

U.S. EMBASSY, ACCRA, AMERICAN CITIZEN SERVICES

December 2010

Welcome to the December newsletter! This monthly newsletter provides information of interest to U.S. citizens residing in Ghana.

Here are this month's topics:

New Topics:

- Holiday Travel Tips
- Visas required for U.S. Citizens visiting Ghana
- Notarized Consent for Passport Services for Minors Under 16

Continuing Topics of Interest:

- Department of State Travel Safety Notices and Updates
- Upcoming Closures
- Subscribing/Unsubscribing

HOLIDAY TRAVEL TIPS

For those planning holiday travel, we offer a few tips to make your holiday travel smoother:

- Please carefully review the validity of your current U.S. passport. Many governments require US travelers to have at least 6 months validity left in their passports for entry into their countries. Regular passports are processed in Washington and are usually received within 10-20 calendar days after the application is submitted to the US Consulate. More information about the passport renewal process can be found at http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html
- Check the visa requirements for your destination: Check our Country Specific Information Sheets to learn the Entry and Exit Requirements for your destination. These information sheets are available online at <http://travel.state.gov/>
- Online Registration; if you are traveling abroad, register your trip online with Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) at: http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/registration/registration_4789.html. The registration information is used to communicate with US citizens and assist them in case of an emergency. The registration site provides up-to-date travel information with country specific alerts and updates. The information citizens provide is secured behind Department of State firewalls, accessed only by cleared personnel in Embassies, Consulates, and the Department of State, and releasable only with the US Citizen's permission under the provisions of the Privacy Act.

You can find information about International Travel at the Department of State website at <http://travel.state.gov/>.

Ghana Visa Requirements

A reminder for all U.S. citizen visitors to Ghana: The Government of Ghana requires all visitors to secure a visa prior to arrival. Travelers without a valid Ghanaian visa may be denied entry to Ghana and/or have their passports confiscated by the immigration authorities at the airport pending the payment of visa fees or related immigration fines.

With the exception of ECOWAS Countries, all visitors traveling into Ghana are required to have valid visas in their passports before proceeding. There are no airport visas on arrival.

For further information about the Ghana visa application process, please visit: <http://www.ghanaembassy.org/index.php?page=visas>

Notarized Parental Consent for Passport Services for Minors Under 16

U.S. law requires both parents' consent to passport services applications for minors under 16. This consent is normally established by both parents signing the application in front of a U.S. Consular officer. Note that both parents must prove their parentage and custodial status when granting their consent every time a U.S. citizen child under age 16 applies for passport services.

Parentage status may be established with an original or certified copy of the child's birth certificate listing both parents' full names. Custodial status may be proven by an original or certified copy of a court order.

U.S. citizens under age 16 applying for passports must appear in person at American Citizens Services. This requirement does not apply to requests for adding visa pages or other amendments to current U.S. passports.

When only one parent is available to execute the application, that parent must provide, under penalty of perjury, documentary evidence demonstrating that he or she has sole legal custody of the child or has the written consent of the other parent to the passport issuance. Effective November 1, 2004, written consent must be notarized and provide unequivocal consent to passport issuance.

TRAVEL SAFETY UPDATES

The Department of State has issued no travel alerts or travel warnings for Ghana at this time.

To view travel warnings or travel alerts in effect for other countries in the region, please visit: <http://travel.state.gov/>

Upcoming Holidays

The U.S. Embassy in Accra will be closed on the following holidays:

December 24 Christmas Day

December 27 Boxing Day

January 3 New Year's Day

January 17 M.L. King's Birthday

February 21 Presidents' Day

March 7 Ghana Independence Day

Subscribing/Unsubscribing

Anyone who wishes to sign up to receive this quarterly ACS email newsletter may do so by sending an email request to acsaccra@state.gov.

To unsubscribe, you may also send your request to acsaccra@state.gov.

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