

Apr - Jun 2016

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

Summertime is upon us and many in the expatriate community will soon be traveling home or to other countries to catch a break from the scorching Saudi Arabian heat. Newcomers will be arriving to start their lives in the Kingdom, while others will move on to new adventures in other parts of the world.

After three eventful and rewarding years working and serving as the American citizen services unit chief here in Riyadh, my time in Saudi Arabia is drawing to a close. Living and working in the Kingdom can be an adventure, one that is at times difficult to navigate, especially for women. However, its unique culture, diversity and landscape create opportunities for growth and the cultivation of life-long friendships. My family and I have truly been blessed by the people and friends we have met here in Saudi Arabia, and by the experiences we have had. I wish you all the best in your work and future endeavors. It has been a pleasure and a privilege to serve with you here in the Kingdom.

As I have mentioned before in our town hall meetings, there are many hard working people here at the U.S. Embassy ready to help you with your needs and concerns. I hope your life has been made easier by our efforts to provide quality customer service and keep you informed about events in the country. If you have any questions or need assistance, please feel free to contact us at RiyadhACS@state.gov, or by telephone at 011-4883800 between 8:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Sunday-Thursday.

For those leaving the Kingdom temporarily during the school break and summer holiday season, please take note of the following to make sure your vacation goes smoothly:

Plan ahead. Review your current U.S. passport and make sure you have at least six months validity. Allow two weeks for renewal. More information about the passport renewal process can be found [online here](#).

Register with the STEP program so the Embassy can better assist you in an emergency. Record your travel plans or overseas residence online at <https://step.state.gov>. In accordance with the Privacy Act, information on your welfare and whereabouts will not be released to others without your express authorization.

Leave **copies** of your itinerary, passport data page and visas with family or friends so you can be contacted in case of an emergency.

Check your overseas medical **insurance** coverage. Ask your medical insurance company if your policy applies overseas, and if it covers emergency expenses such as medical evacuation. If it does not, consider supplemental insurance. Medical treatment and evacuations can cost thousands of dollars.

Familiarize yourself with **local conditions and laws**. While in a foreign country, you are subject to its laws. The State Department web site at http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_4965.html as useful safety and other information about Saudi Arabia and other countries you may visit.

Kind regards,

Don Steele



ACS Chief Message

1

FVAP

2-3

CBP / IRS / Kids Corner

4-5-6

Upcoming Holiday Closures

May 29, 2016 - Memorial Day

Jul 4, 2016 - Independence Day

Jul 5-11 - Eid-al-Fitr / Ramadan

A complete list of all of our holiday closings for 2016 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-3:00pm

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, 1:00-3:00pm

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

Register now to
send your vote home!
FVAP.gov
#everyvotecounts



Voting Residence: Overseas U.S. Citizens

Why do I need a voting residence?

Your election official needs your exact voting residence address in order to determine your voting precinct—and for which offices and candidates you are eligible to vote. Even if you are only voting for federal offices, the local election official still needs to identify your voting residence to send you the appropriate absentee ballot for that voting precinct.

What is my voting residence?

Your voting residence is the State in which you last resided immediately prior to your departure from the United States. This residence remains valid even if:

You no longer own property or have other ties to that State.

Your intent to return to that State is uncertain.

Your previous address is no longer a recognized residential address.

Are there tax implications for claiming an address as your voting residence?

Voting in an election for Federal offices may not be used as the sole basis to determine residency for the purpose of imposing State and local taxes. If you claim a particular State as your residence and have other ties to that State in addition to voting, you may be liable for State and local taxation, depending on that particular State law. If you are unsure of your voting residence or if you are concerned about the tax implications of claiming a specific voting residence, you should consult legal counsel.

What if I was born overseas and have never resided in the U.S.?

Voting rights vary by State for U.S. citizens born overseas who have never established residency in the U.S.

Thirty-one States have passed legislation to allow these citizens to vote if their parents are eligible to vote in that State. In these cases, your voting residence may be your parent's voting residence.

States allowing citizens born overseas who never resided in the U.S. to claim a parent's voting residence

Alaska Arizona California Colorado Connecticut Delaware District of Columbia Georgia Hawaii Illinois Iowa Kansas

Kentucky Maine Massachusetts Michigan Nebraska New Hampshire New York North Carolina North Dakota Ohio

Oklahoma Rhode Island South Dakota Tennessee Virginia Washington West Virginia Wisconsin Wyoming

If neither of your parents is from one of these States, you may not currently have voting rights. However, additional States are working on passing legislation to allow citizens born overseas who have never established residency in the U.S. to vote in the State in which their parents are eligible. Check the Voting Assistance Guide for the most current State information <http://www.fvap.gov/vao/vag>

Voting Alerts

Voting Alerts are focused, timely and relevant emails that keep Voting Assistance Officers and voters informed about election dates, important deadlines throughout the absentee voting process, changes to State laws and other crucial absentee voting information.

