ACS Newsletter

VIETNAM OCTOBER 2019

The monthly newsletter of the American Citizen Services Units of the U.S. Embassy Hanoi and the U.S. Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City

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Upcoming U.S. Citizens Services Visits

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

Da Nang

Date: Wednesday, 23 October 2019 (Thứ Tư, ngày 23 tháng 10 năm 2019)
Time: from 09:00am to 12:00pm (từ 09:00 giờ sáng đến 12:00 giờ trưa).
Place: Sheraton Grand Danang Resort
Address: 35 Truong Sa, Hoa Hai Ward, Ngu Hanh Son District, Da Nang City)

Nghe An:

Date: Wednesday, 6 November 2019 (Thứ Tư, ngày 06 tháng 11
Place: Lobby, Vinpearl Discovery Cua Hoi, Binh Minh Road, Nghi Hai Ward, Cua Lo Commune, Nghe An Province (Sảnh lễ tân,khách sạn Vinpearl Discovery Cửa Hội, đường Bình Minh, phường Nghi Hải, thị xã Cửa Lò, tỉnh Nghệ An).
Time: from 3:00pm to 4:30pm (từ 3:00 giờ chiều đến 4:30 giờ chiều).

Ha Tinh:

Date: Thursday, 7 November 2019 (Thứ Năm, ngày 07 tháng 11 năm 2019)
Place: Lobby, Vinpearl Hotel Ha Tinh, Ham Nghi-Ha Huy Tap, Ha Tinh City, Ha Tinh Province (Ngã tư Hàm Nghi - Hà Huy Tập
Thành phố Hà Tĩnh, Tỉnh Hà Tĩnh).
Time: from 2:00pm to 3:00pm (từ 2:00 giờ chiều đến 3:00 giờ chiều).

No appointments are necessary. Consulate officials will offer notarial services, 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/

Please check our website for more information as it becomes available.

Upcoming Holiday Closures

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

Monday, 14 October: Columbus Day+
Monday, 11 November: Veterans Day +
Thursday, 28 November: Thanksgiving Day+
*Vietnamese Holiday +American Holiday

A complete list of all of our holiday closings for 2019 is available on-line at **https://vn.usembassy.gov/consular-calendar**

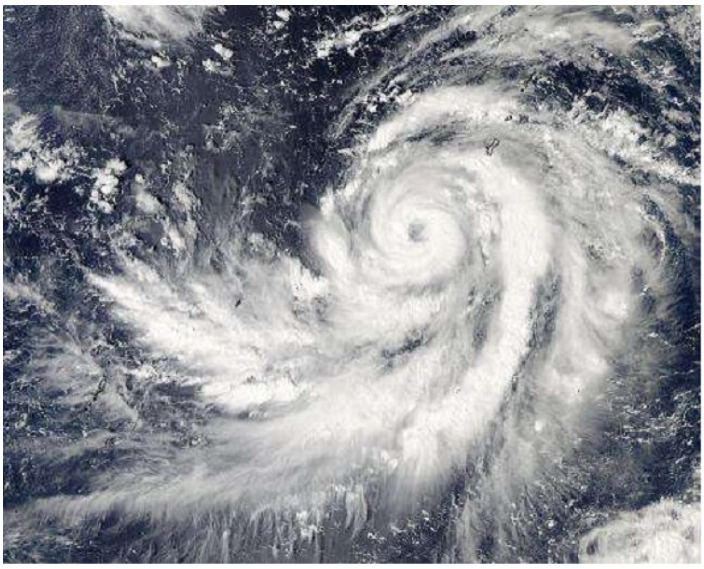
The U.S. Embassy Hanoi Consular Section will be closed for routine services October 7-17, 2019, due to renovations.

During this period, the American Citizen Services Unit will only provide life and death emergency services. Routine services, such as passport renewals, reports of birth abroad, and notarials are **not** considered emergencies and will be processed by appointment only starting on October 18, 2019 . If you have a life and death emergency, please call (024) 3850-5000 within Vietnam or (011) (84-24) 3850-5000 from the U.S. For additional information, please contact us.

