

THE ANDZNAGIR

News for the American citizen community in Armenia

ISSUE 8: JULY 2017



travel.state.gov

For further information:

- See the [State Department's travel website](#) for the [Worldwide Caution](#), [Travel Warnings](#), [Travel Alerts](#), and [Country Information for Armenia](#).
- Enroll in the [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#) to receive security messages and make it easier to locate you in an emergency.
- Contact the U.S. Embassy in Yerevan, Armenia, located at 1 American Avenue, at tel. (374-10) 46-47-00 and fax (374 10) 46-47-42, Monday through Friday 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. After-hours emergency number for U.S. citizens is (374-10) 49-44-44. Our email address is ACSYerevan@state.gov.

Did you know that you can find the answers to most of your urgent travel-related questions at the website above? Some of the recent and frequently-asked questions we have received at American Citizen Services are: Is it okay for American citizens to travel to or via Qatar given the recent diplomatic kerfuffle? Is it true that some European countries have imposed visa requirements for American citizens as a reciprocity measure since we now require visas for some Europeans (namely those who have traveled to Iran, Syria, etc.)? Will I be able to take my laptop with me in the cabin on my upcoming flight back to the U.S. via Qatar? The answers to these questions are, respectively: yes, no, and yes; and all this information is available on travel.state.gov or via links provided there. When you access this valuable website, you will see a drop-down menu, where you should choose the country you want to know more about. Within the page for each country is a link to security messages issued by the U.S. embassy in the capital; there is also up-to-date information about entry requirements like whether a visa is required or a certain amount of validity in the passport. Don't rely on word-of-mouth: go straight to the most reliable source when you need travel-related information. travel.state.gov should be your first stop!

DID YOU KNOW? The Armenian government has recently launched a mobile-phone app to allow the injured and mobility-impaired to contact 911 emergency services more quickly and easily. It is called "911SOS" and is available for Android and iOS smartphones. Users can simply push the SOS button in lieu of dialing, and the emergency operators can gather better information about their location using GPS. It is free of charge, so why not download it today?

The U.S. Embassy will be closed for the following upcoming holidays—September 4 (American Labor Day), September 21 (Armenian Independence Day), October 9 (Columbus Day).

MORE TRANSITION: A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

At the end of this week, I will be departing post with my family after three years in Armenia. This has been a wonderful posting for us, and we are very sad to be leaving. We are off to more tropical pastures: Hong Kong, via two years learning Chinese in Washington and then in Taipei. But rest assured: The Andznagir will continue! Look for the next issue sometime in the autumn. In the meantime, enjoy this, my last issue. In lieu of the normal format, I've decided to include a couple of lists that are sort of a compilation of much that I've learned working in ACS these past three years. I hope you find this information helpful.



Best wishes, *Jeff Hobbs*

30 useful Internet links for American citizens in Armenia:

1. I want the embassy to know that I am in Armenia and how to reach me in an emergency. Register with us at step.state.gov
2. I want to know if American citizens need visas to Australia, how much validity I need on my passport to enter the Emirates, how long I can stay in Armenia visa-free. All such travel-related questions can be answered by accessing the relevant country information page on travel.state.gov
3. I need an apostille on a birth certificate, marriage certificate, divorce decree, or death certificate issued by an American state. Go to the website for the Secretary of State Office of the state in question. You can find a list of them here: www.e-secretaryofstate.com/. Follow their instructions to obtain the apostille by mail.
4. I want to know more about how to register to vote from overseas, how to receive and complete a ballot overseas, etc. Go to www.fvap.gov and choose your state from the drop-down menu to obtain further information.
5. I want to know more about filing and paying my U.S. taxes from overseas. Go to www.irs.gov for further information.
6. I want to know more about Social Security benefits, how to apply for them overseas, how to apply for a SS card for my child, how to do a change of address, etc. Go to www.ssa.gov for further information.
7. I want to know more about my Medicare coverage overseas. Generally, Medicare doesn't cover you outside the U.S. Go to www.medicare.gov/coverage/travel-need-health-care-outside-us.html for further information.
8. I'm planning a trip to Armenia. What is the security situation? Is it safe? You can see a list of current travel warnings issued worldwide by the State Department here: travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/alertswarnings.html. Scroll down to look for any warnings pertaining to Armenia. Also review Armenia-specific postings on the Embassy website here: am.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/security-and-travel-information/
9. I've recently arrived in Armenia to live and need help navigating daily life issues like setting up a bank account and getting a cell phone. RepatArmenia is a useful organization to know, and their website has lots of useful information on these and other practical issues: repatarmenia.org/en/practical-info/getting-started



