



RED, WHITE & BLUE

SEA SANDS SKIES

THE AMERICAN CITIZEN SERVICES NEWSLETTER

• APRIL - JUNE 2019 •

***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***

American Citizen Services Public Hours:
Sunday - Thursday, 1:00pm-3:00pm
Email: JeddahACS@state.gov
Phone: (966)(12)667-0080

***U.S. CONSULATE
GENERAL DHAHRAN***

American Citizen Services Public Hours:
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



Warm greetings, and Happy Spring! On behalf of the officers and local staff in the Consular Sections at Embassy Riyadh and the Consulates General in Jeddah and Dhahran, I am happy to present you with the latest edition of the quarterly American Citizen Services Newsletter.

In this edition, I am very pleased to share with you our latest improvement in customer service for the American community in Saudi Arabia. Beginning on April 15, we will launch an adult passport renewal by mail program. While we'll miss seeing you in person (!), we do hope this new service makes your life in the Kingdom a bit more convenient. Details about the program are on the next page.

As you know, keeping you safe is our top priority. We recently conducted a test of the SMS alert system for American citizens; we identified a number of glitches that we have now resolved. If you are interested in signing up for the system, please see the information on the last page of this newsletter. In February, we updated the Travel Advisory for Saudi Arabia; please take a moment to familiarize yourself with the updated information <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/saudi-arabia-travel-advisory.html>.

Ramadan Kareem and Happy Easter to all those who will be celebrating these upcoming holidays. I hope you find this edition of the ACS newsletter useful.

Sean Murphy

RAMADAN ETIQUETTE

The holy month of Ramadan is expected to begin on or about Sunday, May 6, 2019 and end on or about Tuesday, June 4, 2019. Please pay particular attention during this time of spiritual reflection and increased worship for observing Muslims. Not only is it considered impolite to eat, drink or smoke in the presence of fasting Muslims, including in private locations, but Saudi law prohibits eating, drinking, or smoking in public during Ramadan fasting hours (from sunrise to sunset). Local authorities are vigorous in enforcing laws against eating, drinking, or smoking in public during the hours of fasting, for both Muslims and non-Muslims.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU SEE AN UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEM

If an unmanned aircraft system (UAS or drone) is sighted, seek cover in a hardened structure and stay away from any windows. If a drone lands or drops an object, leave the immediate area, if you can do so safely. Beware of falling debris. Do not approach or touch a drone or any associated debris, whether from the drone itself or from any missile or other weapon used to intercept it, instead, notify local authorities.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

STARTING!

APRIL 15, 2019

ADULT PASSPORT RENEWAL MAIL-IN PROGRAM

Effective April 15, 2019, U.S. Embassy Riyadh and Consulates General Dhahran and Jeddah can receive adult passport renewal applications by mail.

U.S. citizens wanting to renew their current passport can choose to mail-in their passport application rather than coming to the Embassy or Consulate in person. In addition to mailing your passport application, current passport, and a recent photo, the passport application fees must be included. Simply obtain a cashier's check issued by any bank in Saudi Arabia in Saudi Riyals made payable to the "U.S. Embassy Riyadh."

Passport Application Fees:

**418 SAR or \$110 for Passport Book ONLY or
532 SAR or \$140 for Passport Book AND Card**

**For more information including eligibility to utilize the adult passport renewal Mail-In program visit:
<https://sa.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/passports/>.**

The SMSA courier fee is 160 SAR (mail-in and return fee combined) paid directly to SMSA at the time of delivery.

GREAT NEWS !!

**You spoke. We listened. We negotiated.
Effective April 1, 2019, the SMSA passport delivery service
fee was reduced from 127 SAR to 80 SAR!**

**Rather than returning to the Embassy or Consulate to
pick-up your new passport, why not have it delivered?**

Check our website for more details:

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

Yanbu Town Hall

ACS conducted a town hall in Yanbu, Saudi Arabia on March 12th, 2019 which was attended by approximately 20 U.S. citizens who reside in the area. This was Consul General Ryan Gliha's first visit to Yanbu and it was a great opportunity for him to introduce himself to the community. There was a robust discussion of business related topics at the meeting. Consular Section staff also discussed the new SMSA passport delivery option for U.S. passports, and there was significant interest among the participants.