To receive these Voting Alerts, click [Email Updates](#) and subscribe.

If you have trouble, you can contact FVAP at vote@fvap.gov and request to be added. Please provide your full name in the body of the email message.

2016 Primary Elections by State and territory: This chart lists the 2016 State primary election dates in all the States, the District of Columbia and U.S. territories; primary runoff dates (if applicable); States with U.S. Senate races; number of U.S. Representative seats up for re-election; and gubernatorial races. **The General Election is Tuesday, November 8, 2016.**

State	Presidential Primary	State Primary	Runoff Primary (If necessary)	General Election		
				Senate	House of Representatives	Governor
Alabama	March 1	March 1	April 12	Yes	7	No
Alaska	***	August 16	—	Yes	1	Yes
American Samoa	—	—	—	—	1 Delegate	No
Arizona	March 22	August 30	—	Yes	9	No
Arkansas	March 1	March 1	March 22	Yes	4	No
California	June 7	June 7	—	Yes	53	No
Colorado	***	June 28	—	Yes	7	No
Connecticut	April 26	August 9	—	Yes	5	No
Delaware	April 26	September 13	—	No	1	Yes
District of Columbia	June 14	June 14	—	—	1 Delegate	No
Florida	March 15	August 30	—	Yes	27	No
Georgia	March 1	May 24	July 26	Yes	14	No
Guam	—	August 27	—	—	1 Delegate	No
Hawaii	***	August 13	—	Yes	2	No
Idaho	March 8*	May 17	—	Yes	2	No
Illinois	March 15	March 15	—	Yes	18	No
Indiana	May 3	May 3	—	Yes	9	Yes
Iowa	***	June 7	—	Yes	4	No
Kansas	***	August 2	—	Yes	4	No
Kentucky	May 17**	May 17	—	Yes	6	No
Louisiana	March 5	November 8	December 10	Yes	6	No
Maine	***	June 14	—	No	2	No
Maryland	April 26	April 26	—	Yes	8	No
Massachusetts	March 1	September 20	—	No	9	No
Michigan	March 8	August 2	—	No	14	No
Minnesota	***	August 9	—	No	8	No
Mississippi	March 8	March 8	March 29	No	4	No
Missouri	March 15	August 2	—	Yes	8	Yes
Montana	June 7	June 7	—	Yes	1	Yes
Nebraska	May 10	May 10	—	Yes	3	No
Nevada	***	June 14	—	Yes	4	No
New Hampshire	February 9	September 13	—	Yes	2	Yes
New Jersey	June 7	June 7	—	No	12	No
New Mexico	June 7	June 7	—	No	3	No
New York	April 19	June 28	—	Yes	27	No
North Carolina	March 15	March 15	May 24	Yes	13	Yes
North Dakota	***	June 14	—	Yes	1	Yes
Ohio	March 15	March 15	—	Yes	16	No
Oklahoma	March 1	June 28	August 23	Yes	5	No
Oregon	May 17	May 17	—	Yes	5	Yes
Pennsylvania	April 26	April 26	—	Yes	18	No
Puerto Rico	March 6*/TBD**	June 5	—	—	1 Resident	Yes
Rhode Island	April 26	September 13	—	No	2	No
South Carolina	Feb.20*/Feb.27**	June 14	June 28	Yes	7	No
South Dakota	June 7	June 7	August 16	Yes	1	No
Tennessee	March 1	August 4	—	No	9	No
Texas	March 1	March 1	May 24	No	36	No
Utah	***	June 28	—	Yes	4	Yes
Vermont	March 1	August 9	—	Yes	1	Yes
Virgin Islands	—	August 6	—	—	1 Delegate	No
Virginia	March 1	June 14	—	No	11	No
Washington	May 24	August 2	—	Yes	10	Yes
West Virginia	May 10	May 10	—	No	3	Yes
Wisconsin	April 5	August 9	—	Yes	8	No
Wyoming	***	August 16	—	No	1	No

