PALANCA NEWS

Welcome to the Palanca News, a newsletter from the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Angola for the American Citizen community. The purpose of this newsletter is to provide you with updated information about consular services available to Americans abroad, as well as provide information about health and safety issues for travelers. We hope you will find this newsletter useful, and we welcome your suggestions and input.

May 2009

Inside This Issue

- Contact us
- Registration
- Complimentary Registration Letter
- Is your Registration Up-to-Date?
- Upcoming Holidays/Closures
- Country Specific Information Sheet for Angola
- Recent Warden Messages
- New Traffic Code in Angola
- Notarial and Authentication Services
- Tax Information
- U.S. Passport Applications and Forms Online
- Passport fees
- Foreign entry requirements for other countries
- Voting Information
- From the Regional Security Office
- The American Domestic Violence Crisis Line
- Leaving Angola?
- Useful web pages

Contact Us

- Address: Rua Presidente Houari Boumedinne N 32
- Phone: (244) 222-641-000/222-641-086
- Fax: (244) 222-641-259
- Email: Consularluanda@state.gov
- Web page: http://angola.usembassy.gov
- 24-hour Duty Officer cell phone: 923-404-209 (for emergencies only)
- Embassy web site**:** http://luanda.usembassy.gov/
- American Citizen Services hours: Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 2:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Emergency services 24/7

Registration with the U.S. Embassy in Luanda

The cornerstone of our efforts to keep the American traveling public aware of problems threatening their safety and security is our Consular Information Program. If you would like to receive important information issued by the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Embassy in Luanda, please register your stay in Angola by using this online registration service: https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/. By indicating your e-mail address at the time of registration you will automatically receive all U.S. Embassy bulletins and warden messages.

Complimentary Registration Letter

As a courtesy, the U.S. Embassy in Luanda provides U.S. citizens with a registration letter when you register in person. It will include a copy of your passport data page and current Angolan visa, which you may carry as backup identification in the event of a lost or stolen passport. You may obtain a letter by coming in during American Citizen Services hours: Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 2:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Remember to bring your passport!

Is your Registration up-to-date?

Please note that your registration will expire on the departure date you indicate on the registration form. If you work a rotational schedule and do not know how long you will be in Angola, please write “indefinite” and e-mail us at ConsularLuanda@state.gov when you are ready to permanently close your registration with the U.S. Embassy in Luanda.

It is time to update your registration if…

- You are extending your stay in Angola
- You wish to provide additional contact information
- Your contact information has changed

Upcoming Holidays/Closures

The U.S. Embassy will be closed the following days:

May 19 – 26 **– The Consular Section will be closed during this time for administrative purposes. American Citizens Services and visa services will not be available, except in the case of an emergency. For general information emails may be sent to** ConsularLuanda@state.gov**. For any emergencies, please call (244) 222-641-000 or (244) 923-640-154 if you are unable to reach anyone on the first number.**

May 25- **Memorial Day/ African Day**

June 1- **Children's Day**

Country Specific Information Sheet for Angola

Please note the changes recently made regarding travel and safety in Angola:

http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1096.html

(Updated February 20, 2009)

This replaces the Country Specific Information for Angola dated June 20, 2008, to update sections on Medical Facilities and Health Information, Aviation Safety Oversight and Registration/Embassy Location.

Recent Warden Messages

Most Recent Warden Message

Issued 30 April 2009

H1N1 INFLUENZA (SWINE FLU) INFORMATION AND TOWN HALL MEETING:

http://angola.usembassy.gov/wm_05042009.html

World Wide Caution: http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/pa/pa_1161.html

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New Traffic Code in Angola

A new traffic code for Angola went into force April 1, 2009. Please take note of the 6 main rules of the new code:

- It is mandatory for all passengers to wear a seal belt - *article 81*
- It is prohibited to use a mobile phone while driving - *article 83*
- The maximum speed authorized within the city is 60 Km/h - *article 27*
- Blood alcohol level is limited to 0.6 g/l of blood (corresponding approximately to 2 glasses of beer or wine - depending on age, sex and weight) - *article 80*
- Proof of car insurance is mandatory - *article 84*
- All motor vehicles should be equipped with a warning triangle and a reflective jacket - *article 87*

Notarial and Authentication Services

Consulates abroad provide a full range of notarial services, such as taking acknowledgements, oaths, affirmations, affidavits, and attestations for documents required for use in the United States. Notary functions performed by consular officers do not differ much from those performed by a notary public in the United States. The general requirements are that the person appear in person, establish his/her identity, show that he/she is not acting under duress, and that he/she understands the nature, language, and consequences of the documents are the same.

The Consular Section performs notary services during our American Citizen Services hours. Below is an overview of the expected time burden per page:

- Acknowledgments, Oaths, Affirmations, Affidavits and Attestations: 5-10 minutes per page

- Certification of Translations (it is required that we have the translator's signature on file or that the translator appear with photo identification and sign before us): 5-10 minutes per page

** A consular officer may provide notarial services to non-English speaking applicants. However, the officer must be able to understand the document in question. Translations of a foreign language text should be provided by the applicant. If the consul is not comfortable providing the service, s/he will decline and direct the person to a local notary or foreign consul who can communicate in the same language.*

- Power of attorneys: 15 minutes per document
- Certification of True Copies (*not acceptable in many U.S. states): 5-10 minutes per document

** It should be noted that many U.S. states have eliminated certifications of true copies as a function of notaries. In many cases, one must obtain copies certified by the official custodian of the public records.*

What Fees are charged for Consular Notarial and Authentication Services Abroad? Effective June 1, 2002, there is a $30.00 fee for the first notarial service requested, and a $20 fee for each additional seal provided at the same time in connection with the same transaction. Fees must be paid in U.S. dollars only. No personal checks, credit cards, or Kwanzas are accepted.

