

U.S. EMBASSY – MANILA

American Citizen Services

September 2005

Greetings from New Consul General

I arrived in Manila August 7, following in the footsteps of David Donahue. I come from being the Principal Officer in Chennai, India for three years. My wife, May, and I have two children, a grown son Andrew in the U.S. and a daughter Cecilia in her senior year at the International School of Manila. My family and I have served several times each in India and China, as well as in the U.S. where, at various times, I dealt with American Citizens Services, as well as diplomatic relations with India, East Timor and Indonesia.

I look forward to serving the American community in the years ahead. I will do my best to travel as early and often as possible to learn more of conditions in the Philippines and make myself available to learn your concerns. As you well know there are special, close ties between the United States and the Philippines. The American community here is essential for nurturing that special relationship that contributes so much to both nations. We at the Embassy are aware that it is the Americans in our community who are the front-line diplomats here.

The welfare of Americans abroad is one of the highest priorities of our Embassy. The Embassy's American Citizens Services office exists to serve you. Over the next few years, my goal will be to do all I can to support and improve that service.

Richard D. Haynes – Consul General

American Citizen Services

New ACS Deputy Chief

Linda Daetwyler took over as Deputy Chief of American Citizen Services in early August. Linda has served in Jamaica, Germany and Austria. Prior to joining the Foreign Service Linda worked as an educator and foreign student advisor. As the new coordinator of the Embassy's warden program, Linda looks forward to meeting all of you in the upcoming months.

New ACS Newsletter Editor

JoAnn Donovan has just taken over as editor of the ACS Newsletter. She succeeds Casey Graham as a Consular Associate in ACS. Although new to ACS, she is no stranger to the Consular Section having served in the Immigrant Visa, Non Immigrant Visa and Fraud Prevention units. JoAnn welcomes any suggestions for upcoming newsletters.

Be prepared for the unexpected travel emergency!

It takes seven to ten workdays to renew your passport because the Embassy sends the approved passport application to the US electronically and gets the new passport back via FEDEX. You can renew passports up to one year prior to its expiration.

Don't get caught with an expired passport!

Notary services and Legal Capacity to

American Citizen Services U.S. Embassy 1201 Roxas Blvd. Ermita, Manila, Philippines

Consul General: Richard D. Haynes

ACS Chief Christopher Rowan

Office: 63-2-528-6300
x2246/2555

Fax: 632-522-3242

Passports and Birth Registration

Mon through Fri 7:30am - 11:00am

For applications: call FedEx at 02-879-4747

Notary Services

Mon through Fri 8:00 - 10:00am

Legal Capacity to Marry

Mon through Fri 8:00am - 10:00am

EMERGENCIES: For emergencies after hours please call 63-2-528-6300 and ask for the Duty Officer.

Website:

<http://www.phillippines.usembassy.gov>

Email:

acsinfomanila@state.gov

Upcoming US Embassy Holiday Closings

Columbus Day (USA)	Monday, October 10, 2005
All Saints Day (PHL)	Tuesday, November 1, 2005
Eid-ul-Fitr (PHL)	TBD
Veterans Day (USA)	Friday, November 11, 2005
Thanksgiving Day (USA)	Thursday, November 24, 2005
Bonifacio Day (PHL)	Wednesday, November 30
Christmas Day (USA/PHL)	Monday, December 26, 2005
Rizal Day (PHL)	Friday, December 30, 2005
New Year's Day (USA/PHIL)	Monday, January 2, 2006
Martin Luther King Jr's Birthday (USA)	Monday, January 16, 2006

Outreach Schedule

Sept 16	Legazpi
Sept 22	Puerta Princesa, Palawan
Oct 28	Davao
Nov 3 (tentative)	Olongapo
Nov 4(tentative)	Angeles
Nov 18	Baguio

FAQs about the *Affidavit of Support and Domicile*

The I-864 Affidavit of Support is a contract between a sponsor and the applicant that is required for some immigrant visas. In this contract the sponsor agrees to provide financial support for the applicant until he/she becomes an American citizen or can be credited with 40 quarters of work (usually ten years). The sponsor must show that he/she has income equal to or greater than 125 percent of the federal poverty guidelines for his/her household size.

Who needs an I-864 Affidavit of Support?

Most applicants in family-based immigrant visa categories and orphans to be adopted in the United States (IR-4).

Which applicants for family-based immigrant visas do not need the I-864 Affidavit of Support?

Biological (natural-born) children of American citizens (IR-2 immigrant visa category) who will enter the United States when under the age of eighteen and will automatically acquire American citizenship; orphans adopted by an American citizen abroad (IR-3 immigrant visa category) with a full and final adoption; self-petitioning widows or widowers of American citizens (IW immigrant visa category); and Immigrants who have already worked or can be credited with 40 qualifying quarters of work as defined in title II of the Social Security Act.

The applicants must show, however, that they will not become a public charge. A consular officer may ask for an I-134 Affidavit of Support and supporting documents.

Should K-1 fiancé(e) visa applicants use the I-864 or the I-134?

Since fiancé(e)s are nonimmigrant visa applicants, they should use the I-134. They will need to submit an I-864 to USCIS when they adjust status to conditional immigrant in the United States after they are married.

