Upcoming U.S. Citizens Services Visits

Officials from the American Citizen Services (ACS) unit in Ho Chi Minh City will offer consular services in October at the following locations:

**Da Lat**

- **Date:** Thursday, 6 October 2016 (Thứ Năm, ngày 6 tháng 10 năm 2016)
- **Place:** Da Lat Palace Hotel, Address: 2 Trần Phú, Da Lat City (2 Trần Phú, Tp. Đà Lạt)
- **Time:** from 09:00am to 12:00pm

No appointments are necessary. Consulate officials will offer notarial services, deliver federal benefits checks, and U.S. citizens will be able to apply for U.S. passports.

Federal benefits annuitants who have not been contacted by SSA or consulate for the stop of quarterly physical presence please come to finalize the paperwork.

At this time, officials will not be interviewing for Consular Reports of Birth Abroad. Visa and immigration services will not be provided. Only the services listed will be available during the visits.

For additional information concerning applying for U.S. passports and notary services please see our Website at: [https://vn.usembassy.gov/](https://vn.usembassy.gov/)

October Holiday Closures

The Embassy and Consulate will be closed on the following days:

+ October 10– Columbus Day

A complete list of all of our holiday closings for 2016 is available online at [http://vn.usembassy.gov/holiday-calendar/](http://vn.usembassy.gov/holiday-calendar/)

*Vietnamese Holiday
+ American Holiday
Vietnam Extends Visa Validity for U.S. Citizens Traveling For Business and Tourism

On April 9, the National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam approved a plan to issue 12-month, multiple-entry visas to American citizens who travel temporarily for business or tourism. The new reciprocity arrangement, entered into force on 29 May 2016, will benefit American and Vietnamese tourists and business travelers, generating new opportunities for trade, investment and tourism. The successful conclusion of the arrangement underscores the commitment of the U.S. and Vietnam to improve the bilateral relationship by expanding existing trade and economic opportunities and developing people-to-people ties.

Although the agreement officially took effect on May 29, 2016, Vietnam has not yet completed full routine implementation. As a result, American citizens applying at Vietnamese embassies abroad may discover those embassies are not yet prepared to issue multiple-entry 12-month visas. The U.S. is working closely with the GVN to resolve the issues hampering full implementation of the arrangement.

We welcome feedback from American citizens applying for 12-month visas. Information about their experience with the application process will help us to better work with the GVN towards full implementation of the arrangement.

To share your experience, please contact us at ACSanoi@state.gov.
Absentee Voting Information for U.S. Citizens Abroad

Voting Is Now Easier Than Ever Before

All U.S. citizens can now receive their blank ballots electronically. Depending on the state in which you are eligible to vote, you may get your ballot by email, fax, or internet download. To start, go to www.FVAP.gov to complete a new Federal Post Card Application (FPCA), print and sign the form then return it to your local election office in the United States. We recommend overseas U.S. citizens get in the habit of completing FPCAs each January. You should include your email address on the form so it's easier for your election officials to reach you if there is a problem. If your state delivers ballots electronically by fax only, be sure to include your fax number. If you request electronic delivery and include your email address or fax number, you’ll receive your blank ballot 45 days before general and mid-term elections and generally 30 days before special, primary, and run-off elections for federal offices. Most states now have voter registration verification websites, and many offer a means of tracking the status of your registration and ballot.

Absentee Voting Basics
Absentee voting is a simple 2 step process.

1. Every year, you send in a completed Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) to your local election officials.
   - They confirm your eligibility to vote, and put your name on a list to receive absentee ballots for any elections held that calendar year.
   - They send you a blank absentee ballot electronically or by mail.

2(a). You complete the ballot and send it back so it arrives before your state's ballot return deadline.
2(b). Or, if you haven't received your blank ballot 30 days before an election, don't wait any longer; use the emergency Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot to vote.

Overseas voters have a number of options for returning voted ballots:

- Local mail If you have good mail service to the United States, put your ballot in the mail with appropriate international postage.
- U.S. Embassy Pouch/APO/FPO You can drop off your ballot request or voted ballot at the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate for return to the United States, or you can have someone drop it off for you. It must be addressed to your local election officials and have sufficient postage or be in a postage-paid envelope. A postage-paid envelope is available on the FVAP web site. Click here for more information for Ho Chi Minh City and here for more information for Hanoi.
- Fax, Email, or Internet A number of states now allow the electronic return of voted ballots. Consult the Federal Voting Assistance Program’s Voting Assistance Guide for electronic transmission options for your state.
- Express Courier Service If time is short or local mail is unreliable, you can use professional courier services such as FedEx, DHL, or UPS. NOTE: FedEx does not deliver to P.O. boxes.

