

7 FAM 140

CONSULAR VISITS IN WELFARE AND WHEREABOUTS CASES

(CT:CON-101; 02-10-2005)
(Office of Origin: CA/OCS/PRI)

7 FAM 141 SUMMARY

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- a. A consular check concerning the welfare and whereabouts of a U.S. citizen or national abroad usually focuses on the “whereabouts” issue. When the family knows where the person is located, but has concerns for the individual’s welfare, there are a variety of options available to the consular officer to accomplish this task. Consular officers are not professional social workers, even if individual officers have background in that field. We cannot compel a person to permit a consular officer to observe a citizen or national, inspect the household, etc. Nevertheless, there are cases where it is imperative that the consular officer act quickly. This frequently requires close coordination with the host government. CA/OCS is available to assist you 24/7 in critical cases.
- b. You may:
 - (1) Telephone the citizen/national who is the subject of the inquiry;
 - (2) Arrange for a visit to the person’s home;
 - (3) Invite the person to come to the embassy or consulate to discuss his or her situation;
 - (4) Visit the individual personally; and
 - (5) Arrange for local authorities to visit the person.
- c. If the person is located far away from the embassy or consulate, it may not be possible for you to visit the individual personally for some time. You may wish to:
 - (1) Arrange for local authorities to visit the person;
 - (2) Arrange for a visit by a member of the local American

community, such as a warden. See 7 FAM 010 - 090 regarding limitations on the use of volunteers; and

- (3) Arrange for a visit from a nearby representative of consulate of a friendly nation.
- d. See 7 FAM 300 for guidance about medical cases, including cases involving mental illness.
- e. Exercise “active listening” skills in conversations with the citizen/national. See CA/OCS Intranet page welfare and whereabouts feature for background reference material.
- f. Consult CA/OCS/ACS for assistance or guidance.

7 FAM 143 REPORTING ON WELFARE VISITS

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- a. Reports on welfare and whereabouts visits are accounts by a Foreign Service post to the Department of State. The reporting cable or email should not be routinely released to inquirers, even the person who initiated the request. The information is subject to the Privacy Act and Freedom of Information Act. (See 7 FAM 010-090.)
- b. The consular report of the visit should include a factual account of what occurred. Consider the following points in writing your report:
 - (1) Who visited the citizen;
 - (2) What were the conditions of the interaction – phone, in person, through a third party;
 - (3) When did it occur;
 - (4) Where did it occur;
 - (5) What did you observe;
 - (6) What was the person’s demeanor;
 - (7) What did the person say about his or her situation;
 - (8) What are your concerns (if any) for the citizen/national’s welfare; and
 - (9) What are your recommendations or questions?

7 FAM 144 THROUGH 149 UNASSIGNED