This newsletter is also available on the U.S. Embassy & Consulate's website at: https://vn.usembassy.gov/

Please pass this newsletter on to any other U.S. citizens in Vietnam and encourage them to enroll in STEP (https://step.state.gov/step/) to receive the newsletters in the future.

Typhoon Season 2019



Typhoon season is coming! If you are a U.S. Citizen traveling or residing in Vietnam, you may enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) to receive safety messages and other travel information. During the approach of a typhoon you should monitor the U.S. Joint Typhoon Warning Center and the Vietnam National Center for Hydro-Meteorological Forecasting (English or Tiếng Việt).

You should also have an emergency plan in place before the approach of a typhoon, as even areas far from the coastline can experience dangerous winds, tornadoes, mudslides, and floods. Please consider the follow-ing precautionary measures prior to the advance of a typhoon:

•Locate shelter in your area and follow all official instructions from local authorities, 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 up your 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.

•Pack an adequate supply of first-aid materials and prescription medications.

•Let your family and office know how you plan to weather the storm, especially those family members in the United States. Keep them updated regarding your location and well-being.

For more information on how to prepare for typhoons and other natural disasters, please visit the State Department's Natural Disaster webpage. Please also check the State Department's Worldwide Caution webpage for Travel Warnings, Travel Alerts, and Vietnam Country Specific Information.

Services for U.S. Citizens

The American Citizen Services (ACS) Units of the U.S. Embassy in Hanoi and the Consulate General in Ho Chi Minh City use a service-by-appointment system. Please visit our website at: https://vn.usembassy.gov/acs 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 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday to Friday (except holidays) or call us any time at (84-24) 3850-5000 (Hanoi) and (84-28) 3520-4200 (Ho Chi Minh City).

Every day we have a number of no-shows for routine services. If you make an appointment for passport or notarial services 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 forgot your appointment password, please contact us at: vn.usembassy.gov/acs-contact. If you have a CRBA appointment and find you cannot keep it, please send an email to: HanoiCRBAAppt@state.gov to request cancelation and rescheduling.

If you are only picking up passports, you do not need to make an appointment and can walk in for assistance between the hours listed below:

- **U.S. Embassy in Hanoi:** From 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday (except holidays)
- **U.S. Consulate General in Ho Chi Minh City:** From 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., Wednesday only (except holidays)

If you are submitting additional information related to a Consular Report of Birth Abroad case, please send an email to HanoiCRBAAppt@state.gov with the subject line: "The additional required documentation – [NAME OF YOUR CHILD]", we will then set up a date for you to come in the Consulate for a review of your additional documents. Each child will need a separate appointment.

If you have questions or issues while in Vietnam, you may use our online form here without having to schedule an appointment for entry into our office. Our office will respond to your inquiries as soon as possible. You may want to visit the Department of State's travel website for more information on **entry, exit, and foreign visa requirements**.

Services for U.S. Citizens (Cont.)

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.

ATTENTION:

Do not bring laptop computers, IPads, tablets, and other large electronic devices to the U.S. Embassy or Consulate. You may not enter the building with these devices. **You also may not leave these devices at the security checkpoint.**

You are not allowed to enter the U.S. Embassy or Consulate while carrying any of the following battery-operated or electronic devices such as:

- Mobile phones
- Digital watches
- Compact Cameras
- Audio recorders
- Portable music players

Please note that these small electronic devices will be kept at the security checkpoint when you enter the U.S. Embassy/Consulate building, and returned to you when your business is completed.

Large shoulder bags or purses, travel bags, backpacks, briefcases, and suitcases are considered prohibited items and therefore NOT allowed inside the Embassy/Consulate premises. The limit size for bags is: 35 cm (height) x 20 cm (width) x 40 cm (length). Unfortunately, if your bag is bigger than the size limit, you will not be allowed to bring it into the U.S. Embassy or Consulate. Please plan accordingly! Bring a small bag that can be carried by hand to store your personal belongings.