For more information about overseas voting, visit http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/abroad/legal-matters/benefits/voting.html.
Exciting News! The U.S. Mission to Vietnam has launched an updated public website – making just one place to obtain all information and services for U.S. Citizens traveling to or visiting Vietnam! It’s https://vn.usembassy.gov/. Please note that you may need to update your web browser bookmarks.

Services for U.S. Citizens

Ho Chi Minh City
The Consulate General in Ho Chi Minh City uses a service-by-appointment system. Please visit our Website at: https://vn.usembassy.gov/ to make an appointment to apply for a U.S. passport, a Consular Report of Birth Abroad, and for notary services and authentications.

Those with genuine emergencies, such as the death, arrest, or life threatening illness of a U.S. citizen, can appear on a walk-in basis from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and from 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday (except Vietnamese and American public holidays) or call us any time at (84-8) 3520-4200.

Every day we have a number of no-shows for routine services. If you make an appointment and find you cannot keep it, please log back into the appointment system and cancel the appointment so that the appointment slot will be available to another client. If you are picking up passports or Federal Benefits checks/correspondence you do not need to make an appointment and can walk in for assistance between the hours of 8:30 – 11:30 a.m., Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, excluding Vietnamese and American holidays. If you are submitting additional information related to a Consular Report of Birth Abroad case you can walk in for assistance between the hours of 1:15 – 2:00 p.m., Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, excluding Vietnamese and American holidays.

Hanoi
The U.S. Embassy in Hanoi uses a service-by-appointment system. Please visit our website at https://evisaforms.state.gov/Instructions/ACSSchedulingSystem.asp to make an appointment to apply for a U.S. passport, a Consular Report of Birth Abroad, as well as for notary services.

Those with genuine emergencies, such as the death, arrest, or life threatening illness of a U.S. citizen, can appear on a walk-in basis from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and from 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday (except Vietnamese and American public holidays) or call us any time at (84-4) 3850-5000.

Every day we have a number of no-shows for routine services. If you make an appointment and find you cannot keep it, please log back into the appointment system and cancel the appointment so that the appointment slot will be available to another client.

If you are picking up passports or Federal Benefits checks/correspondence you do not need to make an appointment and can walk in for assistance between the hours of 8:30 – 16:30 p.m., Monday to Thursday, excluding Vietnamese and American holidays. If you are submitting additional information related to a Consular Report of Birth Abroad case you can walk in for assistance between the hours of 1:15 – 2:00 p.m., Monday to Thursday, excluding Vietnamese and American holidays.

ALL APPOINTMENTS ARE FREE (no cost) FOR U.S. CITIZEN SERVICES, including passports, notary services, and Consular Reports of Birth Abroad. The website also has detailed instructions about service costs and required documents/procedures for each service. WE ARE DEDICATED TO FIGHTING FRAUD. If you wish to report fraudulent activity related to any of the Consular services we provide, please contact our Consular Fraud Prevention Unit at HCMCFPU@state.gov for Ho Chi Minh City or HanoiFPU@state.gov for Hanoi.
The U.S. Embassy in Vietnam informs U.S. citizens that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued Travel Guidance for Vietnam regarding the risk of Zika virus infection. Zika virus is endemic. The risk of Zika to travelers, especially pregnant women, in endemic countries is likely lower (but not zero) than in areas where Zika is newly introduced and spreading widely. Women who are pregnant or planning to become pregnant should discuss their travel plans with their medical provider and consider postponing nonessential travel to Vietnam. Men whose partners are pregnant or are considering pregnancy should talk to their medical provider about CDC’s recommendations on how to avoid sexual transmission of Zika infection to their partners.

The CDC has concluded that the Zika virus is a cause of microcephaly and other severe fetal brain defects in some fetuses and babies born to some infected mothers. Zika also rarely may lead to the Guillain-Barré syndrome or other neurological conditions, which can affect individuals of any age or sex.

Zika virus is typically transmitted by the day biting Aedes aegypti mosquito, but there have been confirmed cases of transmission through sexual contact and blood transfusion. CDC reports that travel to elevations higher than 2,000 m (6,500 ft) above sea level is considered to have minimal likelihood for mosquito-borne Zika virus transmission, even within countries reporting active transmission.