If the consular officer says the applicant needs a joint sponsor, does the joint sponsor send the I-864 to the NVC for review?

No. If the post asks for a joint sponsor, the joint sponsor should send the completed I-864 directly to the applicant. The applicant will submit the I-864 to the consular officer for review.

What are the requirements for being a sponsor?

A sponsor must be **at least 18 years old** and either **an American citizen** or a **lawful permanent resident** (LPR). The sponsor must also have a **domicile** (residence) in the United States.

Can a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident (LPR) petitioner who is not domiciled (living) in the United States be a sponsor?

No. The law requires that sponsors be domiciled (live) in any of the States of the United States, the District of Columbia, or any territory or possession of the United States. Since immigrant visas are intended to reunite families, if there is no reunification to be achieved then there is no reason to issue an immigrant visa if the petitioner is not residing in the country where the applicants intend to live.

If the petitioner does not have a domicile in the United States, can a joint sponsor file an I-864?

No. Under the law, a joint sponsor cannot sponsor an immigrant when the petitioner does not have a domicile in the United States. The petitioner must first meet all the requirements for being a sponsor (age, domicile and citizenship) except those related to income before there can be a joint sponsor.

How is domicile determined?

Domicile is a complex issue and must be determined on a case-by-case basis. To qualify as a sponsor, a petitioner who is residing abroad must have a principal residence in the U.S. and intend to maintain that residence for the foreseeable future. Lawful permanent resident (LPR) sponsors must show they are maintaining their LPR status.

Many U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents reside outside the United States on a temporary basis, usually for work or family considerations. "Temporary" may cover an extended period of residence abroad. The sponsor living abroad must establish the following in order to be considered domiciled in the United States: he/she left the United States for a limited and not indefinite period of time; he/she intended to maintain a domicile in the United States, and he/she has evidence of continued ties to the United States.

An American citizen or LPR spouse or dependent who has maintained a residence in the U.S. and/or whose spouse/parent works in one of the categories listed below would also qualify as a sponsor.

What kinds of employment abroad can be counted as U.S. domicile?

Employment by the U.S. government; employment by an American institution of research recognized by the Attorney General; employment by an American firm or corporation engaged in whole or in part in the development of foreign trade and commerce with the United States, or a subsidiary of such a firm; employment with a public international organization in which the United States participates by treaty or statute; employment by a religious denomination/group having a genuine organization within the United States and is stationed abroad with that religious denomination; and employment as a missionary by a religious denomination/group or by an interdenominational mission organization within the United States and is stationed abroad with that religious denomination

There may be other circumstances in which a sponsor can show that his or her presence abroad is of a temporary nature, and the sponsor has a domicile in the United States. The sponsor must satisfy to the consular officer that he/she has not given up his/her domicile in the United States and established his/her domicile abroad.

How can a petitioner establish a domicile?

When a sponsor has clearly not maintained a domicile in the United States, he/she will need to re-establish a U.S. domicile in order for him/her to be a sponsor. The sponsor may take a number of steps to show that he/she considers the United States his/her principal place of residence. Examples of things he/she can do are given below:

Find a job in the United States; locate a place to live in the United States; register children in U.S. schools; make arrangements to give up (relinquish) residence abroad. Other evidence of a U.S. residence may include making investments, voting in local, state or federal elections, setting up a bank account and transferring funds to the US.

Can the applicant use government assistance or public benefits?

If the sponsored immigrant uses federal means tested public benefits, the sponsor is responsible for repaying the cost of the benefits. This includes, food stamps, supplemental security income (SSI), Medicaid, temporary assistance for needy families (TANF) and state child health insurance programs (CHIP).

What are the special provisions for members of the Armed Forces?

Active duty members of the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force and Coast Guard need to meet only 100 percent of the minimum poverty guideline income requirement. Members of the Merchant Marine must meet the full 125 percent income requirement.

If the poverty guidelines change between the time the petitioner signed the I-864 and the issuance of an immigrant visa, must the petitioner/sponsor and joint sponsor, if required, submit a new I-864?

No. As long as the I-864 was submitted to a consular officer within one year of the date it was signed and notarized, a new I-864 is not required. However, the petitioner/sponsor and the joint sponsor must meet the minimum income requirement based on the federal poverty guidelines in effect on the date of the visa issuance, not those in effect when the form was signed.

Who can notarize the signatures on the I-864 and I-864A?

A U.S. consular officer, associate, or agent abroad, an immigration officer from the USCIS or a U.S. notary public can notarize signatures on the I-864 and I-864A. A consular officer will not accept I-864 affidavits of support that have been notarized by foreign notary publics.

What happens if the sponsor did not file income tax returns for the previous three years?

Immigration law requires the sponsor to submit income tax returns for the three years prior to visa application if the sponsor was required to file. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) requires Americans and lawful permanent residents who are working abroad to file income tax returns even if most or all of their overseas income is excluded from U.S. taxes.

What does the sponsor do when he/she was not required by law to file an income tax return during a given year?

If a sponsor was not required by law to file an income tax return, he/she should prepare a notarized statement. In this statement the sponsor should state that he/she was not required to file a tax return and give the related Internal Revenue Service (IRS) regulation. The IRS 1040 Instruction Book has information on who is not required to file income tax returns.