Please visit: http://bit.ly/no-items for more information regarding which items you are also prohibited from bringing into the Embassy or Consulate.

Decree No. 143/2018/ND-CP on compulsory social insurance for foreign employees in Vietnam came into effect from December 1, 2018. The full volume in English can be found from the official website of the Ministry of Labor – Invalids and Social Affairs: http://english.molisa.gov.vn/Pages/Document/Detail.aspx?Id=37228

Please Note: *The issuance of work permits in Vietnam falls solely under the purview of the Ministry of Labor – Invalids and Social Affairs. Therefore, you should contact the office of your respective provincial Department of Labor –Invalids and Social Affairs for official guidance in case you need further assistance.*

Some helpful links regarding Decree No. 143/2018/ND-CP:

https://www.vantageasia.com/work-permit-foreigners-vietnam/

https://www.amchamvietnam.com/foreign-staff-increase-forces-insurance-change/

Some of the provincial Department of Labor – Invalids and Social Affairs offices' websites:

Hanoi: http://solaodong.hanoi.gov.vn/

Da Nang: https://ldtbxh.danang.gov.vn/

Ho Chi Minh City: http://www.sldtbxh.hochiminhcity.gov.vn/

Electronic Payments

—International Direct Deposit

International Direct Deposit (IDD) for U.S. federal benefit payments is now available in Vietnam. With this method, your U.S. Social Security payments will be sent electronically to your Vietnam bank account. It will usually be in your account shortly after the regular payment date. This is the safest way of receiving your benefits.

The U.S. Treasury Department can make payments to almost all banks within the country. SSA does not have a list of host-country banks. In the rare event that a bank is not listed, SSA office will notify the client who will need to open an account at another bank.

It is important to note that the U.S. Treasury Department can only make payments in Vietnamese Dong. Therefore, please ensure that the payment account is in Vietnamese Dong and not U.S. Dollars. If your address changes, you must inform the Social Security Administration (If you return to live in the U.S., IDD will cease.)

To start the IDD enrollment process, complete form SF-1199 for Vietnam. Scan and email the completed form to: FBU.Manila@ssa.gov

If you have any question, Please send an email to FBU.Manila@ssa.gov or call (632) 301-2000 extension 9 which is open to the public from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., on Tuesdays and Thursdays, except on Philippines holidays.

Effective **October 6, 2019**, the telephone and fax numbers for FBU Manila will be as follows:

Telephone General Inquiry Line: 632-5301-2000 option 9 (Open to public from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays, except on Philippine and U.S. Holidays)

Fax Numbers: 632-8708-9723

DIRECT DEPOSIT SIGN-UP FORM (VIETNAM)

APPLICATION FOR PAYMENT OF UNITED STATES SOCIAL SECURITY MONTHLY BENEFITS BY DIRECT DEPOSIT

- Complete Section 1 and **"SIGN YOUR NAME"**
- Ask your bank to complete Section 3
- Mail completed form back using address in Section 2

SECTION 1 (TO BE COMPLETED BY PAYEE)

Name and Complete Mailing Address:	**SOCIAL SECURITY CLAIM NUMBER**	**B.I.C. (OPTIONAL)**
	Name of Person Entitled to the Benefits	
Telephone Number:	THIS BOX IS FOR ALLOTMENT OF PAYMENT ONLY (if applicable)	
	Type	Amount

PAYEE CERTIFICATION
I (beneficiary or representative payee) certify that I have read and understand the back of this form. In signing this form, I authorize the Social Security Administration to send this payment to the financial institution indicated in Section 3 and deposit it in the designated account. I understand that personal information in these payments is confidential, but I consent to disclosure of payment information compelled by law or necessary to protect against fraud or crime.

