

**CONSULAR NEWS
SENEGAL & GUINEA BISSAU**

**U.S. Embassy Dakar, Senegal
August 2007**

August Frequently Asked Question

Q. I want to get married in Senegal. What does the embassy need to do to make it a valid marriage?

A. The validity of marriages performed abroad is not dependent upon the presence of an American diplomatic or consular officer, but upon adherence to the laws of the country where the marriage is performed. In general, Senegalese marriages which are legally performed by civil officials are valid in both Senegal and the United States. Specific inquiries regarding the validity of a Senegalese marriage should be directed to the attorney general of the state in the United States where the parties to the marriage live.

Documents required to get married include:

- One copy of both the bride and groom's birth certificate issued within three months bearing the words "issued in anticipation of marriage." Americans, who cannot obtain a copy of their birth certificate locally, can obtain an "Attestation de certificat de naissance" (a notarized statement made by the applicant) from the U.S. Embassy consular section for \$30 (or the equivalent in CFA).
 - One form of identification and copy for both the bride and groom. Valid identification includes a passport, a driver's license, or an identity card.
 - One witness for each the bride and groom, and a copy of their identification documents.
- Publication of the banns for fifteen days (the local authorities post it on a bulletin board located at the City Hall).

Applications for marriage and the publication of the banns are normally done at "La Mairie," or Town Hall. The actual marriage ceremony can be held anywhere, with most civil ceremonies performed at the l'Hotel de Ville. Prospective couples should apply and post their banns a minimum of fifteen days before the intended ceremony.

If you get married in Senegal and would like to take your new spouse to live in the U.S. with you, please visit our website for information on filing an I-130 petition, which will start the process towards an immigrant visa. http://dakar.usembassy.gov/immigrant_visas.html

Hours for American Citizen Services

As you may know, the Consular Section is understaffed this summer due to a number of circumstances beyond our control. Consequently, we are temporarily reducing our walk-in hours. Effective August 1, we are open for routine American Citizen Services on Tuesday and Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. We plan to return to our regular hours in October, and we sincerely regret any inconvenience this may cause.

When you arrive at the embassy, please show your U.S. passport or proof of American citizenship to the guard and go directly to the Consular Receptionist window. You do not have to wait in line with visa applicants. For better service, please email questions regarding visas to consulardakar@state.gov. We are unable to answer visa-related questions during ACS hours.

Emergency American citizen services are available during U.S. Embassy normal working hours which are Monday through Thursday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. For an after-hours emergency involving an American citizen, please call 383-9566. We are also available by e-mail at consulardakar@state.gov.

Warden for Guinea-Bissau

We are looking for a new warden for Guinea-Bissau. Consular wardens serve on a voluntary basis to assist the consular section in communicating with private American citizens in their warden zone. The warden's role is to help distribute warden messages when email is not accessible, particularly in an emergency. As a result, it is important that consular wardens have reliable communications and the time to call or fax warden messages to the American citizens in their warden zones. While wardens are not employees or staff of the U.S. Embassy, they provide a valuable service to the embassy and to American citizens in Senegal and Guinea-Bissau. If you live in Guinea-Bissau and are interested in more information about becoming a warden, please email consulardakar@state.gov.

Changes to fee collection for Non-Immigrant Visa applicants

The United States Embassy is pleased to announce that effective immediately, ECOBANK will collect the nonimmigrant visa processing fee of \$100. Visa applicants will now enjoy the convenience of paying their visa processing fees at many locations in Senegal. Ecobank will sell the receipts at the following Ecobank branch locations:

Dakar

- Head Office Branch
- Bourguiba Branch
- Tilène Branch
- Touba Sandaga Branch
- Parcelles Assainies Branch
- Thiaroye Branch
- VDN
- HLM
- Pikine

Touba

- Touba Main Branch
- Touba Gouye Mbinde

Kaolack

- Kaolack Main Branch

There is no refund of the fee even if the visa is denied.

The receipt cannot be reissued in case of loss or theft.

The fee receipts are transferable, and the person who buys the receipt need not be the person who applies for the visa.

All fee receipts are valid for one year from the date of payment as shown on the receipt, including receipts previously purchased at Chèques Postaux, rue Abdoulaye Marie Parsine.

For more information about nonimmigrant visas to the United States, please visit <http://travel.state.gov>. For specific information about applying for a visa at the U.S. Embassy in Dakar, please visit <http://dakar.usembassy.gov>. You may also e-mail the consular section at ConsularDakar@state.gov.

Crime Watch

Now that the rainy season has begun, we would like to remind Americans to keep their windows and doors locked to their homes. As the temperatures rise, it becomes more tempting to leave doors open at night. Unfortunately, this is also an invitation for burglars.

On Saturday July 7 at approximately 8:00 pm three Americans were driving in an unlocked truck on the Airport Road near Virage beach. Traffic was moving very slowly and there were many people in the area on foot leaving the beach area. One young man opened the door to the back seat and grabbed an American woman's arm, as if reaching for a purse. When he realized that she did not have a purse in her hand, he ran off. This is similar to an incident that involved another American on June 23 in the same area that was reported in the July Consular News. Please remember to lock your car doors at all times.

On Sunday July 8 at around 2:15 am two American women took a cab to the Mermoz mosque area after returning from Just4U. Because their houses are most accessible from a walking path too narrow for a taxicab, the women got out at the mosque and proceeded to walk the short distance to their houses. The young women noticed a young man walking behind them on the path. In order to let him pass, the two women stepped to the side of the path. As the man passed them, he grabbed one of the women's purses and ran back in the other direction. The contents of the purse were a driver's license, copy of her passport, a credit card and approximately 30,000-40,000 F CFA.

There was an armed robbery attempt at an American family's home in the village of Tonguia (department of Velingara) on Sunday morning June 24 at about 01:45. The American woke up and noticed a flashlight shining in his yard, and shone his own flashlight out to see who was there. He was not able to see anyone clearly. The family dog that was tied in the yard started barking, and woke the rest of the family. At about that time, men were heard running up the back hill in their yard. The men (possibly 4) then came back to the house and fired what was

apparently a small caliber pistol by a bedroom window. The American started yelling to scare off the attackers. The men tried to enter the house by a side door, which they were not able to force open. The American continued to yell for help, and succeeded in waking the others, including some of the villagers, who came running to help, but by that time the men had gone. A short time later, at least two shots were heard coming from the direction of the village rice fields. The gendarmes were called, and came within a short time. They believe that the men were probably bandits, and that they may have come to the village on bicycles. They felt that the shots were fired in an attempt to warn the villagers not to follow them as they left. There were no injuries, and nothing was taken in the attempt.

Have You Left Senegal or Guinea-Bissau?

If you have left Senegal or Guinea-Bissau, please e-mail us at consulardakar@state.gov so we can remove your name from the warden registration database. If you would like to remain on the newsletter mailing list, please let us know in your e-mail.