

RED, WHITE, & BLUE

SEA SAMAS SKIES

THE AMERICAN CITIZEN SERVICES NEWSLETTER

• JANUARY - MARCH 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***

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Sunday - Thursday, 1:00pm-3:00pm
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***U.S. CONSULATE
GENERAL DHAHRAN***

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Phone: (966)(13)330-3200

FROM THE DESK OF THE MINISTER COUNSELOR FOR CONSULAR AFFAIRS



On behalf of the U.S. consular team in Saudi Arabia, it is my pleasure to present you with this edition of the quarterly American Citizen Services newsletter!

In the last edition, I introduced you to some of the new faces in the Mission Saudi Arabia consular management team. As a team, we are all committed to providing American citizens in the Kingdom the best possible consular services.

With that in mind, I am pleased to bring your attention to the new passport delivery service that is described in greater detail on the next page of this newsletter. With this optional, user-pays service, it will no longer be necessary to return to the Embassy or to the Consulates General in Jeddah and Dhahran to collect your new passport; instead, you can collect it from any one of the private contractor's almost 300 branch offices located throughout the Kingdom. We hope you will find this a small, but meaningful enhancement in our customer service.

On the issue of customer service, let me mention a couple of additional things. First of all, thank you to the more than 250 American citizens across Saudi Arabia who during December participated in the first-ever (at least in our collective memory!) American Citizen Services customer service survey in Saudi Arabia. We received a lot of useful feedback about the customer experience at our three posts. One area of frequent comment concerned how American citizens can obtain information and assistance from the ACS units. Bottom line: if you have an emergency, call us, we are here to help 24/7. However, if your inquiry concerns a routine service, for example, requirements for applying for a passport, please first review our website (<https://sa.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/>); we try to keep it as current and useful as possible and, in most cases, you will find exactly the information you are looking for. If you can't find what you are looking for, and the matter is not urgent, please send us an email; we will do everything we can to respond within two business days. And please note, the ACS units are not involved in immigration, visa, or social security and veterans benefits matters and cannot take inquiries on these subjects; information about immigration and visas is available on the website <https://sa.usembassy.gov/visas/>) and the U.S. Embassy in Rome handles all federal benefits matters for persons in Saudi Arabia (<https://it.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/fbu/>). Thank you for your cooperation with these guidelines.

Finally, on behalf of all members of Consular Team Saudi Arabia, let me wish you belated, but sincere best wishes for a happy and successful 2019. We look forward to continuing to work with you.

Sean Murphy

NEW PASSPORT DELIVERY PROGRAM

Coming Soon- February 10, 2019



To enhance customer service for the American community in Saudi Arabia, on February 10, 2019, the U.S. Embassy in Riyadh and Consulates General in Dhahran and Jeddah will launch a new passport delivery program in partnership with SMSA Express. U.S. citizens applying for a passport for the first time or applying to renew their passport can choose to have their passport delivered to the SMSA branch of their choice rather than picking up their passport at the Embassy or Consulate. While the processing time for a new passport generally takes 1-2 weeks, the delivery of the new passport will take 24 hours within the geographic areas of Riyadh, Jeddah, Dhahran, Hail, and Qassim. Passport deliveries in all other geographic areas of Saudi Arabia will take 48-72 hours. The delivery fee for this service will be 127 SAR paid directly to SMSA at the time of pick-up.

Additional information on the new passport delivery program can be found by visiting our website:

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

Test of the ALN Communication System

On November 14, the U.S. Mission to Saudi Arabia conducted a semi-annual test of the American Liaison Network communication system. In Riyadh, eighty-three percent of the Citizen Liaison Volunteers (CLVs) responded within 60 minutes, up from seventy-five percent during the last semi-annual test conducted on April 12, 2018. Thank you to all of our CLVs for their participation in this important test of our communication system!



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.

Important Consular Updates

Consular Notification and Access

The U.S. Embassy maintains an active dialogue with the Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) on the important issue of consular notification and access to detained U.S. citizens. The Vienna Convention on Consular Relations (VCCR) of 1961 to which both the U.S. and Saudi Arabia are signatories requires the host government to notify the consular representative of all countries of which a detained person has citizenship and to allow for consular access should the detained citizen request a visit from his/her embassy or consulate. In early December, the Bureau of Consular Affairs Overseas Citizen Services country officer for Saudi Arabia visited the Kingdom and met with officials at the MFA to discuss the VCCR. For additional information on the arrest or detention of a U.S. citizen abroad, visit:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/emergencies/arrest-detention.html>

International Parental Child Abduction Consultations

The third round of consultations of the U.S. – Saudi Joint Commission to Address International Parental Child Abduction took place on November 14-15, 2018 in Riyadh. Protecting the interests of children unlawfully removed from the United States is one of the highest priorities of the Department of State around the world. The U.S. delegation was led by the State Department's Office of Children's Issues, while the Saudi delegation consisted of representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, and the Ministry of Interior. The U.S. Mission to Saudi Arabia will continue to engage on this important issue.