For general information and the latest updates about Zika and steps to prevent mosquito bites and sexual exposure to the virus, please visit the CDC website.

For further information:
- See the State Department’s travel website for the Worldwide Caution, Travel Warnings, Travel Alerts, and Vietnam Country Specific Information.
- Enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) to receive security messages and make it easier to locate you in an emergency. Please remember to complete the privacy waiver located in the STEP registration as well; should the need arise, the Embassy can then contact the persons or offices that you designate.
- Contact the U.S. Embassy in Vietnam, located at 7 Lang Ha Street, Hanoi, Vietnam, at (84) (4) 3850 5000 from Vietnam or (+84) (4) 3850 5000 internationally, from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., and from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. After hours emergency telephone (84) (4) 3850 5000/3850 5105 from Vietnam or (+84) 4 3850 5000/3850 5105 internationally
- Contact the U.S. Consulate General in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, located at 4 Le Duan Blvd, District 1, Ho Chi Minh City, at (84) (8) 3520-4200 from Vietnam or (+84) (8) 3520 4200 internationally, from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., and from 1:00p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. After-hours emergency number for U.S. citizens, please call the U.S. Consulate General 24/7 at (08) 3520-4200 within Vietnam, or (011) (84) (8) 3520-4200 internationally
- Call 1-888-407-4747 toll-free in the United States and Canada or 1-202-501-4444 from other countries from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays).
- Follow us on Twitter and Facebook.
The typhoon and severe storm season in Vietnam runs from approximately May through November. Before this year’s season gets underway, we would like to pass along some severe weather preparation tips to U.S. citizens residing or traveling in Vietnam.

During the approach of a typhoon or severe storm U.S. citizens are encouraged to monitor the storm’s path by listening to the radio, watching television, or monitoring the following websites:

- U.S. Joint Typhoon Warning Center
- Vietnam National Center for Hydro-Meteorological Forecasting (Tiếng Việt)
- Tropical Storm Risk

If you are in the path of a typhoon or severe tropical storm, please take the following precautionary measures to ensure minimal disruption or damage. You should also contact friends and family in the United States with updates on your whereabouts.

- Locate shelter and follow all official instructions, including evacuation if ordered.
- Carry your travel documents at all times (i.e., copies of your U.S. passport, birth certificate, picture ID’s, etc.) or secure them in a safe, waterproof location.
- Secure loose outdoor items (limbs, roofing material, windows (coverings), doors, debris (trash), etc.).
- Fill vehicle, generator, and water tanks.
- Check and charge radios.
- Charge cell phones and carry your charger, including portable chargers available for most cell phone models at many convenience stores and electronic shops.
- Have bottled water; make ice.
- Gather flashlights, tools, and first aid supplies.
- Have fresh batteries, candles, matches, water, groceries (canned and/or dry foods), and pet supplies.
- Assure an adequate supply of first aid materials and prescription medications.
- Stay home and let your family and office know how you plan to weather the storm, especially those family members in the United States.

Additional information on natural disasters including hurricanes/typhoons and storm preparedness may be found on the following disaster preparedness websites.

**General Disaster Preparedness Websites**
- U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs [Natural Disasters website] - general information and resources pertaining to natural disasters.
- U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) [Ready website] - general information and resources for emergency preparedness
- [American Red Cross] - Member of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.
Air Quality Monitors in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City

The U.S. Embassy and U.S. Consulate have installed air quality monitors to measure PM 2.5 particulates as an indication of the air quality. You can read more information and check the current reading for Hanoi and for Ho Chi Minh City at: https://vn.usembassy.gov/embassy-consulates/embassy-air-quality-monitor/ for Hanoi, and https://vn.usembassy.gov/embassy-consulates/ho-chi-minh-city/air-quality-monitor/ for Ho Chi Minh City.

For more details on air quality index, please follow the link to the Environmental Protection Agency’s Air Now website. The AQI can be observed either by clicking on the location on the map, or by selecting Hanoi or Ho Chi Minh City in the “Select a City” option on the upper right part of the page. The page provides AQI over the last 24 hour period as well as pollutant concentration and a downloadable historical document.