Jeddah Town Hall

ACS conducted a town hall in Jeddah and met with approximately 30 U.S. citizens who work and live in the area. The town hall introduced ACS services to citizens in the area, including the announcement of, and elaboration on, the Mission's new passport delivery program. The town hall also served as Consul General Ryan Gliha's introduction to the community as it was his first town hall for U.S. citizens in Jeddah. Consul General Gliha and ACS Chief Gallian led a discussion on the future of the move to the New Consulate Compound and re-iterated the importance of the Citizen Liaison Volunteer network. Questions fielded from attendees covered a range of topics to include issues related to social liberalization in the country, security, and the process for obtaining driver's licenses for women.



Abha/Khamis Mushayt Town Hall

ACS conducted a town hall in Khamis Mushayt and met with approximately 90 U.S. citizens who work and live in the area. The town hall was a wonderful opportunity to hear from citizens regarding the security situation in Southern Saudi Arabia and to provide additional information to them about security. The trip was also an opportunity to introduce Consul General Ryan Gliha to the community as it was his first visit to the area.

TRAVELING THIS SUMMER? RENEW YOUR PASSPORT NOW!

Beat the summer rush and make an appointment to renew your passport early. It generally takes about 2 weeks for the new passport to arrive so please plan your travel accordingly.

Don't forget to check the passport validity of your children's passports as well. Do the kids have an early dismissal soon? Use that afternoon to bring the whole family in! And don't forget that the presence of both parents is required when renewing your child's passport.

For more information on how to renew your U.S. passport in Saudi Arabia, visit our website:
<https://sa.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/passports/>



U.S. Customs and Border Protection

Did you know that Saudi Arabia is part of the Six-Month Club? This means that you can enter and exit Saudi Arabia with less than six months of validity on your U.S. passport. Your passport need only be valid for your intended period of stay in the Kingdom. For additional details, visit:

<https://www.cbp.gov/document/bulletins/six-month-club-update>

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

Eid Al-Fitr Holiday

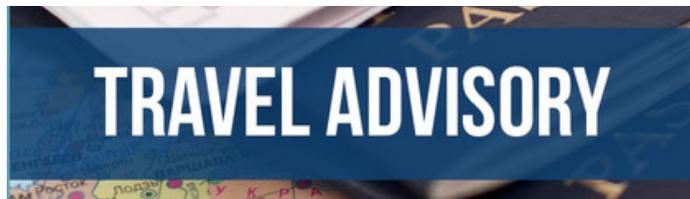
Please plan a head as the Embassy will be closed June 3 - 6, 2019.



Did you know?

The General Directorate of Civil Defense has an English-language website filled with helpful information about public safety? There is even a Kids' Corner with educational cartoons and activities about how to stay safe in the event of an emergency. Check it out at:

<http://www.998.gov.sa/English/Pages/Default.aspx>



On February 21, 2019, the U.S. Department of State's Travel Advisory for Saudi Arabia was updated. You can find it at travel.state.gov

U.S. CITIZENS AND RESIDENT ALIENS ABROAD - AUTOMATIC 2 MONTH EXTENSION OF TIME TO FILE TAXES

U.S. citizen residing overseas on April 15 are automatically allowed a 2 month extension to file taxes. The regular due date of your return is April 15, and the automatic extended due date would be June 15. If the due date falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday, the due date is delayed until the next business day. Even if you are allowed an extension, you will have to pay interest on any tax not paid by the regular due date of your return. You will be allowed the extension if you are a U.S. citizen or resident alien and on the regular due date of your return: You are living outside of the United States and Puerto Rico and your main place of business or post of duty is outside the United States and Puerto Rico, or you are in military or naval service on duty outside the United States and Puerto Rico. More information can be found by visiting:

<https://www.irs.gov/individuals/international-taxpayers/resident-aliens>



CONSULAR AFFAIRS BY THE NUMBERS*

OUR MISSION: The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs provides services that protect U.S. citizens and their interests abroad, ensure U.S. border security, facilitate the entry of legitimate travelers, and foster economic growth.