JOINT ACCOUNT HOLDER'S CERTIFICATION (optional)
I certify that I have read and understand the back of this form, including the SPECIAL NOTICE TO JOINT ACCOUNT HOLDERS.

Your Signature	Date	Joint Account Holder's Signature	Date

Are you the Representative Payee? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Beneficiary Date of Birth

This account is: ☐ My own account ☐ A joint account

SECTION 2 (MAILING ADDRESS)

GOVERNMENT AGENCY NAME:

SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

MAIL COMPLETED FORMS TO:
Federal Benefits Unit
U. S. Embassy
1201 Roxas Boulevard
Ermita, Manila 0930
Philippines

SECTION 3 (TO BE COMPLETED BY YOUR FINANCIAL INSTITUTION)
THIS ACCOUNT MUST BE IN VIETNAMESE DONG

NAME OF BANK	BANK PHONE NUMBER
ADDRESS OF BANK	
PRINT NAME OF BANK OFFICIAL	SIGNATURE OF BANK OFFICIAL

Type of Depositor Account ☐ Checking ☐ Savings

Account Number **CITAD Number**

IMPORTANT INFORMATION - PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

The Information you give on this form is confidential. We need the information to send your U.S. Social Security payments electronically to your **Vietnam** bank account.

WHEN YOU WILL RECEIVE YOUR DIRECT DEPOSIT PAYMENTS

You will receive your payment through the **Vietnam** banking system and will usually be in your bank account shortly after the regular payment date. With direct deposit, you will have immediate access to your money. This is the safest way of receiving your benefits.

INFORMATION ABOUT CURRENCY CONVERSION:

With direct deposit, your U.S. Social Security payment is automatically converted to **Vietnamese Dong** (if applicable) at the daily international exchange rate before being deposited to your account.

SPECIAL NOTICE TO JOINT ACCOUNT HOLDERS

If you have a joint account with a person who receives Social Security payments, and that person dies, you must immediately contact your bank and the Social Security Administration or the Federal Benefits Unit in your area. You must return to Social Security any payments deposited into a joint account after the death of a beneficiary.

IF YOUR ADDRESS CHANGES:

If your address changes, you **must** inform the Federal Benefits Unit or the Social Security Administration. Your payments may stop if the Social Security Administration needs to contact you and cannot find your location.

CHANGING BANKS OR BANK ACCOUNTS:

If you change your bank or your account, you must notify one of the following offices:

Federal Benefits Unit U. S. Embassy 1201 Roxas Boulevard Ermita, Manila 0930 Philippines	Social Security Administration Office of Earnings and International Operations Division Of International Operations PO Box 17769 Baltimore, MD 21235-7769 USA

You may need to fill out a new Direct Deposit sign-up form.

Do not close your old account until payments have started coming to your new account.

Privacy Act Statement
Collection and Use of Personal Information

Section 205(a) of the Social Security Act, as amended, allows us to collect this information. Furnishing us this information is voluntary. However, failing to provide all or part of the information may prevent you from receiving benefit payments through foreign financial institutions.

We will use the information you provide to process benefit payments with your financial institution. We may also share your information for the following purposes, called routine uses:

- To the Department of State and its agents for administering the Act in foreign countries through facilities and services of that agency; and
- To third party contacts where necessary to establish or verify information provided by representative payees or payee applicants.

In addition, we may share this information in accordance with the Privacy Act and other Federal laws. For example, where authorized, we may use and disclose this information in computer matching programs, in which our records are compared with other records to establish or verify a person's eligibility for Federal benefit programs and for repayment of incorrect or delinquent debts under these programs.

