

RED, WHITE, & BLUE *SEA SANDS SKIES*

AN AMERICAN CITIZEN SERVICES NEWSLETTER

• *January - March 2020* •



*U.S. EMBASSY
RIYADH*

American Citizen Services Public Hours:
Sunday - Thursday, 1:00pm-3:00pm
Email: RiyadhACS@state.gov
Phone: (966)(11)488-3800

*U.S. CONSULATE
GENERAL JEDDAH*

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Sunday - Thursday, 1:00pm-3:00pm
Email: JeddahACS@state.gov
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*U.S. CONSULATE
GENERAL DHAHRAN*

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Sunday - Thursday, 1:00pm-3:30 pm
Email: DhahranACS@state.gov
Phone: (966)(13)330-3200



From the Desk of the Minister Counselor for Consular Affairs

On behalf of my colleagues in the Consular Sections in Embassy Riyadh and Consulates General Jeddah and Dhahran, warm greetings and best wishes for a wonderful 2020. As you know, the start of the New Year was accompanied by an increase in tension in the region. The U.S. Mission to Saudi Arabia issued Security Alerts on January 3 and January 5 advising the American community of the heightened drone and missile threat and providing practical guidance to mitigate risk in the event of an attack. In early January, we witnessed a significant increase in registrations in the STEP program, in the number of followers on our Twitter account, and in new registrations in our SMS alert system. We are encouraged that the American community looks to the Mission for guidance; keep in mind, however, that you should also follow sources of local and international news to keep abreast of often fast breaking events that can impact your personal security. Inside this edition of the newsletter, we bring you information about crisis preparedness activities that are an integral part of what all three posts within the Mission do throughout the year, along with more seasonal information about voting and taxes. We also repeat the text of the January 5 Security Alert to remind you of actions you can take to protect yourself and your family; the situation in the region is still tense and all Americans should know and follow the guidance in this Alert. Stay Alert, Stay Informed, and Stay Safe in 2020 and beyond!

Sean Murphy

In This Edition:

Page 3-4 - Consular Updates

Page 5 - Security Alert and Emergency Preparedness

Page 6 - Taxes

Page 7 - Voting Info

Page 8-10- General Information

Page 11- Upcoming Closures



REGISTER FOR STEP

The Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) is a free service for Americans to enroll their trip with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate.

<https://step.state.gov/STEP>

Stay Informed, Stay Connected, Stay Safe!



SIGN UP FOR SMS ALERTS

If you wish to receive important announcements via text message enroll in our SMS alert system at:

[https:// Tinyurl.com/USKSAAlerts](https://Tinyurl.com/USKSAAlerts)

Messaging and Data Rates May Apply

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS WITH OUR CITIZEN LIAISON VOLUNTEERS



Minister Counselor for Consular Affairs Sean Murphy addresses the CLVs during the emergency preparedness event on December 11, 2019.

Riyadh’s American Citizen Services (ACS) unit hosted an emergency preparedness event on December 11, 2019. The event was attended by 15 American Citizen Liaison Volunteers (CLVs) and five guests from the New Zealand, Australian, and Canadian Embassies. The CLVs participated in a crisis management exercise based on several hypothetical scenarios, which drew on recent events in Saudi Arabia. The ACS unit provided guidance on the best responses to each situation. The evening concluded with an informal networking session with Ambassador John Abizaid.

Great teams. Great work.

INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING TO HELP YOUR FELLOW AMERICANS? Contact your local ACS unit for more information.

ACS units in Riyadh, Jeddah, and Dhahran recently tested the response time of our American Liaison Network System and the results were excellent. The exercise tested how quickly CLVs would respond to ACS units in a simulated disaster. Across the board, CLVs responded promptly, with more than 75% of responses logged within an hour of receipt. The response time was an improvement over last year, both in the total percentage of responses and timeliness of responses. A big thank you to our American Citizen Liaison Volunteers! We appreciate your partnership and your support of the American community in Saudi Arabia!

Happenings in Jeddah



Ambassador John Abizaid addresses the American community in Tabuk during a town hall on December 17, 2019 in Tabuk.

During the months of November and December, Jeddah's ACS unit traveled to Tabuk and Abha. The ACS unit held town halls and offered passport services, emergency preparedness tips, and holiday cheer. Jeddah also conducted a CLV crisis management exercise which attracted the majority of the CLVs who reside within 90 minutes of Jeddah. Several brand new CLVs attended and they provided feedback that the training was very valuable as it clarified the role of a CLV in a crisis in addition to providing general tips on crisis management and resilience.



Dhahran Digest

In response to concerns after the missile and armed drone attacks that hit ARAMCO facilities in September, the ACS unit in Dhahran actively engaged with CLVs, holding meetings with them at the Consulate at the end of October and in mid-December. Additionally, the ACS unit participated in the Regional Security Office's January meeting of the Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) for the Eastern Province, and in conjunction with the RSO office, held a town hall for American employees of a local company. Americans who live in the Eastern Province and travel frequently to Bahrain, whether for work, school, or pleasure, are encouraged to register in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) to include Bahrain, to receive alerts from both countries.

Security Alert – U.S. Mission Saudi Arabia (January 5, 2020)

Level 2: Exercise increased caution in Saudi Arabia due to terrorism and the threat of missile and drone attacks on civilian targets.