If the sponsor does not have copies of his/her tax returns, can he/she submit a summary of the returns from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS)?

Yes.

Does the I-864 ever expire?

In general, the I-864 must be submitted to the consular officer in an immigrant visa interview within one year of the sponsor's signature. If it is submitted after one year, a new I-864 will be required.

After the I-864 has been submitted to and accepted by a consular officer (at the immigrant visa interview), it does not expire. However, if the supporting documents are more than 12 months old, the consular officer will ask for new supporting documents, such as the most recent federal income tax returns.

Do children of American citizens need an I-864 for an immigrant visa?

Children of American citizens (IR-2) are not required to have an I-864 in the following circumstances: they are under the age of 18 when they enter the United States and are natural born, biological children, living with and in legal custody of a U.S. citizen parent. Adopted children in the IR-3 category also are not required to have an I-864 in the following circumstances; they have a full and final adoption decree, are living with and in legal custody of a U.S. citizen parent, and entering the U.S. under the age of 18.

However, these children must present evidence that they will not become public charges when they enter the United States. This can be shown with documents such as recent income tax returns (1040), job letters and bank statements. The consular officer may ask for an I-134 Affidavit of Support.

Also see How Do I File an Affidavit of Support for a Relative? at <http://www.uscis.gov> and for general information at <http://travel.state.gov/visa/immigrants> and <http://philippines.usembassy.gov>

Comparison between K1, K3 and IR1 Visas

	K1 Visa (fiancé/fiancée)	K3 Visa (spouse)	IR1/CR1 Visa (spouse)
Average processing time	180 days	180 days	90 days
What petition do I file?	I-129F only	I-129F and I-130	I-130 only
Any major restrictions?	One entry, valid for 6 months, must marry within 90 days of entry into the US	Multiple entries for two years, must file for adjustment of status within 2 years	One entry, processing for green card begins upon entry into the US
Can my fiancée/fiancé or spouse take her/his children?	Yes, only unmarried children under 21 may get a K-2 visa within one year of the K-1 issuance	Yes, only unmarried children under 21 may get the K-4 visa within one year of the K-3 issuance	Yes, but a separate I-130 petition must be filed by the sponsor for each unmarried child under 21
Is an interview required?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Which Affidavit of Support do I submit?	I-134 may be requested	I-134 may be requested	I-864 required

* Remember, approval of a visa petition by USCIS does not necessarily mean that a visa will be issued. Only a Consular Officer at the Embassy may determine a person's eligibility to receive a visa.

2005 FEDERAL POVERTY GUIDELINES
Minimum Income Required for Use in Completing Form I-864 and I-134

USA DC, PUERTO RICO, V. ISLANDS, GUAM			ALASKA			HAWAII		
SIZE	100%	125%	SIZE	100%	125%	SIZE	100%	125%
1	\$9,570	\$11,963	1	\$11,950	\$14,938	1	\$11,010	\$13,763
2	\$12,830	\$16,038	2	\$16,030	\$20,038	2	\$14,760	\$18,450
3	\$16,090	\$20,113	3	\$20,110	\$25,138	3	\$18,510	\$23,138
4	\$19,350	\$24,188	4	\$24,190	\$30,238	4	\$22,260	\$27,825
5	\$22,610	\$28,263	5	\$28,270	\$35,338	5	\$26,010	\$32,513
6	\$25,870	\$32,338	6	\$32,350	\$40,438	6	\$29,760	\$37,200
7	\$29,130	\$36,413	7	\$36,430	\$45,538	7	\$33,510	\$41,888
8	\$32,390	\$40,488	8	\$40,510	\$50,638	8	\$37,260	\$46,575
9	\$35,650	\$44,563	9	\$44,590	\$55,738	9	\$41,010	\$51,263
10	\$38,910	\$48,638	10	\$48,670	\$60,838	10	\$44,760	\$55,950
11	\$42,170	\$52,713	11	\$52,750	\$65,938	11	\$48,510	\$60,638
12	\$45,430	\$56,788	12	\$56,830	\$71,038	12	\$52,260	\$65,325
13	\$48,690	\$60,863	13	\$60,910	\$76,138	13	\$56,010	\$70,013
14	\$51,950	\$64,938	14	\$64,990	\$81,238	14	\$59,760	\$74,700
15	\$55,210	\$69,013	15	\$69,070	\$86,338	15	\$63,510	\$79,388
16	\$58,470	\$73,088	16	\$73,150	\$91,438	16	\$67,260	\$84,075
17	\$61,730	\$77,163	17	\$77,230	\$96,538	17	\$71,010	\$88,763
18	\$64,990	\$81,238	18	\$81,310	\$101,638	18	\$74,760	\$93,450
19	\$68,250	\$85,313	19	\$85,390	\$106,738	19	\$78,510	\$98,138
20	\$71,510	\$89,388	20	\$89,470	\$111,838	20	\$82,260	\$102,825

NOTE: Minimum Income Requirement for I-134 is 100% of Poverty Guideline

Visa Information Service

The telephone number of the U.S. Embassy Consular section Visa Appointment and Information Service for PLDT and SMART subscribers is 1-909-101-7878. The number will be available for GLOBE subscribers shortly. This number is available Monday through Friday, 8:00 am to 6:00 pm. The public may make non-immigrant visa appointments and obtain information regarding immigrant and non-immigrant visa application procedures through this Visa Information Service. This is a toll call - the cost is approximately 53 pesos per minute, plus

Public Charge Ineligibility- INA 212(a)(4)(A)

“Any alien who, in the opinion of the consular officer at the time of application for a visa...is likely at any time to become a public charge, is inadmissible.”