A list of additional routine uses is available in our Privacy Act System of Records Notices (SORN) 60-0089, entitled Claims Folders Systems, as published in the Federal Register (FR) on April 1, 2004, at 68 FR 15784 and 60-0090, entitled Master Beneficiary Record, as published in the FR on January 11, 2006, at 71 FR 1826. Additional information and a full listing of all our SORNs are available on our website at https://www.ssa.gov/privacy.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement

This information collection meets the requirements of 44 U.S.C. § 3507, as amended by section 2 of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995. You do not need to answer these questions unless we display a valid Office of Management and Budget control number. We estimate that it will take about 5 minutes to read the instructions, gather the facts, and answer the questions. **SEND OR BRING THE COMPLETED FORM TO YOUR LOCAL SOCIAL SECURITY OFFICE. You can find your local Social Security office through SSA's website at** www.socialsecurity.gov**. Offices are also listed under U. S. Government agencies in your telephone directory or you may call Social Security at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778).** *You may send comments on our time estimate above to: SSA, 6401 Security Blvd, Baltimore, MD 21235-6401.* ***Send only comments relating to our time estimate to this address, not the completed form.***

HỘ CHIẾU ĐẦU TIÊN CHO NGƯỜI LỚN

First Time Adult Passport Applicants

Những gì cần có khi nộp đơn xin hộ chiếu:

Chứng minh là công dân Mỹ, ví dụ giấy khai sinh của Mỹ.
Thẻ căn cước có ảnh do chính quyền cấp.
Người nộp đơn phải có mặt, trừ khi hội đủ điều kiện gia hạn hộ chiếu qua thư gửi bằng đường bưu điện.
Một ảnh màu cỡ 2”x2”.
Mẫu đơn xin hộ chiếu DS-11.
Lệ phí xin hộ chiếu.

Muốn biết thêm thông tin
Xin truy cập trang:
https://vn.usembassy.gov/firstpassport2

(Tiếng Việt và Tiếng Anh)

Hoặc trang:

travel.state.gov/passports (Tiếng Anh)

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-consulate/embassy/air-quality-monitor/ and https://vn.usembassy.gov/embassy-consulate/ho-chi-minh-city/air-quality-monitor/

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 calculated, please click here.

Air Quality Index Levels of Health Concern	Numerical Value	Meaning
Good	0 to 50	Air quality is considered satisfactory, and air pollution poses little or no risk
Moderate	51 to 100	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.
Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	101 to 150	Members of sensitive groups may experience health effects. The general public is not likely to be affected.
Unhealthy	151 to 200	Everyone may begin to experience health effects; members of sensitive groups may experience more serious health effects.
Very Unhealthy	201 to 300	Health warnings of emergency conditions. The entire population is more likely to be affected.
Hazardous	301 to 500	Health alert: everyone may experience more serious health effects.

Travel Alerts and Warnings

The U.S. Department of State has recently updated travel alerts and warnings for various countries and regions. Please review for the most recent specific information on the country conditions for Vietnam by following this link: https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages/Vietnam.html

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

U.S. Embassy Hanoi and U.S. Consulate General, Ho Chi Minh City wish to take this opportunity to remind American citizens in Vietnam that protests can happen spontaneously and quickly turn violent. It is recommended citizens do the following:

- Avoid the areas of the demonstrations.
- Exercise caution if unexpectedly in the vicinity of large gatherings or protests.
- Monitor local media for updates.
- Keep a low profile.
- Visit Vietnam Country Information.
- Enroll in Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) to receive security updates.
- Follow us on Facebook.

TRAVELLING WITH PETS?

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

Miscellaneous

Voting office hours

What's the first step to vote as an overseas U.S. citizen?

In anticipation of the 2020 U.S. elections, the American Citizen Services unit is ready to answer any question regarding the electoral process. Our purpose is to inform and educate you about your voting rights.

Walk-ins

October 16, 23, 30 from 8:30am to 11am

November 6, 13, 20, 27 from 8:30 am to 11am

December 4, 11, 18 from 8:30am to 11am

Address: 4 Lê Duẩn, Bến Nghé, Quận 1, Hồ Chí Minh City, Vietnam , ACS unit

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

Have an ACS experience to share? Share your story with:

ACShanoi@state.gov

Enroll in STEP to receive security and emergency messag-es from the U.S. Consulate.