



The Sphinx

A Newsletter for the American Community in Egypt

Consular Section, United States Embassy Cairo

Volume 2 Edition 1

January 2016

متوفر أيضا باللغة العربية

American Citizen Services (ACS)

8 Kamal El Din Salah Street
Garden City, Cairo

(20-2) 2797-3300 (24 hour number
for emergencies* only)

*ACS emergencies include: arrests, hospitalizations, child custody cases, welfare and whereabouts requests, repatriations, deaths, and lost and/or stolen passports.

For all other services, including passport renewals, consular reports of birth abroad, and notarial requests, please make an appointment using our website. For questions, send an email to:

ConsularCairoACS@State.gov

U.S. Embassy Cairo is not a Federal benefits post. For all questions about federal benefits please contact U.S. Consulate Jerusalem directly at: FBU.Jerusalem@SSA.gov



Egyptian Emergency Services Numbers

122 Police and Fire Department

123 Ambulance

140 National Phone Directory

16000 Child Emergency Line

Voting Overseas

Although it is easy to forget while living overseas, the U.S. state and national election season is fast approaching in November 2016. American citizens living overseas have the ability and right to participate in the elections through an absentee voting process. Every absentee vote is counted and several past Senate and House races were decided by margins smaller than the number of overseas votes. We encourage citizens living overseas to register as an absentee voter early to ensure states receive all overseas ballots before their deadlines. Absentee voting is a simple three-step process, most of which can be completed on-line by visiting fvap.gov.

Step 1: Register and Request Your Absentee Ballot

You must do this in your State of legal residence by completing a Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) according to your State or territory's specific instructions and submitting it to your local election office. If you have never lived in the US, you may be eligible to vote in your parents' last state-of-residence.

Step 2: Your Election Official Processes Your FPCA and Sends You a Blank Ballot

They will determine if you meet the jurisdiction's residency requirements and may decide which ballot to send. You may also be contacted if there are any questions about your application.

Voting continued on Pg. 3

What's Inside:



Absentee Voting
Pg. 1, 3



New SMS Service
Pg. 2



Emergency Preparedness
Pg. 3-4



Passport Renewals and Validity
Pg. 4-5



ACS Services

Hours of operation are 9:00 to 15:00, Sunday-Wednesday.

All customers for an ACS service must have a confirmed appointment of the proper type for the service being requested.

Launch of a New SMS Service

The Embassy is pleased to announce a new SMS rapid notification service for the American community. The Embassy will use this service to send an SMS notice to registered mobile phones when it issues urgent security-related information. If you are interested in receiving such messages, please send your mobile phone number to cairoconssms@gmail.com. An initial test of the SMS system will be conducted during March.



ACS will be closed on the following dates for local and U.S. federal holidays:

Sunday, February 14

Monday, April 25

Sunday, May 1

Monday, May 2

Want to see something in particular in the next issue of *The Sphinx*? Email us:

ConsularCairoACS@State.Gov

A Reminder about Marriage Affidavits for U.S. Citizens Marrying in Egypt

Egypt has special requirements for foreigners who wish to marry here: foreigners are required to provide written proof, issued by a government authority in their own country of citizenship, that they are “free to marry.” No such document or governmental authority to issue such a document, exists in the United States. As the United States does not maintain centralized records of the marriage and/or divorce of its citizens and does not “authorize” marriages or divorces, the Department of State is unable to make this type of certification.

U.S. citizens may attempt to certify their eligibility to marry in Egypt by completing a sworn statement/affidavit with the Embassy’s ACS (American Citizen Services) unit. At their scheduled notary service appointment, U.S. citizens may complete a notarized sworn statement where they affirm their own status as being “free to marry,” along with other items, on a marriage affidavit form.

In some cases, the Egyptian Authorities have not accepted the notarized affidavit as sufficient proof of one’s freedom to marry. As an alternative, U.S. citizens can file for a K-1 (fiancé/e visa) petition with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) on behalf of their fiancé/e to allow the couple to marry in the United States. For more information about the K-1 visa process, please visit this website:

<http://travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/immigrate/family/fiance-k-1.html>



...Voting Continued

Step 3: Vote With Your State Ballot or Use the Back-Up Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB)

Vote and return your State ballot as soon as you receive it. If you have registered and requested your ballot by your State's deadline (or at least 30 days before the election, whichever is later), you may use the FWAB anytime before the election. A FWAB is a back-up ballot that can be used if you requested your State ballot but did not receive it in time to vote. Visit FVAP.gov.



Look for more answers to frequently asked questions on voting overseas in future editions of The Sphinx. In the meantime, happy election season!

Emergency Preparedness

Recognizing an impending emergency and knowing what to do to protect yourself and your family will help you take effective steps to prepare beforehand and aid recovery after the event. Some of the things you can do to prepare for the unexpected, such as assembling a supply kit and developing a family emergency plan, are the same for all types of hazards. Taking a good look at your ability to respond to these situations is critical to being prepared. The first and most important component of emergency preparedness is mindset. By deciding to succeed, you start down the pathway to success in the face of adversity. While this pathway to success may vary from person to person, a few basic decisions should be universal. Following are suggestions for how to prepare for an emergency while traveling.