The term “public charge” means that an alien, after admission into the US, is likely to become primarily dependent on the US government for subsistence.

If a relative petitioner does not or cannot properly execute an I-864, Affidavit of Support, that applicant must be considered ineligible for a visa as likely to become a public charge.

Passport Services Introduces Online Application Status-Checks Effective August 12, 2005

Effective August 12, 2005, customers who have recently applied for a Regular (Tourist) U.S. passport and want to know the status of their application may do so by accessing http://travel.state.gov/passport/get/status/status_2567.html using a standard browser.

Customers can securely enter online their last name, date of birth, and the last four digits of their Social Security Number to receive information on the status of their application. A customer's personal information will remain in our system only long enough for he or she to complete their inquiry, thus protecting that data, as authorized by law. This information will then be deleted from our system.

Customers who have applied for an Official, Diplomatic, or other No-Fee passport must contact their travel office to get a status-check on those types of applications.

This service will enhance the status-check option currently only available to customers by phone or email at the National Passport Information Center (NPIC). It will also allow Passport Services to better allocate resources at NPIC by freeing Customer Service Representatives to respond to other calls and inquiries, reducing waiting time.

Customers may still request an application status-check via email, at travel.state.gov, or by calling, toll-free, the National Passport Information Center at 1-877-487-2778 (TDD/TTY 1-888-874-7793).

For more information on applying for a U.S. passport, forms, and a wealth of other international travel information, please visit our website at travel.state.gov.

Consular Fees Information

- **\$82.00** – Passport for applicant below 16 years
- **\$97.00** – Passport for applicant 16 years and above
- **\$67.00** – For adult passport renewal (whose most recent passport was issued less than 15 years ago and while the applicant was at least 16 years at the time of issuance of the said passport)
- **No Fee** – Passport amendment/extension/limitation/additional pages; six copies of Consular Report of Death Abroad; Notarials for Affidavit of Support (I-864, I-134) and other required US government forms.
- **\$65.00** - Consular Report of Birth Abroad (for below 18 years old only)
- **\$30.00** - Notarials (Affidavit, Acknowledgment, Authentication, Legal Capacity to Marry)
- **\$20.00** – Notarials (Each additional seal)
- Payment can be in cash (dollars or Philippine currency) or credit card (Visa/MasterCard/Diners/American express/Discover only.) Fees and acceptable cards are subject to change without prior notice. All fees are non-refundable.

REGISTRATION FORM

(Date of Registration: _____)

☐ **PERMANENT**

(Will stay in the Philippines for more than four months)

☐ **TEMPORARY**

(Will stay in the Philippines four months or less)

FULL NAME:		DATE & PLACE OF BIRTH
_____, _____ Last Name First Name Middle		US PASSPORT NUMBER
LOCAL ADDRESS		LOCAL/CELLPHONE NO.:
E-MAIL ADDRESS		SEX:
U.S. ADDRESS:		U.S. PHONE NO.:
OCCUPATION:	COMPANY NAME	COMPANY PHONE NO.:
COMPANY ADDRESS		COMPANY FAX NO.:
<u>U. S. CITIZEN</u> DEPENDENTS RESIDING WITH THE REGISTRANT:		
<u>Name</u>	<u>Relationship</u>	<u>Date of Birth.</u> (mo/day/year)
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION		
CONTACT PERSON/NEXT OF KIN:		RELATIONSHIP
CONTACT PERSON'S ADDRESS		CONTACT PERSON'S LOCAL/CELLPHONE NO.:

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

PLEASE SIGN HERE:

For office use only: Stamp "citizenship approved/passport issued" here:

- ☐ New Registration
☐ Renewed/Updated Registration
w/ record in warden database



U.S. Department of State
Bureau of Consular Affairs
Washington, DC 20520

For recorded travel information, call 202-647-5225
Internet Address: <http://travel.state.gov>



Consular Information Sheet

Philippines

July 26, 2005

COUNTRY DESCRIPTION: The Philippines is a developing nation with a democratic system of government, located in Southeast Asia. The archipelago consists of more than 7,000 islands, of which 880 are inhabited. The major island groupings are Luzon in the north, the Visayas in the center, and Mindanao in the south. Tourist facilities are available within population centers and the main tourist areas. English is widely spoken in the Philippines, and most signs are in English.

Read the Department of State [Background Notes](http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2794.htm) on The Philippines at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2794.htm> for additional information.

ENTRY/EXIT REQUIREMENTS: U.S. citizens may enter the Philippines without a visa upon presentation of their U.S. passport valid for at least six months after the date of entry into the Philippines, and a return ticket to the United States or an onward ticket to another country. Upon your arrival, immigration authorities will annotate your passport with an entry visa valid for 21 days. If you plan to stay longer than 21 days, you must apply for an extension at the Philippine Bureau of Immigration and Deportation's main office at Magallanes Drive; Intramuros, Manila, Philippines, or at any of their provincial offices located nationwide (<http://www.immigration.gov.ph>).

