.) and wait in the ACS Waiting Room for your number to be called.

Security Situation

The security situation in Japan remains the same with no new credible threat information. The Government of Japan has maintained heightened security measures at key facilities and ports of entry, as counter terrorism precautions linked to the increased tensions in the Middle East. The June 6, 2006 Worldwide Caution Public Announcement we distributed via this channel remains in effect. Please view the full text at http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/pa/pa_1161.html. You can always read the most current information at <http://travel.state.gov/>.

Since our last newsletter, the Department of State has issued two more Travel Warnings (Syria and Chad) and Public Announcements (Thailand and Mexico). Please review them at http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis_pa_tw_1168.html.

The most up-to-date information regarding Permitted and Prohibited Items on flights can be viewed online at <http://www.tsa.gov/travelers/airtravel/prohibited/permitted-prohibited-items.shtm>.

For additional information, please visit "International Travel for American Citizens" on the State Dept. website at http://travel.state.gov/visa/americans/americans_1252.html. To obtain up-to-date information on security conditions, call 1-888-407-4747 (toll free in the United States), or 1-202-501-4444 if you are in Canada or outside the United States.

New Requirements for Travelers

The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 requires that by January 1, 2008, travelers to and from the Caribbean, Bermuda, Panama, Mexico and Canada have a passport or other secure, accepted document to enter or re-enter the United States.

The Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative will be rolled out in phases according to the following timeline:

January 8, 2007 - Requirement applied to all air and sea travel to or from Canada, Mexico, Central and South America, the Caribbean, and Bermuda.

January 1, 2008 - Requirement extended to all land border crossings as well as air and sea travel.

This is a change from prior travel requirements and will affect all United States citizens entering the United States from countries within the Western Hemisphere who do not currently possess valid passports. This new requirement will also affect certain foreign nationals who currently are not required to present a passport to travel to the United States.

Frequently Asked Questions about the New Travel Initiative Requirements (FAQs) and a Press Release can be found at http://travel.state.gov/travel/cbpmc/cbpmc_2225.html

Those wishing to comment on the proposal may access the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov/> and follow the instructions for submitting comments.

For more information, visit <http://www.dhs.gov/> or www.travel.state.gov.

Elections Update 2006: One month left before E-day

This is a reminder that November 7, 2006 is general election day in the United States.

The official U.S. Government website for overseas absentee voting assistance is the Federal Voting Assistance Program website at <http://www.fvap.gov/>. The site includes a downloadable SF-76 absentee ballot application (also known as Federal Post Card Application, or FPCA), state-specific instructions for completing the form and registering to vote, links to or contact numbers for state and local officials, and a downloadable emergency ballot.

Information about all states' procedures is available on the web here. Information about your state's registration and voting deadlines is available online on our web site.

Check Your Voter Registration Status On-Line

The Federal Voting Assistance program encourages the states to make available to citizens online tools that allow voters to check their registration status. These sites allow voters the opportunity to promptly know if they are registered with their jurisdiction and provide them with the opportunity to take corrective measures if necessary. To date, ballot registration status sites have been launched in 18 states (Updates to this list is available at: <http://www.fvap.gov/vao/stregissites.html>):

Delaware

<http://pollingplace.delaware.gov/>

District of Columbia

http://www.dcboee.org/voterreg/vic_step1.asp

Georgia

<http://www.sos.state.ga.us/cgi-bin/Locator.asp>

Indiana

<http://www.indianavoters.com/PublicSite/Public/PublicVoterRegistration.aspx?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1>

Kansas

<https://myvoteinfo.voteks.org/>

Kentucky

<http://cdc.ky.gov/VICWeb/index.jsp>

Louisiana

<http://sos.louisiana.gov/polllocator/>

Maryland

<http://mdelections.umbc.edu/>

Michigan

<http://michigan.gov/sos/0,1607,7-127-1633-49313--,00.html>

Nebraska

<https://www.votercheck.necvr.ne.gov/>

North Carolina

<http://www.sboe.state.nc.us/>

Ohio

<http://www.sos.state.oh.us/sosapps/elections/voterquery.aspx>

Puerto Rico

<http://www.ceepur.org/serviciosLineas/estatusEelectoral/index.htm>

South Carolina

<https://webprod.cio.sc.gov/SCSECVoterWeb/voterInformationSearch.do>

Utah

<http://gva1.utah.gov/elections/polling.aspx>

Virginia

http://www2.sbe.virginia.gov/VotReg/VR_Confirmation/Default.html

Washington

<http://www.secstate.wa.gov/elections/lookup.aspx/>

West Virginia

<http://www.wvvotes.com/voters/am-i-registered.php>

The 2006 Integrated Voting Alternative Site

The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) would like to announce the launch of the 2006 Integrated Voting Alternative Site (IVAS). The new section of the FVAP website (<http://www.fvap.gov/>) features information from the fifty states and five territories regarding the electronic ballot request and delivery alternatives available to citizens covered by the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA).

The FVAP recognizes that due to the nature of absentee voting, accessing electronic alternatives to current by-mail voting procedures can greatly assist in ensuring that all UOCAVA citizens are enfranchised. Possible electronic alternatives offered by various states and territories include:

- Faxing or emailing of the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) for Registration
- Faxing or emailing of the FPCA for Ballot Request
- Faxing or emailing of the Blank Ballot to citizens
- Fax or email return of the Voted Ballot
- Fax-to-email conversion of the above via the Department of Defense Electronic Transmission Service

Each state and territory has differing laws regarding the use of electronic transmission alternatives to the by-mail process with respect to absentee voting materials, so be sure to review your home state's procedures.