PROVIDE PASSPORT SERVICES



Passports and passport cards:

21.1 MILLION issued

Passports in circulation:

- **137 MILLION** valid U.S. passports
- **42 PERCENT** of U.S. citizens have a passport
- **29** domestic passport agencies and centers
- Approximately **7,600** passport application acceptance facilities nationwide
- **4.5 MILLION** inquiries addressed by the National Passport Information Center

STAY CONNECTED

Travel.state.gov - Find Travel Advisories and Alerts, passport information, and visa requirements.

Adoption.state.gov - Read general information about intercountry adoption, country-by-country statistics, and Adoption Notices.

Step.state.gov - Enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) for security and travel updates on the go.

10,000 FOLLOWERS  @KSA_ACS

559,000 FOLLOWERS  @TravelGov



The Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS)

The Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) is caused by a strain of the coronavirus. Most coronaviruses cause only minor illnesses, like the common cold. However, the virus that causes MERS can cause more serious illness. MERS is caused by a virus with seasonal variation. It is most common in the spring, usually spiking in March-May. There have been some early cases in KSA this year, but all are in areas significantly south of Riyadh, such as Wadi Al Dawasir. MERS is transmissible to people who are in close contact with an infected person. Camels can also be carriers of the MERS virus.

Follow some basic steps to limit your exposure to MERS virus:

1. Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Note that alcohol-based sanitizers are not as effective on visibly soiled hands. 2. Avoid contact with ill animals, including camels, and wash hands with soap and water immediately after coming into contact with any animal.

3. Cover your sneezes and coughs with a tissue, or your elbow if a tissue is not available. Throw the tissue in the trash immediately after use.
4. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Touching your hands to these areas allows germs easy entrance to your body.
5. Avoid close physical contact with infected people.
6. Stay home if you are sick with a flu-like illness. The CDC recommends that patients stay home for at least 24 hours AFTER fever is gone, except to get medical care or for other necessities. Please keep children home from school for at least 24 hours AFTER fever is gone.
7. See a healthcare provider if you have a symptoms such as fever or cough for more than 3 days. If you have shortness of breath, please seek care immediately.

For more information, please visit:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/mers/index.html>



REGISTER IN STEP TO RECEIVE IMPORTANT SAFETY & SECURITY INFORMATION - SPREAD THE WORD!

Please remind your American friends to enroll in the U.S. State Department's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program

<https://step.state.gov/step/> in order for them to be kept abreast of any public announcements on safety and security issues in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere. Additionally, by enrolling in STEP, your friends will also receive our quarterly newsletter.



SIGN UP FOR SMS ALERTS

If you wish to receive important safety & security announcements via text message, please enroll in our SMS Message System

at: <https://tinyurl.com/USKSAAlerts>



FOLLOW US ON TWITTER

In addition to the STEP messages we send via email, we post safety and security information on Twitter, as well as helpful information for U.S. citizens living, working, and traveling in Saudi Arabia. To stay up-to-date on the latest ACS news, follow us at: [@KSA_ACS](https://twitter.com/KSA_ACS)



ACS APPOINTMENT

All ACS services are by appointment only. For information on how to schedule one, visit:

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

For CRBA appointments, please send us an email: Riyadh: RiyadhACS@state.gov;

Jeddah: JeddahACS@state.gov; Dhahran: DhahranACS@state.gov



UPCOMING CLOSURES

For the latest holiday schedule and upcoming closures for the U.S. Embassy and Consulates, please visit: <https://sa.usembassy.gov/holiday-calendar/>

DON'T FORGET