Persons who overstay their visas are subject to fines and detention by Philippine immigration authorities. American citizens are urged to remain aware of their visa status while in the Philippines and to follow immigration laws and regulations strictly. Travelers departing the country from international airports must pay a Passenger Service Charge in Philippine Pesos. For further information on entry/exit requirements, please contact the Embassy of the Philippines at: 1600 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036 (telephone: (202) 467-9300), or one of the Philippine consulates in the United States (Chicago, Honolulu, Los Angeles, New York, and San Francisco) or via the Internet at <http://www.philippineembassy-usa.org>

Special requirements exist for the entry of unaccompanied minors. In an effort to prevent international child abduction, the Philippine government requires that a waiver of exclusion must be obtained from a Philippine Embassy or Consulate or from the Bureau of Immigration and Detention in Manila for a child under 15 years of age who plans to enter the Philippines unaccompanied by either a parent or legal guardian prior to the child's entry into the Philippines.

See our [Foreign Entry Requirements brochure](#) for more information on the Philippines and other countries.

For entry and exit requirements pertaining to dual nationality and the prevention of international child abduction, read our information at http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1469.html.

SAFETY/SECURITY: The terrorist threat to American citizens in the Philippines remains high and the Department warns against all but essential travel to the Philippines. The U.S. Embassy continues to receive reports of ongoing activities and of multiple planned attacks throughout the Philippines by known terrorist groups. Americans should carefully consider the risks of travel to the Philippines. Numerous security-related incidents highlight the risk of travel in certain areas due to kidnappings,

bombings, and other violence and criminal activity. The Department urges American who choose to travel or reside in the Philippines to observe vigilant personal security precautions, to remain aware of the continued potential for terrorist attacks against Americans, U.S. or other Western interests in the Philippines, to register with the U.S. Embassy through the State Department's travel registration website, <https://travelregistration.state.gov>, and to obtain updated information on travel and security within the Philippines.

The Philippine government has been engaged on and off in negotiations with Communist and Muslim rebel groups. Nonetheless, rebel activity and armed banditry in certain areas of the Philippines still pose security concerns. The Communist Party of the Philippines and its terrorist military arm, the New People's Army, operate throughout the country and have issued public threats against U.S. citizens and interests in the Philippines. Americans are urged to exercise caution when traveling throughout the country and are specifically warned to avoid hiking or camping in the vicinity of Mt. Pinatubo in Pampanga Province.

In Mindanao and the Sulu archipelago, kidnappings, bombings, violence, and insurgent activity make travel hazardous in many areas. The Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), which the U.S. Government has designated a Foreign Terrorist Organization, has kidnapped several Americans and other foreign tourists since April 2000. Some were freed after substantial ransoms were paid, some escaped or were rescued by military action, and some were killed. Other kidnapping gangs operate in the same general area and have abducted a number of foreigners for ransom.

Americans are urged to defer non-emergency travel to central, southern, and western Mindanao, and the islands of Basilan, Tawi-Tawi, and Jolo, located in the Sulu archipelago in the southwest of the Philippines, due to military operations against kidnappings and other criminal activity.

Operatives of the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), which the U.S. Government has also designated a Foreign Terrorist Organization, are also present in the Philippines. JI is an extremist group linked to al-Qaeda and other regional terrorist groups and has cells operating throughout Southeast Asia. Extremist groups in the region have demonstrated a capability to carry out transnational attacks in locations where Westerners congregate. Terrorist groups do not distinguish between official and civilian targets.

U.S. citizens and interests may be at increased risk of terrorist actions from foreign or domestic extremist groups in the Philippines. There are periodic reports of plans for possible terrorist acts aimed at U.S. Government facilities or personnel, public and private institutions, and transportation carriers. The U.S. Embassy takes all such threats seriously. The State Department reminds all Americans traveling or living abroad of the need to remain vigilant with regard to personal security issues and to always follow basic and important security countermeasures: do not establish a pattern or routine in movement and travel; vary the times and routes taken to the extent possible; maintain a low profile; and immediately report any unusual activity, to include possible surveillance, to the Philippine Police and the Regional Security Office at the U.S. Embassy.

For the latest security information, Americans traveling abroad should regularly monitor the Department's Internet web site at <http://travel.state.gov>, where the current [Worldwide Caution Public Announcement](#), [Travel Warnings and Public Announcements](#) can be found.

Travelers are also encouraged to contact the U.S. Embassy in Manila at tel. (63) (2) 528-6300 for an update of the current security situation, especially if planning to travel outside the Metro Manila area.

Up-to-date information on security can also be obtained by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll free in the U.S., or, for callers outside the United States and Canada, a regular toll line at 1-202-501-4444. These numbers are available from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays).

The Department of State urges American citizens to take responsibility for their own personal security while traveling overseas. For general information about appropriate measures travelers can take to

protect themselves in an overseas environment, see the Department of State's pamphlet [A Safe Trip Abroad](#) at http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/safety/safety_1747.html.