Iowa Election Update:

Iowa To Allow Its Citizens Overseas to Vote Absentee by Fax and Email

Iowa just announced a new initiative that allows overseas Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA), citizens to request, receive and return absentee ballots via facsimile and email.

Overseas UOCAVA citizens may send ballots back by fax or email only if it is not feasible to return the ballot by mail by the Iowa postal deadline of noon November 13, 2006.

For more information please visit <http://www.sos.state.ia.us/> or email sos@sos.state.ia.us.

Wisconsin Election Update:
Wisconsin changes ballot request and ballot return deadlines

Effective July 1, 2006, Wisconsin law changed its ballot request and return deadlines for citizens covered by the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA). The new deadlines, which vary depending on whether you are in the military, are outlined in the Wisconsin state pages of the Voting Assistance Guide at <http://www.fvap.gov/pubs/vag/pdfvag/wi.pdf>.

Opening of new Bangkok international airport, Suvarnabhumi

Bangkok's new Suvarnabhumi International Airport began operations in mid-September. Limited domestic service on Thai Airways shifted from Don Muang Airport to Suvarnabhumi International Airport on September 15. Current plans call for full international service at Suvarnabhumi beginning September 29. These dates are subject to change. Suvarnabhumi will inherit Don Muang's "BKK" international airport code and Don Muang will be recoded as "DBK". Therefore, travelers are strongly encouraged to reconfirm destinations with airlines if your travel falls on or near these dates. The new international airport is located 18 miles (30 kilometers) east of downtown Bangkok.

PDF Formatting - We heard you!

One of our subscribers suggested we offer a PDF-formatted version of the newsletter. Starting this month, we'll do just that. Thank you for a great suggestion.

Japanese embassy in Washington's web page

Another subscriber, commenting on last month's newsletter article on cancelled and expired passports, commented on how helpful he had found the web site of the Japanese Embassy in Washington, D.C.

As we originally mentioned in the article, we encourage members of the American community who are resident in Japan to verify which visa requirements apply to their situation. This web page is a great place to start.

http://www.us.emb-japan.go.jp/english/html/travel_and_visa/visa/faq.htm

Unsubscribing

We make every attempt to include in our newsletter information of real value. We know that should world events dictate, we can use this email channel to get important information to you, as we did in the immediate aftermath of 9/11.

That said, if you are leaving Japan or otherwise wish to unsubscribe from this list you can unsubscribe by writing from the same email address you used to subscribe, and send a blank email to:

leave-tokyoacs@mh.databack.com

If you need to receive these newsletters at a different email address, unsubscribe first, using the old address, and subscribe again from the new address.

Contact us:

The American Embassy in Tokyo
American Citizen Services
1-10-5 Akasaka, Minato-ku, Tokyo 107-8420
Tel: 03-3224-5174

Fax: 03-3224-5856

<http://japan.usembassy.gov/e/tacs-main.html>

The Embassy helps Americans in Tokyo, Chiba, Fukushima, Gunma, Ibaraki, Kanagawa, Nagano, Niigata, Saitama, Shizuoka, Tochigi, Yamagata, Yamanashi.

American Consulate General Sapporo

American Citizen Services

Kita 1-jo, Nishi 28-chome

Chuo-ku, Sapporo 064-0821

Tel: 011-641-1115

Fax: 011-643-1283

The Consulate in Sapporo helps Americans in Akita, Aomori, Hokkaido, Iwate and Miyagi. As there are times when both officers are away from the office, we ask that you make an appointment before coming to the Consulate General.

American Consulate Nagoya

Nagoya International Center Bldg. 6th floor

1-47-1 Nagono, Nakamura-ku, Nagoya 450-0001

TEL (052) 581-4501

FAX (052) 581-3190

Consulate Nagoya provides emergency consular services including death and arrest cases for Americans living in Aichi, Gifu, and Mie prefectures. Please call Nagoya or Osaka for confirmation before traveling to Nagoya if you believe you have an emergency situation. Routine American Citizen services are provided by appointment only. If an appointment is not available, American residents may also receive service at the Consulate in Osaka.

American Consulate General Osaka-Kobe

American Citizen Services

11-5, Nishitenma 2-chome

Kita-ku, Osaka 530-8543

Tel: 06-6315-5912

Fax: 06-6315-5914

The Consulate in Osaka helps Americans in Osaka, Aichi, Ehime, Fukui, Gifu, Hiroshima, Hyogo, Ishikawa, Kagawa, Kochi, Kyoto, Mie, Nara, Okayama, Shimane, Shiga, Tokushima, Tottori, Toyama, Wakayama.

American Consulate Fukuoka

American Citizen Services

5-26, Ohori 2-chome

Chuo-ku, Fukuoka 810-0052

Tel: 092-751-9331

Fax: 092-713-9222

The Consulate in Fukuoka helps Americans in Fukuoka, Kagoshima, Kumamoto, Miyazaki, Nagasaki, Oita, Saga and Yamaguchi.

The American Consulate General Naha
211 Toyama,
Urasoe City
Okinawa 901-2104
Phone: 098.876.4211
Fax: 098.876.4243
DSN: 645-7323

The Consulate in Naha helps Americans in Okinawa, the Amami Oshima Island group, parts of Kagoshima Prefecture.

Travel, safety and security information is also available directly from the Department of State.

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For more information, including our phone and FAX number, please contact the office serving your part of Japan.

The U.S. Embassy and our Consulates are closed on both U.S. and Japanese holidays.

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