



Embassy of the United States of America

Maputo · Mozambique



American Citizens e-Newsletter May 2008

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ConsularMaputo@state.gov
maputo.usembassy.gov

American Citizen Services:
Monday, Wednesday & Friday
9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

In the event of an emergency
involving an American citizen,
please call +258 21 49 0723

U.S. MISSION TO MOZAMBIQUE NEWSLETTER

The U.S. Mission to Mozambique now publishes a monthly newsletter, *Estamos Juntos*. The newsletter, mostly in Portuguese, features articles focusing on what the U.S. government does in Mozambique. It is 4-pages long and filled with stories from all U.S. Mission sections/agencies and includes photos. To subscribe, write to EstamosJuntos@state.gov.

EMBASSY CLOSURES

The U.S. Embassy will be closed Thursday, May 1st (Mozambican Worker's Day) and Monday, May 26th (U.S. Memorial Day).

The Consular Section will be closed Thursday, May 29 for internal meetings.

RENEWING PASSPORTS AHEAD OF THE RUSH

U.S. citizens planning to travel in the next few months are strongly encouraged to check their passports (and those of their family members) to confirm they have not expired and you have plenty of blank pages. Don't let a long-awaited and well-deserved vacation become a nightmare because of an expired passport or a lack of blank pages. If your passport is nearing its expiration date or you need additional pages, you should begin the process of applying now in order to beat the rush.

Passports take a minimum of 7-10 business days to process and extra pages can be added while you wait. IN some cases passports and extra pages may be applied for by mail. Please contact the Consular Section at consularmaputo@state.gov to find out if you can apply by mail. For those who will visit the Consular Section in person, non-emergency American citizen service hours are 9-11 a.m. Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

HOW TO IDENTIFY EMAIL FROM A GOVERNMENT ADDRESS

Recently, you may have received an email from the U.S. Embassy's American Citizens Services (ACS), requesting verification of your contact details. The U.S. Embassy's ACS section is updating its registration records so we can better respond in an emergency. Given the proliferation of fraudulent email seeking personal information for a malicious purpose, we received a number of inquiries as to whether the email was genuine. Generally, official correspondence from a U.S.

Government office will have a ".gov" email address. Emails from the U.S. Embassy's consular section will have an "@state.gov" address. If you are unsure whether an email purportedly from the U.S. Embassy is genuine, please contact us at:

consularmaputo@state.gov
or +258 21 49 2797 x3436.

SOCIAL SECURITY AND YOU

The U.S. Social Security program provides insurance against the loss of income due to retirement, death, or disability. The U.S. system is relatively new compared to many national pension systems.

The Social Security system was created in 1935 and has since undergone many changes. Significant events in history have shaped it; such as population shifts from the countryside into big cities, longer life expectancy and the steady decline in the practice of extended families. The increasing number of workers spending their careers in more than one country also has had an impact.

To be eligible for Social Security benefits, a worker generally has to work at least 10 years in the U.S. However, social security agencies from around the world have recognized that there are a growing number of workers who have spent their careers working in more than one country. Thus, many of these workers have found that they do not qualify for benefits under the normal rules. For this group of workers, social security agencies have entered into "totalization agreements" whereby each country can use another country's work record to qualify the worker for benefits from one or both countries. For a list of countries that have an agreement with the U.S., please go to <http://www.ssa.gov/international/status.html>.

For workers who fall under a totalization agreement, only 1.5 years of work in the U.S. is needed to qualify for benefits. In addition, the worker's spouse and young children, under certain conditions, may also qualify for benefits. The worker and/or dependents do not have to be U.S. citizens to qualify for benefits.

EXTENSIONS TO FILE WITH THE IRS & FOREIGN BANK ACCOUNTS

Extensions to File

Taxpayers generally must file a 2007 tax return by April 15, 2008. U.S. citizens and residents with tax homes outside of the U.S. on April 15, 2008, however, are automatically granted a two-month extension to June 16, 2008, to file a tax return. However, any tax due must still be paid by April 15, 2008, to avoid being charged penalties and interest.

To file a later return, taxpayers may request a filing extension to October 15, 2008, by filing Form 4868 before the normal return due date. Those taxpayers living abroad who need an extension to qualify for the bona fide residence test or physical presence test in order to be eligible for a foreign-earned income exclusion on Form 2555, however, should request a filing extension using Form 2350 by the normal due date of their return. With either extension, any tax due still must be paid by April 15, 2008, to avoid being charged interest and penalties.

Foreign Bank Accounts

American citizens and residents with a financial interest in, or signatory or other authority over, any foreign financial accounts, including bank, securities, and other types of accounts, which exceed \$10,000 at any time during a calendar year, must file Form TD F 90-22.1 with the Department of the Treasury before June 30 of the following year. Such interests should also be indicated in Part III of Schedule B of Form 1040.

A TD F 90-22.1 does not need to be filed, however, if assets are with a U.S. military banking facility operated by a U.S. financial institution or if the combined value of assets in any and all accounts is \$10,000 or less during the year.

TD F 90-22.1 should be sent (separately from any tax return) to the following U.S. address:

U.S. Department of the Treasury
P.O. Box 32621
Detroit, MI 48232-0621
USA