CRIME INFORMATION: As in many of the major metropolitan areas in the United States, crime is a serious concern in Metro Manila. As a rule of thumb, Americans are advised to exercise good judgment and remain aware of their surroundings. Reports of confidence games, pick-pocketing and credit card fraud are common. Be wary of unknown individuals who attempt to befriend you, especially just after you have arrived in country. A number of recent robberies and assaults involving the "date rape drug" (known locally as Ativan) have occurred; the drug is generally administered to unwitting male and female visitors via food or drink. It is best not to accept food, drink or rides in private vehicles from strangers, even if they appear legitimate. There have been several kidnappings and violent assaults of foreigners in the Metro Manila area, although Americans have not been specifically targeted in such crimes. There have also been reports of gunmen robbing foreign passengers in vehicles traveling to and from the international airport.

Taxis are the recommended form of public transportation. However, the following safeguards are important: do not enter a taxi if it has already accepted another passenger; and, request that the meter be used. If the driver is unwilling to comply with your requests, it is best to wait for another cab. It is also a good idea to make a mental note of the license plate number should there be a problem. When driving in the city, make certain that the doors are locked and the windows rolled up. All other forms of public transportation, such as the light rail system, buses, and "jeepneys" should be avoided for both safety and security reasons.

Visitors should also be vigilant when using credit cards. One common form of credit card fraud involves the illicit use of an electronic device to retrieve and record information, including the PIN, from the card's magnetic strip. The information is then used to make unauthorized purchases. To limit your vulnerability to this scam, never let your card out of your sight.

A continuing problem is the commercial scam or sting that attempts to sell or to seek negotiation of, fraudulent U.S. securities. Visitors and residents should be wary when presented with supposed Federal Reserve Notes or U.S. securities for sale or negotiation. For further information, consult the Federal Reserve System's Web site at:

<http://www.federalreserve.gov/boarddocs/SRLETTERS/2003/sr0314.htm>.

INFORMATION FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME: The loss or theft of a U.S. passport in the Philippines should be reported immediately to the local police and to the U.S. Embassy in Manila. If you are the victim of a crime while in the Philippines, in addition to reporting to local police, please contact the U.S. Embassy's American Citizen Services Unit. The Embassy staff can, for example, assist you to find appropriate medical care, contact family members or friends, and explain how funds could be transferred. Although the investigation and prosecution of the crime is solely the responsibility of local authorities, consular officers can help you to understand the local criminal justice process and to find an attorney if needed.

See our information on Victims of Crime at

http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/emergencies/emergencies_1748.html.

The Philippines has a victim compensation program to provide financial compensation to victims of violent or personal crime and of unjust imprisonment. Information may be obtained from the Philippine Department of Justice at 011-632-521-6264 or via the Internet at <http://www.doj.gov.ph/>.

See our information on Victims of Crime at

http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/emergencies/emergencies_1748.html.

MEDICAL FACILITIES AND HEALTH INFORMATION: Adequate medical care is available in major cities in the Philippines, but even the best hospitals may not meet the standards of medical care, sanitation, and facilities provided by hospitals in the United States. Medical care is limited in rural and more remote areas. Most hospitals will require a down payment of estimated fees in cash at the time of admission.

Serious medical problems requiring hospitalization and/or medical evacuation to the United States can cost several or even tens of thousands of dollars. A list of doctors and medical facilities in the Philippines is available on the web page of the U.S. Embassy in Manila at <http://philippines.usembassy.gov>.

Information on vaccinations and other health precautions, such as safe food and water precautions and insect bite protection, may be obtained from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's hotline for international travelers at 1-877-FYI-TRIP (1-877-394-8747); fax 1-888-CDC-FAXX (1-888-232-3299), or via the CDC's Internet site at <http://www.cdc.gov/travel>. For information about outbreaks of infectious diseases abroad, please consult the World Health Organization's website at <http://www.who.int/en>. Further health information for travelers is available at <http://www.who.int/ith>.

MEDICAL INSURANCE: The Department of State strongly urges Americans to consult with their medical insurance company prior to traveling abroad to confirm whether their policy applies overseas and if it will cover emergency expenses such as a medical evacuation. [Please see our information on medical insurance overseas](#) at http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1470.html.

TRAFFIC SAFETY AND ROAD CONDITIONS: While in a foreign country, U.S. citizens may encounter road conditions that differ significantly from those in the United States. The information below concerning the Philippines is provided for general reference only, and may not be totally accurate in a particular location or circumstance.

Travel within the Philippine archipelago is possible by boat, plane, bus, or car. Few tourists rent a car to drive, as the road system is crowded and drivers are undisciplined. Driving off the national highways and paved roads is particularly dangerous, especially at night, and should be avoided. To avoid overcrowded or unsafe transport, exercise caution in planning travel by older, inter-island ferryboats, or other public conveyances.

For specific information concerning Philippine driver's permits, vehicle inspection, road tax and mandatory insurance, please contact the Philippine Embassy in Washington, D.C. at tel. (202) 467-9300 or one of the Philippine consulates in the United State (Chicago, Honolulu, Los Angeles, New York, and San Francisco) or via the Internet at <http://www.philippineembassy-usa.org>. Please see also related information from the Philippine Department of Tourism at <http://www.tourism.gov.ph> and <http://www.dotpcvc.gov.ph>.