U.S. Visa Waiver Program



The Visa Waiver Program (VWP), administered by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in consultation with the State Department, permits citizens of 38 countries^[1] to travel to the United States for business or tourism for stays of up to 90 days without a visa. In return, those 38 countries must permit U.S. citizens and nationals to travel to their countries for a similar length of time without a visa for business or tourism purposes. Since its inception in 1986, the VWP has evolved into a comprehensive security partnership with many of America's closest allies. The VWP utilizes a risk-based, multi-layered approach to detect and prevent terrorists, serious criminals, and other *mala fide* actors from traveling to the United States. This approach incorporates regular, national-level risk assessments concerning the impact of each program country's participation in the VWP on U.S. national security and law enforcement interests. It also includes comprehensive vetting of individual VWP travelers prior to their departure for the United States, upon arrival at U.S. ports of entry, and during any subsequent air travel within the United States. <https://www.dhs.gov/visa-waiver-program>

Tax Scams

E-mail, Phishing and Malware Schemes: The IRS has seen an approximate 400 percent surge in phishing and malware incidents so far in the 2016 tax season.

The emails are designed to trick taxpayers into thinking these are official communications from the IRS or others in the tax industry, including tax software companies. The phishing schemes can ask taxpayers about a wide range of topics. E-mails can seek information related to refunds, filing status, confirming personal information, ordering transcripts and verifying PIN information.

Variations of these scams can be seen via text messages, and the communications are being reported in every section of the country.

When people click on these email links, they are taken to sites designed to imitate an official-looking website, such as IRS.gov. The sites ask for Social Security numbers and other personal information, which could be used to help file false tax returns. The sites also may carry malware, which can infect people's computers and allow criminals to access your files or track your keystrokes to gain information.

For more details, see: [IR-2016-28](#), Consumers Warned of New Surge in IRS E-mail Schemes during 2016 Tax Season; Tax Industry Also Targeted; [IR-2016-15](#), Phishing Remains on the IRS "Dirty Dozen" List of Tax Scams for the 2016 Filing Season

Identity Theft Scams: The IRS has issued several consumer warnings about the fraudulent use of the IRS name or logo by scamsters trying to gain access to consumers' financial information in order to steal their identity and assets. Scamsters will use the regular mail, telephone, fax or email to set up their victims. When identity theft takes place over the Internet (email), it is called [phishing](#).

The IRS does not initiate taxpayer communications through email. Unsolicited email claiming to be from the IRS, or from an IRS-related component such as EFTPS, should be reported to the IRS at phishing@irs.gov.

Additionally, clicking on attachments to or links within an unsolicited email claiming to come from the IRS may download a malicious computer virus onto your computer.

Learn more about [identity theft](#).

Learn how to [protect your personal information](#).



You may also report instances of IRS-related phishing attempts and fraud to the [Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration](#) at 1-800-366-4484.

Important - Appointment Required for All ACS Services

In order to reduce your wait time and serve you more efficiently, the American Citizen Services Unit uses an online appointment system for all routine services.

This includes passport renewals for adults and minors, reports of birth abroad, and notarial. If you have an urgent, unforeseen need to travel, such as a death or illness, please contact us at RiyadhACS@state.gov

Friendly Reminder: 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 applicant.

Please note that we cannot book appointments over the phone. To make or cancel an appointment, please visit the U.S Citizen Services Appointment System:

<https://evisaforms.state.gov/acs/default.asp?postcode=RID&appcode=1>

Memorial Day

Memorial Day, which is observed on the last Monday of May, commemorates the men and women who died while in the military service. In observance of the holiday, many people visit cemeteries and memorials, and volunteers often place American flags on each grave site at national cemeteries. A national moment of remembrance takes place at 3:00 p.m. local time.

In the aftermath of the American Civil War, Maj. Gen. John A. Logan declared that Decoration Day should be observed on May 30 as a time for the nation to decorate the graves of the war dead with flowers. It is believed that date was chosen because flowers would be in bloom all over the country. It was not until after World War I, however, that the day was expanded to honor those who have died in all American wars. In 1971, Memorial Day was declared a national holiday by an act of Congress, though it is still often called Decoration Day. It was then also placed on the last Monday in May.

This year, Memorial Day is Monday, May 30.

Memorial Day will be observed on Sunday May 29, 2016 and all USG facilities in Saudi Arabia will be closed in remembrance.



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](https://twitter.com/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

<https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country/saudi-arabia.html>

Please see the updated Travel Warning for Saudi Arabia dated April 12, 2016

<http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/alertswarnings/saudi-arabia-travel-warning.html>



Please see all Messages for U.S citizens here:

riyadh.usembassy.gov/amcitmessages.html

<http://>

"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.