Before You Travel

- Research where you are going to understand the kinds of security situations or natural disasters that may affect you while in your planned destination. Identify emergency and medical resources, such as the local emergency number and nearby hospitals. Being aware of the potential risks you face—as well as the resources available—allows you to customize an emergency plan. Learn more country specific information at travel.state.gov, as well as about your health abroad.
- Identify an emergency contact at home and make sure you give them your flight itinerary and contact information while traveling, as well as update them of any changes. Sign up with the [Smart Travelers](#)



[Enrollment Program](#) with your planned destination and include your emergency contact's information. In case of an emergency, the Embassy will use this information to quickly reach out to you and your loved ones.

Emergency Preparedness Continued...

Passport Renewal Wait Times

The Department of State is expecting an [increase in passport applicants](#) through 2018 and, as a result, the wait time to receive travel documents will increase. We encourage travelers to apply for passports far in advance of planned travel to avoid delays. When applying for a first time passport or to renew your passport in Egypt, schedule an appointment at the U.S. Embassy in Cairo. We strongly encourage applicants to come prepared to submit their passport applications by printing and filling out the correct form in advance and bringing passport photos. Additionally, children and first time adult passport applicants require interviews. To read more about preparing your passport application for acceptance at U.S. Embassy Cairo visit us [on-line](#).



...Emergency Preparedness Continued

While Abroad

- Familiarize yourself with the evacuation procedures of the hotels you stay in and transportation you use. Ensure that everyone in your party understands proper procedures and discuss how to respond in case of potential emergencies. Based on the specifics of your environment and your individual needs, develop an emergency action plan. Practice and maintain it with those traveling with you.

The Role of a U.S. Embassy

- The actions of U.S. embassies depend on the type and severity of an emergency; roles vary from providing information to citizens overseas and loved ones at home to recommending that citizens leave the country and evacuating Americans when no commercial transportation is available. During an emergency, the Embassy's priority is to inform citizens of developments. The Embassy cannot provide individual advice or transportation. It is the responsibility of citizens overseas to heed travel warnings, monitor the local situation, and develop a plan.

Additional Resources and Toolkits to Help You Prepare

[Are you Ready? An In-Depth Guide to Citizen Preparedness](#), FEMA

[Index of Natural Disasters and Sever Weather](#), Center for Disease Control (includes guides on how to respond in different emergencies)

[Get Help in an Emergency](#), U.S. Department of State (resources and services for citizens abroad during emergencies)

[Plan & Prepare](#), American Red Cross

[Let's Get Ready](#), Sesame Street Toolkit for Children

[Ready Kids!](#) Family Communication Plan for Parents and Kids, FEMA

Before You Travel...Check Your Passport's Validity!

Before traveling, please check the expiration date on your passport carefully. The United States and Egypt both require a minimum of six months validity from your date of arrival. Travelers who do not meet the passport validity requirement may be stopped before boarding their aircraft or upon entering the country.

Additionally, if you are traveling to one of the 26 European countries in the Schengen area for tourism, business, or in transit to a non-Schengen destination, you may generally enter the country for up to three months without a visa. However, your passport must be valid for at least three months beyond your intended date of departure. For the purposes of enforcing their shared entry requirements, Schengen governments assume that anyone entering one of Schengen nations will stay for the full three months. As a result, to enter a Schengen country, you generally must have at least six months validity on your passport. For more information on visas and entry requirements for Schengen nations, please read the State Department's Schengen Fact Sheet or visit Travel.State.Gov to look up your destination on our Country Specific Information pages. In the meantime, make sure to check the validity of your passport before booking travel to Europe or back to the U.S. If you need to renew your passport, make an appointment with the U.S. Embassy well in-advance of travel.

Spotlight on President's Day, February 13, 2016

President's Day is an American holiday held annually on the third Monday of February. It began in 1885 under the name of Washington Day. At that time, the holiday was a way of honoring former President George Washington, the first President of the United States. Later, a second U.S. holiday was established to honor the life of Abraham Lincoln, who is one of the most respected U.S. Presidents for his leadership during the American Civil War.

Later, the American government joined these two separate holidays into one: President's Day. Since then, the holiday has grown to include a celebration of all U.S. presidents, past and present. Currently, people spend the holiday by celebrating American patriotism and history. Children learn about the holiday in school by staging plays about the greatest American presidents. On the holiday, families often gather for a meal together.

Photo Captions, photos on right: Images of the U.S. National Park, Mount Rushmore., which includes a sculpture carved into a giant cliff in the state of South Dakota. The sculpture depicts four U.S. Presidents (from left to right), George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt, and Abraham Lincoln. Every year, about three million American and foreign tourists visit the sight.

Mount Rushmore, South Dakota