Saudi Arabia has a system of civil defense sirens, but there may be no advance warning of a missile or drone attack. The Mission urges American citizens in the Kingdom to immediately review precautions to take in the event of an attack.

Actions to Take:

- If you hear a loud explosion or if sirens are activated, immediately seek cover.
- If in a home or a building, go to the lowest level of the structure with the fewest exterior walls, windows, and openings; close any doors and sit near an interior wall, away from any windows or openings.
- If you are outdoors, immediately seek cover in a hardened structure; if that is not possible, lie down and cover your head with your hands.
- Be aware that even if the incoming missile or drone is intercepted, falling debris represents a significant risk.
- After the attack, stay away from any debris, and monitor major news outlets for official guidance.

Emergency Preparedness

Being prepared is a part of who you are.
Disaster preparation is no different.



READY.GOV/MYPLAN

For more preparedness tips, visit

[ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov)





It's Tax Time! If you need assistance, please contact IRS.gov or please see the lists of tax specialists collected [here](#).



IRS Opens 2019 Tax Filing Season for Individual Filers from 27 January 2020

UNPAID TAXES MAY RESULT IN REVOCATION OR DENIAL OF A PASSPORT



If you have seriously delinquent tax debt, IRC § 7345 authorizes the IRS to certify that debt to the State Department for action. The State Department generally will not issue a passport to you after receiving certification from the IRS.

Upon receiving certification, the State Department will deny your passport application and/or may revoke your current passport. If your passport application is denied or your passport revoked and you are overseas, the State Department may issue you a limited validity passport good only for direct return to the United States.

You can find more information on the Internal Revenue Service's website.

How to Vote from Anywhere in 2 Simple Steps...

WHEN YOU'RE AN AMERICAN OVERSEAS



ACROSS THE POND? NO MATTER WHERE YOU ARE, YOU CAN VOTE.

If you're an American living abroad, you can have your absentee ballot sent to you.

HERE'S HOW:

STEP
1

FILL OUT THE FEDERAL POST CARD APPLICATION (FPCA) AT FVAP.GOV TO REGISTER AND REQUEST YOUR BALLOT

WHEN?
Send in your FPCA by your State's specific deadline. Find it at FVAP.gov.



STEP
2

FILL OUT AND SEND IN YOUR BALLOT WHEN IT ARRIVES

WHEN?
By the recommended deadline of October 13.

DIDN'T GET YOUR BALLOT IN TIME?
No worries. Get a Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB) from FVAP.gov.

WANT TO MAKE SURE YOUR BALLOT WAS RECEIVED?
Check the status at FVAP.gov.



THAT'S IT. YOU'RE AN OVERSEAS VOTER

GET MORE INFO AND ASSISTANCE AT FVAP.GOV



FVAP.gov
FEDERAL VOTING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Americans can vote. Wherever they are.



TEACHING IN SAUDI

Are you currently teaching or planning to teach in the Kingdom? Check out our helpful teacher's guide that provides information on iqamas, visas, contracts, and what to expect.

DEPARTING ON FINAL EXIT?

We recommend getting a Saudi police clearance before departing the Kingdom for good. A police clearance may be needed for future employment or immigration. You must be physically present in the Kingdom to get this clearance, therefore you will be unable to obtain one after exiting the country.



The Saudi police may require a letter from the U.S. Embassy or U.S. Consulate General before they will fingerprint U.S. citizens for the clearance. Contact RiyadhACS@state.gov, JeddahACS@state.gov, or DhahranACS@state.gov for more information.

FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICER TEST

WHEN

February 3 and 4, 2020
9am to 12noon.

WHERE

U.S. Embassy Riyadh

IRM Java Room

YOU MUST REGISTER FOR THE FSOT IN ADVANCE. REGISTRATION CLOSES ON **JANUARY 29, 2020. FOR MORE INFORMATION ON BECOMING A FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICER AND TO REGISTER FOR THE TEST, PLEASE SEE THE LINK BELOW.**

**[HTTPS://CAREERS.STATE.GOV/WORK/
FOREIGN-SERVICE/OFFICER/TEST-
PROCESS/](https://careers.state.gov/work/foreign-service/officer/test-process/)**

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

A U.S. citizen on the date the candidate submits the registration package

At least 20 years old and no older than 59 years of age on the day the candidate submits the registration

At least 21 years old and not yet 60 on the day the candidate is appointed as a Foreign Service Officer

Available for worldwide assignments, including Washington, D.C

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Please contact FSOTRiyadh@state.gov if you have any questions.

ACS APPOINTMENTS

U.S. passport and notarial services are available by appointment only and generally offered from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm.

Please see our website for information about these services, as well as how to schedule your appointment online:

<https://sa.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/citizenship-services/>

Was your child born in Saudi Arabia and needs their first US. passport? Please see detailed information on our website about applying for a U.S. Consular Report of Birth Abroad (CRBA) and how to make an appointment with us:

<https://sa.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/child-family-matters/birth/>

UPCOMING CLOSURES

FEBRUARY 16

WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY

For a full list of Embassy/Consulate closures, see our website:

<https://sa.usembassy.gov/holiday-calendar/>

*Exact dates subject to change

**Traveling this summer?
Do you know your
passport's expiration
date?**

Check your passport now - some countries require at least 6 months validity in order to enter!



For information on how to renew your U.S. passport in Saudi Arabia, see our website:

<https://sa.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/passports/>

Visit travel.state.gov to see passport validity requirements for other countries.