10. I want to make an appointment to come to the American Citizen Services unit. Go to evisaforms.state.gov/acs/default.asp?postcode=YRV&appcode=1
11. I want to register the birth of my child in Armenia and make him/her a U.S. citizen. Go to am.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/birth/ for further information and to download a citizenship application.
12. I want to renew my passport in Armenia or replace a passport that has been lost, stolen, or damaged. Go to am.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/passports/ for further information and to download a passport application.
13. I would like to obtain a list of attorneys who can assist American citizens with civil or criminal legal matters in Armenia. Go to am.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/local-resources-of-u-s-citizens/attorneys/ and click on the link to download the list.
14. I would like to obtain a list of doctors and clinics where American citizens can obtain medical treatment in Armenia. Go to am.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/local-resources-of-u-s-citizens/doctors/ and click on the link to download the list.
15. I want to know more about obtaining a tourist visa for someone I'd like to visit me in the U.S. Go to am.usembassy.gov/visas/nonimmigrant-visas/ for further information. To complete an online visa application and to make a visa appointment, go here: <https://ais.usvisa-info.com/en-am/niv/>
16. I want to know more about filing an immigration petition so that my relative can come to live with me in the U.S. Go to am.usembassy.gov/visas/immigrant-visas/ for further information.
17. I would like to obtain the I-130 immigrant visa petition form or some other immigration related form. Go to www.uscis.gov/ and search for the form you need in the upper right search box.
18. I have lost or damaged my certificate of citizenship or naturalization. Go here to apply for a replacement: www.uscis.gov/n-565
19. I want to know more about how my relative can replace his/her lost green card or renew his/her expired green card. Go to am.usembassy.gov/visas/immigrant-visas/lost-green-card/ for further information.
20. I want to know more about getting an FBI criminal record check, otherwise called a certificate of good conduct. Go to www.fbi.gov/services/cjis/identity-history-summary-checks for further information.
21. I want to know where I can go in Armenia to get my fingerprints taken. You can do this at the National Bureau of Expertise. Their contact information is here: www.spyur.am/en/companies/national-bureau-of-expertises/5173
22. I want to know more about getting married in Armenia. Go here for further information about the process: [www.wikiprocedure.com/index.php/Armenia - Getting Married](https://www.wikiprocedure.com/index.php/Armenia_-_Getting_Married) . Go here for further information about the form American citizens must obtain from the Embassy: am.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/marriage/

23. I want to know if I am also an Armenian citizen. There is a good overview of Armenian citizenship law here: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armenian_nationality_law . The actual law translated into English is available here: www.refworld.org/pdfid/51b770884.pdf
24. I want to know more about becoming an Armenian citizen. Go to www.mfa.am/en/citizenship/
25. I want to know more about compulsory military service in Armenia. There is a good overview here: www.ilex.am/en/2-ilex/244-military-service-in-armenia.html
26. I want to know more about extending my stay in Armenia beyond 180 days. Visa extensions are handled by the Passport and Visa Office of the Police of Armenia. Their contact information is here: www.spyur.am/en/companies/passport-and-visa-office/70112
27. I need a visa to travel on my American passport to Russia. Here is the contact information for the Russian Consulate in Yerevan: www.russianembassy.biz/armenia-yerevan.htm
28. I need an official translation of a document into English for use in the U.S. or into Armenian for use locally. You can find a list of notary-translators here: www.spyur.am/en/business_directory/bd/21704
29. I want to know more about flight schedules into/out of Armenia, which airlines serve Zvartnots Airport, whether a particular flight is on time. Go to: www.aia-zvartnots.aero/src/index.php?id=aboutus
30. I want to know more about job opportunities at the Embassy. Go to: www.usa.am/cms/announcements.php

New bus service!

Did you know that there is now a bus service running directly between Republic Square and Zvartnots Airport? There is now an alternative to taxis! The buses and mini-buses will work around the clock and will depart for Zvartnots Airport from Republic Square every hour. Tickets cost 300 AMD. To help you spot the buses, here's a photo of what the sign looks like:



NO, TOURIST VISA DENIALS ARE NEVER ARBITRARY!

We know that many of you remain mystified over tourist visa denials: why wasn't my friend or relative allowed to come to the U.S. for a visit? Time permitting, consular officers do try to explain to an applicant why he/she is being denied, but confusion sometimes remains. Please believe us when we say that there is *always a reason for the denial in accordance with U.S. immigration law*. But in order to make this issue more concrete for you, here is a list of the most common, specific reasons why people are denied tourist visas. If someone you know has been denied, one or more of these reasons probably applied:



1. They do not have strong ties to Armenia that ensure they will return here.
2. The story they told the consular officer made no sense: their reason for travel didn't jive with their personal circumstances.
3. They have a family history of misusing visas.
4. They lack sufficient family ties outside the U.S.
5. They are unemployed and/or do not have enough money to afford the trip.
6. They have previously overstayed a visa in the U.S. and/or been deported.
7. They have been to the U.S. before and committed a crime there.
8. They have received medical treatment in the U.S. and cannot prove that they paid their bills.
9. They are likely to become a financial burden to U.S. taxpayers (i.e. they are likely to require financial assistance in the U.S. or care that they cannot afford)
10. They presented fraudulent documents at a previous visa interview.
11. They applied for the wrong category of visa (i.e. they applied for a tourist visa but plan to study, work, perform, or open a business).
12. They clearly intend to immigrate to/live in the U.S.

Under U.S. law, in order to qualify for a visa, applicants must demonstrate that they have social, economic, and family ties to their home country that are so strong that they would never dream of abandoning them. The way that the law is written, the burden of proof is on applicants to demonstrate their ties and that they will depart the U.S. after a short stay. This is the one place in U.S. law where people are presumed to be guilty until they have proved themselves innocent. If the consular officer has any doubts whatsoever, the application must be refused. More information on how to qualify for a U.S. visa and what the officers consider to be ties is available at travel.state.gov.

As always, we welcome your comments, feedback, and suggestions for inclusion. Write to us at:

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