Riyadh October 2018 Town Hall

Embassy Riyadh hosted its annual American Citizen Town Hall on October 3, 2018, with over 170 American citizens in attendance. The event included remarks from and a discussion with Chargé d'Affaires Christopher P. Henzel that focused broadly on the U.S. – Saudi relationship and on recent cultural and social developments in the Kingdom. Embassy officers briefed attendees on consular services available to American citizens and on current security conditions in Saudi Arabia. The American Citizen Services Unit thanks all the Americans who attended the event and especially the more than half of



attendees who participated in a post-event online survey that provided valuable feedback to the organizers. We look forward to seeing you all at our next Town Hall event!

Crisis Preparedness Exercise

On December 6, 2018, the Riyadh Consular Section participated in a crisis management exercise (CME) organized by the American Citizen Services Unit. Participation in CMEs is critical to enhancing the Consular Section's crisis preparedness and ability to assist U.S. citizens during an emergency. In addition to participation in CMEs, the Consular Section focuses heavily on crisis preparedness throughout the year in order to maintain readiness to respond to a wide variety of potential emergency situations.

Jeddah November 2018 Town Hall

Consul General Gliha and American Citizen Services (ACS) staff held an American Citizens Town Hall meeting in Medina on November 18. The event was the first town hall Consul General Gliha has conducted since assuming his position this past summer. Consul General Gliha led a discussion with U.S. citizens on how ACS can better provide services to citizens who do not live in close proximity to the Consulate. The lively discussion produced several

ideas for how to better serve these communities. ACS Jeddah also held successful meetings with the Director General of Medina Health Affairs and the Director of Customs at Prince Mohammed Bin Abdulaziz Airport, raising issues of importance to American citizens in the area and developing relationships with both directors that will help facilitate better coordination with their offices on ACS issues in the future.



NEED TO CONTACT US?

We encourage all U.S. citizens to check our website before calling or emailing the Embassy or nearest Consulate. Many of the routine questions we receive regarding appointments, renewing a passport, acquiring citizenship, and notarials can be answered by the information contained on our website. If the information on our website does not answer your question, please feel free to contact the Embassy or nearest Consulate via email or phone. Our telephone public call-in hours are from 9 – 11am. Outside of these hours, only emergency calls will be transferred to the American Citizen Services Unit or to the Embassy/Consulate Duty Officer afterhours. You can find contact information for the Embassy or nearest Consulate on the first page of the newsletter or on our website: <https://sa.usembassy.gov>

WHAT TO DO IF YOU SEE AN UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEM

If an unmanned aircraft system (UAS or drone) is sighted, consider your safety first and if necessary, move to cover. If a drone lands or drops an object, please leave the immediate area and seek cover in a hardened structure. Never attempt to move or otherwise touch a drone on the ground or an object dropped by a drone.

WHAT TO DO IN THE EVENT OF A MISSILE ATTACK

In the event of a missile attack and/or immediately upon hearing an explosion, physically lower your profile. A secure area on the lowest level of your residence provides the best protection from anything falling out of the sky. This space should be prepared ahead of time with emergency supplies, flashlight, comfort items, and means to communicate. At night you should keep your cell phone on and not in silent mode.

When your safe haven is not located at the lowest level, take measures to:

- Go to a room on the lowest level of your residence with the fewest exterior walls, windows, and openings.
- Close the door of the room.
- Sit on the floor near an interior wall, away from any windows.
- Have your mobile phone in your possession.

If you are outdoors during a missile event, you may not have time to take shelter in a building or find protective cover. If no cover is available in your immediate surroundings upon hearing an explosion, lie down and cover your head with your hands to provide some protection from debris.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION



IT'S 2019!

Time to complete a new Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) to register to vote and request absentee ballots for all elections for federal and state offices. You can complete the FPCA online at FVAP.gov. Your vote counts!



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: RiyadhACS@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