[Please refer to our Road Safety page for more information.](#)

AVIATION SAFETY OVERSIGHT: The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has assessed the Philippine Government as being in compliance with ICAO international aviation safety standards for oversight of the Philippines' air carrier operations. For more information, travelers may visit the FAA's Internet web site at http://www.faa.gov/safety/programs_initiatives/oversight/iasa.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES:

Marriage in the Philippines: The Philippine Government requires foreigners who wish to marry in the Philippines to obtain from the U.S. Embassy a "Certificate of Legal Capacity to Contract Marriage" before filing an application for a marriage license. Because there is no national register of marriages in the United States, the U.S. Embassy cannot provide such a certification. As a result, the Philippine Government will accept an "Affidavit in Lieu of a Certificate of Legal Capacity to Contract Marriage" in its place. Americans may execute this affidavit at the U.S. Embassy in Manila Monday-Friday, between 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m., except for Philippine or American holidays. The American must present his/her U.S. passport. There is a fee of \$30.00 or its peso equivalent for the affidavit. Philippine authorities will not accept any substitute document issued in the United States. Before traveling to the Philippines to be married, U.S. military personnel should contact their personnel office regarding Department of Defense joint service regulations.

Execution of the affidavit by a U.S. consular officer is a notarial act and the consular officer is authorized by U.S. law to refuse to perform the service if the document will be used for a purpose

patently unlawful, improper, or inimical to the best interests of the United States (see 22 C.F.R. section 92.9b). Entering into a marriage contract for the principal purpose of facilitating immigration to the United States for an alien is an unlawful act, and the U.S. Code provides penalties for individuals who commit perjury in an affidavit taken by a consular officer. Relationship fraud is a persistent problem in the Philippines, and it is not uncommon for Filipinos to enter into marriages with Americans solely for immigration purposes. Relationships developed via correspondence, particularly those begun on the Internet, are particularly susceptible to manipulation.

The Marriage Application Process: Once an American citizen has obtained from the U.S. Embassy an "Affidavit in Lieu of a Certificate of Legal Capacity to Contract Marriage," he/she may file an application for a marriage license at the office of the Philippine Civil Registrar in the town or city where one of the parties is a resident. The U.S. citizen applicant must present: (a) the affidavit; (b) divorce decree(s) or death certificate(s), if applicable (required to verify civil status and legal capacity to contract marriage); (c) his/her U.S. passport; and (d) documentation regarding parental consent or advice, if applicable. (Persons aged 18 to 21 must have written parental consent to marry in the Philippines; those aged 22 to 24 must have received parental advice. Philippine law prohibits marriage for persons under the age of 18.) A judge, a minister or other person authorized by the Philippine Government can perform the marriage.

Marriage to a U.S. citizen confers neither citizenship nor an automatic eligibility for entry to the United States. A foreign spouse requires an immigrant visa to live in the United States. Questions about filing a petition to bring a foreign spouse to the United States may be directed to the nearest U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service office, to the U.S. Department of State's Visa Office (telephone: (202) 663-1225) or, while in the Philippines, to the U.S. Embassy's Immigrant Visa Unit at <http://philippines.usembassy.gov>.

Disaster Preparedness: The Philippines is a volcano-, typhoon- and earthquake-prone country. From May to December, typhoons and flash floods often occur. Flooding can cause road delays and cut off bridges. Typhoons in the vicinity of the Philippines can interrupt air and sea links within the country. Volcanic activity is frequent, and periodically the Philippine Government announces alerts for specific volcanoes. Earthquakes can also occur throughout the country. General information about natural disaster preparedness is available via the Internet from the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) at <http://www.fema.gov>.

Customs: Philippine customs authorities enforce strict regulations concerning temporary importation into or export from the Philippines of items such as firearms and currency. It is advisable to contact the Embassy of the Philippines in Washington, D.C. or one of the Philippine consulates in the United States (Chicago, Honolulu, Los Angeles, New York, and San Francisco) for specific information regarding customs requirements. Counterfeit and pirated goods are widely available in the Philippines; transactions involving such products are illegal and bringing them back to the United States may result in forfeitures and/or fines. A current list of countries with serious problems in this regard can be found at http://www.ustr.gov/Document_Library/Reports_Publications/2004/2004_Special_301/Section_Index.html.

[Please see our information on customs regulations at http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1468.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1468.html).

CRIMINAL PENALTIES: While in a foreign country, a U.S. citizen is subject to that country's laws and regulations, which sometimes differ significantly from those in the United States and may not afford the protections available to the individual under U.S. law. Penalties for breaking the law can be more severe than in the United States for similar offenses.

Persons violating Philippines laws, even unknowingly, may be expelled, arrested or imprisoned. Penalties for possession, use, or trafficking in illegal drugs in the Philippines are severe, and convicted offenders can expect long jail sentences and heavy fines. Capital punishment is possible

for certain drug-related crimes. Engaging in illicit sexual conduct with children or using or disseminating child pornography in a foreign country is a crime, prosecutable in the United States. For more information visit http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1467.html.

Under the Protect Act of April 2003, it is a crime, prosecutable in the United States, for a U.S. citizen or permanent resident alien, to travel to a foreign country to engage in criminal sexual activity or to engage in illicit sexual conduct in a foreign country. It is important to note that under the new legislation, the act of illicit sexual conduct is sufficient to violate the law - the intent to travel for the purpose of engaging in the criminal sexual activity does not need to be proven. For purposes of the PROTECT Act, illicit sexual conduct means: (1) a sexual act with a person under 18 years of age that would be illegal in the United States or (2) any commercial sex act in a foreign country with a person under the age of 18.

