

U.S. Embassy in Singapore
Consular Section

<http://singapore.usembassy.gov>

<http://www.travel.state.gov>

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American Citizen Services (ACS) Newsletter

October - November 2009

The newsletter is our way of sharing topics of general interest as well as any changes in Embassy hours or procedures. We will continue to send time-sensitive announcements separately. If you need to update your registration, please click [here](#). Please share your feedback with us at SingaporeACS@state.gov. *Thank you!*

If you no longer live in or travel to Singapore, please click [here](#). If you have any difficulty with your registration or feedback, please contact us at SingaporeACS@state.gov.

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Consular Section Closures – Holidays and Other Closures

The Consular section will be closed on the following dates in October and November 2009.

October 12, 2009 (Monday)	U.S. Holiday – Columbus Day
October 16, 2009 (Friday)	Singapore Holiday – Deepavali
October 22, 2009 (Thursday)	Admin/Training Day *
November 9 – 13 (full week)	Closed for Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meetings *
November 26, 2009 (Thursday)	U.S. Holiday – Thanksgiving Day
November 27, 2009 (Friday)	Singapore Holiday – Hari Raya Haji Day

Holidays: The Embassy observes certain local and American holidays. On these days, the Consular Section will be closed. For an emergency involving an American citizen, please contact the Duty Officer at 6476-9100.

* We will be closed for all routine American Citizen Services such as passport renewal, extra passport pages and notarial services on these days. We will be open for collection of documents only at 3:00 – 3:30pm. Regular services will resume the following day. For emergency services at any time, please call 6476-9100.

Consular Section Public Hours

Our public hours are as follows: Monday-Friday 8:30am-12:00pm and 1:30pm-3:00pm on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday. We are closed to the public on Thursday afternoons. Document collection takes place between 3:00-3:30pm Monday-Friday. We are constantly evaluating our delivery of services within the parameters of our space and staffing resources. Your feedback is welcome at SingaporeACS@state.gov.

Appointments are only needed for two services at this time: Consular Reports of Birth Abroad and Passports for minors (Aged below 16). All other services are currently being provided without appointments. Please make an appointment on the following website: <https://evisaforms.state.gov/acs/default.asp?postcode=SGP&appcode=1>

Online Travel Registration

If you received this newsletter directly to your e-mail address from the U.S. Embassy – Congratulations! You have already registered. If you received this newsletter any other way, you may register or update your registration at: <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/>. Travel registration is a free service provided by the U.S. Government to U.S. citizens who are traveling to, or living in, a foreign country. Registration allows you to record information about your upcoming trip(s) or residence abroad that the Department of State can use to assist you in case of an emergency. Americans residing abroad can also get routine information (like this newsletter) from the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate. We would like your help to increase the use of this service among American citizens. Please cut, paste, and forward this paragraph in an e-mail to your American Citizen friends. Thank you for your assistance.

Updating Your Voting Address

Elections for Congress, state, and many municipal offices will take place across the U.S. in November. To update your voting address or to request your absentee ballot from your state election authority, follow the instructions on the Federal Voting Assistance Program website at <http://www.fvap.gov>.

ACS Tips

- Photocopy your supporting documentation before you come. For example, bring a photocopy of your passport that you can submit for a passport renewal or if renewing your child's passport bring photocopies of both parents' and children's passports for submission. This is another way you can help us reduce wait-times by assisting us in your applications. We urge you to come to the Embassy prepared.
- Check the expiry date of your passport often. Also, especially as it is class trip season, do not forget to check the dates of expiry on your children's passports. Singapore and some neighboring countries do not allow Americans to enter with less than six months of validity remaining on their passport. You and your family need to be aware of this and plan accordingly.

ACS Topic of Interest: What is an Apostille?

An "apostille" is a certificate issued by a designated authority in a country where a treaty called the [Hague Convention Abolishing the Requirement for Legalization of Foreign Public Documents](#) applies. Under the convention, the effect of an apostille is to "certify the authenticity of the signature, the capacity in which the person signing the document has acted and, where appropriate, the identity of the seal or stamp which it bears." Hence, documents issued in a Convention country which have been certified by a Convention apostille are entitled to recognition in any other Convention country without any further authentication. For a list of countries party to the Hague Convention, [please click here](#). For more information on apostilles, please visit the following website: http://travel.state.gov/law/info/judicial/judicial_2545.html.

We have received public inquiries asking whether the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy Singapore can issue apostilles for documents originating out of the United States, such as marriage certificates or school transcripts. Please note that we are unable to issue apostilles. For information on the designated competent authorities in the United States who can issue apostilles, please click on the following website:

http://www.hcch.net/index_en.php?act=authorities.details&aid=353.

IRS: Voluntary Disclosure Deadline Extended

The Internal Revenue Service has announced a one-time extension of the deadline for voluntary disclosure of foreign accounts to October 15. The IRS encourages all American taxpayers with unreported offshore accounts to follow procedures for voluntary disclosure of these accounts. The IRS has prepared a list of Frequently Asked Questions and answers regarding the topic at the following website: <http://www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,,id=210027,00.html>. To make a voluntary disclosure, or to learn more about it by phone, please contact the Hong Kong office of the IRS Criminal Investigative Division by phone at 2841-2466, or by letter to IRS CID, 26 Garden Road, Central, Hong Kong.

How do I know if I have to make a voluntary disclosure?

If you own or have authority over a foreign financial account, including a bank account, brokerage account, mutual fund, unit trust, or other types of financial accounts, then you should report the account yearly to the Internal Revenue Service if:

1. You have a financial interest in, or signature authority (or other authority that is comparable to signature authority) over one or more accounts in a foreign country, and
2. The aggregate value of all foreign financial accounts exceeds \$10,000 at any time during the calendar year.

The Foreign Bank and Financial Accounts Report (FBAR) is required because foreign financial institutions may not be subject to the same reporting requirements as domestic financial institutions. The FBAR is a tool to help the United States government identify persons who may be using foreign financial accounts to circumvent United States law. Investigators use FBARs to help identify or trace funds used for illicit purposes or to identify unreported income maintained or generated abroad.

Travel Safety:

Since our last newsletter, new country-specific information is now available for the following countries:

- [Singapore](#)
- [Japan](#)
- [Republic of Korea](#)
- [Vietnam](#)

The Department of State has issued this following Worldwide Caution to provide an update on the continuing threat of terrorist actions against American citizens:

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/pa/pa_1161.html.

An earlier Travel Alert for China, regarding H1N1 quarantine procedures, has recently been updated, and is available at: http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/pa/pa_4238.html.

To read the Travel Alert regarding security concerns in the Xinjiang Uyghur region, please click the following link: http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/pa/pa_4180.html.

The Department has also released a Travel Warning for the Philippines, calling attention to terrorist and insurgent activities in the southern islands of Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago. Please click the following link for more information:

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_2190.html.

As you make your travel plans, don't forget to check www.travel.state.gov for the most current safety and security information.