Please note that citywide analysis cannot be done with data from a single monitor. This data provides an accurate measure of the air quality in the section of each city close to the location of the monitor. The Vietnamese Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment also provides air quality data for Hanoi. You can view this information at http://www.cem.gov.vn/.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has developed a formula to convert PM 2.5 readings into an air quality index (AQI) value that can help inform health-related decisions. Meanings of AQI numerical values can be seen in the chart below. For more information on AQI and how it is

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Air Quality Index Levels of Health Concern</th>
<th>Numerical Value</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>0 to 50</td>
<td>Air quality is considered satisfactory, and air pollution poses little or no risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>51 to 100</td>
<td>Air quality is acceptable; however, for some pollutants there may be a moderate health concern for a very small number of people who are unusually sensitive to air pollution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups</td>
<td>101 to 150</td>
<td>Members of sensitive groups may experience health effects. The general public is not likely to be affected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unhealthy</td>
<td>151 to 200</td>
<td>Everyone may begin to experience health effects; members of sensitive groups may experience more serious health effects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Unhealthy</td>
<td>201 to 300</td>
<td>Health warnings of emergency conditions. The entire population is more likely to be affected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazardous</td>
<td>301 to 500</td>
<td>Health alert: everyone may experience more serious health effects.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For Your Information

Glasses No Longer Accepted in Photos

When you take your next passport or visa photo, be sure to take it *without* your glasses. Starting November 1, 2016, eye glasses will no longer be allowed in U.S. visa and passport photos. For more information, visit the [Nonimmigrant Visa](https://www.state.gov/visa), [Immigrant Visa](https://www.state.gov/immigrant-visa), and [Passport](https://www.state.gov/passport) pages on U.S. Mission Vietnam’s website.

Request for Returned Peace Corps Volunteers

In May 2016 the U.S. Peace Corps and the Government of Vietnam announced a historic partnership to establish a Peace Corps program for the first time in Vietnam. As this partnership moves forward, there may be opportunities to involve Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs - those who have served as Peace Corps Volunteers in other countries in the past) to be included in different events. If you are an RPCV and interested in receiving such invites, please let us know by submitting your contact information [here](https://www.peacecorps.gov/news/library/vietnam-welcome-peace-corps-first-time/). For more about Peace Corps: [https://www.peacecorps.gov](https://www.peacecorps.gov)
Travel Alerts and Warnings

The U.S. Department of State regularly issues travel alerts or travel warnings for various countries and regions. Travel warnings and alerts issued in the last month or so include Haiti, Saudi Arabia and Lebanon, Nigeria, Honduras, DR Congo, North Korea, Ethiopia, Cameroon, Iran, Israel, Eritrea, Turkey, the Bahamas, Jamaica and Haiti.

A Worldwide Caution was released on March 3, 2016 regarding the possible risks for travel due to increased terrorist threats. See the whole caution here.

U.S. citizens are reminded to maintain a high level of vigilance and to take appropriate steps to increase their security awareness.

For information regarding all travel alerts and warnings, please go to this site: http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/alertswarnings.html

Travelling with pets?
The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service launched a new web site to help international travelers determine travel requirements for pets. For more info, please visit the site here.

Contact Us

Hanoi
American Citizen Services
U.S. Embassy in Hanoi
170 Ngoc Khanh, Ba Dinh District
Hanoi, Vietnam

Email: acshanoi@state.gov
Telephone: (84-4) 3850-5000
Fax: (84-4) 3850-5010

Ho Chi Minh City
American Citizen Services
U.S. Consulate General in Ho Chi Minh City
4 Le Duan, District 1
Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

For routine inquiries, submit your question via: https://vn.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/contact-us/
Telephone: (84-8) 3520-4200 (for urgent assistance involving an arrest, death or life threatening illness)
Fax: (84-8) 3520-4244

How to Subscribe/Unsubscribe to this Newsletter

The U.S. Embassy in Hanoi and U.S. Consulate General in Ho Chi Minh City are sending this monthly newsletter via the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) as a public service to U.S. citizens in Vietnam.

If you are departing Vietnam after a long stay, please be sure to update your status in STEP: https://step.state.gov/step/

Updating your status if you move away from Vietnam will remove you from the mailing list for this newsletter and other Embassy and Consulate Messages for U.S. citizens in Vietnam.

If you encounter any difficulties or have any questions about the travel registration website, please send an e-mail to CASTEP@state.gov

Please note: Inclusion of Non-U.S. Government links or information does not imply endorsement of contents.