The Bureau of Immigration arrests several Americans each year on immigration charges of "undesirability," sometimes based solely on complaints arising from personal or business disputes in the Philippines. Frequently, these detainees cannot be deported and/or released from custody until substantial fines are paid and any underlying criminal charges are resolved – a process that sometimes takes months or even years.

Fraud, swindling, and "bad debts" are also serious criminal offenses in the Philippines, as is the illegal recruitment of Philippine citizens for employment overseas. Several Americans are currently serving lengthy prison sentences for illegal recruitment activities. The Philippine Government also has strict laws against the possession of firearms, and several foreigners have been sentenced to life imprisonment for bringing firearms into the country. Americans who are arrested overseas should immediately ask to contact a U.S. Embassy representative.

CHILDREN'S ISSUES: Under Philippine law, the mother and father of a child are held to exercise parental control jointly, and child custody cases are considered civil disputes. Parental abduction is not a crime. The Philippines is not a party to the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction. For specific information on child custody cases in the Philippines, please consult the web page of the U.S. Embassy in Manila at <http://philippines.usembassy.gov>.

For information on international adoption of children and international parental abduction, see the Office of Children's Issues website at http://travel.state.gov/family/family_1732.html.

REGISTRATION/EMBASSY AND CONSULAR AGENCY LOCATION: Americans living in or visiting the Philippines are encouraged to register with the U.S. Embassy through the State Department's travel registration website, <https://travelregistration.state.gov>, and to obtain updated information on travel and security within Philippines. Americans without Internet access may register directly with the U.S. Embassy. By registering, American citizens make it easier for the Embassy to contact them in case of emergency. The U.S. Embassy is located at: 1201 Roxas Boulevard, Manila, Philippines, tel. (63)(2) 528-6300. The Consular American Citizen Services (ACS) section's fax number is (63)(2) 522-3242 and the ACS web page is at <http://philippines.usembassy.gov>.

The U.S. Consular Agency in Cebu provides limited services for U.S. citizens. The Consular Agency address is: Waterfront Hotel, Lahug, Cebu City, tel. (63) (32) 231-1261.

The Virtual Consulate Davao (<http://www.usvirtualconsulatedavao.org.ph>) provides targeted information and services of interest to Americans residing in or traveling to Davao. The Virtual Consulate supports email correspondence for queries from American citizens. Regularly scheduled "chat" sessions also allow Americans to interact in real time with the American Citizens Services personnel at the U.S. Embassy.

This replaces the Consular Information Sheet dated January 13, 2005, to update entry/exit requirements, safety and security, crime information, aviation safety oversight and criminal penalties and Registration/Embassy and Consular Agency Location

Public Announcement

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of the Spokesman

This information is current as of Tue Aug 30 13:54:06 2005.

Worldwide Caution

August 02, 2005

This Public Announcement updates information on the continuing threat of terrorist actions and violence against Americans and interests overseas. This supersedes the Worldwide Caution dated March 8, 2005 and expires on February 2, 2006.

The Department of State remains concerned about the continued threat of terrorist attacks, demonstrations and other violent actions against U.S. citizens and interests overseas. Americans are reminded that demonstrations and rioting can occur with little or no warning. Ongoing events in Iraq have resulted in demonstrations and associated violence in several countries; such events are likely to continue for the foreseeable future. Nation-wide elections in Afghanistan scheduled for mid-September may also trigger violent anti-American actions.

Current information suggests that al-Qa'ida and affiliated organizations continue to plan terrorist attacks against U.S. interests in multiple regions, including Europe, Asia, Africa and the Middle East. These attacks may employ a wide variety of tactics to include assassinations, kidnappings, hijackings and bombings. Extremists may elect to use conventional or non-conventional weapons, and target both official and private interests. The latter may include facilities where U.S. citizens and other foreigners congregate or visit, including residential areas, business offices, clubs, restaurants, places of worship, schools, hotels and public areas.

In the wake of the July 2005 London bombings and the March 2004 train attacks in Madrid, Americans are reminded of the potential for terrorists to attack public transportation systems. In addition, extremists may also select aviation and maritime services as possible targets.

U.S. citizens are strongly encouraged to maintain a high level of vigilance, be aware of local events, and take the appropriate steps to bolster their personal security. For additional information, please refer to "[A Safe Trip Abroad](#)" found at <http://travel.state.gov>.

U.S. Government facilities worldwide remain at a heightened state of alert. These facilities may temporarily close or periodically suspend public services to assess their security posture. In those instances, U.S. embassies and consulates will make every effort to provide emergency services to U.S. citizens. Americans abroad are urged to monitor the local news and maintain contact with the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.

As the Department continues to develop information on any potential security threats to U.S. citizens overseas, it shares credible threat information through its Consular Information Program documents, available on the Internet at <http://travel.state.gov>. In addition to information on the Internet, travelers may obtain up-to-date information on security conditions by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll-free in the U.S. or outside the U.S. and Canada on a regular toll line at 1-202-501-4444.