Notarial Tips:

If your document requires an oath (e.g., if the document says “swear,” “sworn,” “affirm,” “affirmed,” or “affidavit”), do not sign the document, but make sure that all other blanks are filled in before coming to the Embassy. If your signature must be notarized and witnessed, you must bring witnesses with you.

If your document is to be acknowledged (e.g., if the part where the notary is to sign says “acknowledged” or “acknowledges”), complete the entire document and sign it (in front of witnesses, if necessary) before coming to the Embassy.

If you have an additional question about this service, please e-mail ConsularLuanda@state.gov.

Tax Information

The IRS has published a flyer for U.S. taxpayers living abroad to assist taxpayers in locating useful tax information to help in the preparation of their tax returns and/or in resolving tax account problems. To see it, please visit: http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p4732.pdf.

Tax Forms: http://www.irs.gov/formspubs/index.html

For information on your refund: http://www.irs.gov/individuals/article/0,,id=96596,00.html

Contacting the IRS internationally: http://www.irs.gov/localcontacts/article/0,,id=101292,00.html

For tax forms and information, please visit www.irs.gov

U.S. Passport Applications and Forms Online

Did you know that U.S. passport applications and forms are online? Visit:
http://travel.state.gov/passport/forms/forms_847.html

Passport Fees

What Are You Applying For?	Application Fee	* Execution Fee	Total Amount You Pay
Passport Book (Age 16 & Older)	$75.00	$25.00	**$100.00**
Passport Book (Under Age 16)	$60.00	$25.00	**$85.00**
Passport Card (Age 16 & Older)	$20.00	$25.00	**$45.00**
Passport Card (Under Age 16)	$10.00	$25.00	**$35.00**

* The Execution Fee only applies to first time applicants, minors, and when current passport cannot be presented.

Foreign Entry Requirements for Other Countries

For information on entry requirements for a specific country, please go to the Entry/Exit Requirements section in the Country Specific Information for the country you are interested in at http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1765.html. You may also contact the U.S. embassy or consulate of that country for further information.

VOTING INFORMATION

Upcoming Elections

* May 19th: Special General Election in the 32nd Congressional District of California
* June 2nd: New Jersey State Primary Election
* June 9th: Virginia State Primary Election
* November 3rd: State General Elections in New Jersey and Virginia

For information on voting absentee, please visit:
http://www.fvap.gov/overseas-citizens/index.html

From the Regional Security Office:

International Hotels: An Important Collection Arena

Background: Many Americans regard their overseas hotel as a refuge in the midst of a foreign land, language, and culture. This is especially true when they stay in a hotel which is part of a modern upscale chain, even more so if that chain is U.S. owned or based. To us, our hotel room is our own space, a place to relax and let our guard down. Unfortunately this sense of haven is an illusion when it comes to host nation intelligence collection. The host nation's foreign intelligence and security services (FISS) exploit this false sense of security.

The reality is that travelers are often more exposed to host nation FISS in their hotel rooms than anywhere else on their trip. The hotel is the one place the FISS know where to find the traveler before the traveler even arrives. The hotel therefore becomes a primary intelligence collection arena, a "target rich environment." In many countries, there is a strong and sometimes formal relationship between the travel sector and the security sector of society. The term "travel sector" includes airlines, hotels, travel agencies, conference organizers, and similar institutions. The term "security sector" includes such things as visa processing, airline security, passport control, police, foreign intelligence services, and internal security services. An important intersection for these two sectors is the traveler's hotel.

Tracking the Traveler: Americans traveling abroad are sometimes surprised when asked to surrender their passports on checking into their hotel, but they soon learn that this is a common practice in many countries. Few of them think beyond their concern for

the safe return of that valuable document. The fact is that most such requirements exist to assist the host country in monitoring foreigners' travel inside its borders. The passport is usually photocopied or its information transcribed onto forms. In some countries, the passport is not taken, but registration information is used. What happens next varies from country to country, but the information is either kept on hand for use by security personnel, or sent in some fashion to the host nation's internal security service. Sometimes it is submitted electronically from the hotel directly to the nation's internal security service. That service may visit the hotel frequently or even have a permanent presence there. The FBI is our own internal security service, but when travelers check into an upscale U.S. chain hotel in Houston or San Diego, they won't find an FBI presence there. When they check into that same chain overseas, it is likely that the host security service is either on the scene or has contacts that are.

The Internal Security Service: The U.S. traveler in a foreign land is more likely to encounter the host nation's internal security service (ISS) rather than its foreign intelligence service (FIS). The ISS is charged with monitoring the actions of foreigners inside the nation's borders, and its first priority is preventing those persons from harming the nation it protects. In keeping tabs, however, the ISS has lucrative opportunities for intelligence collection, and most nations take advantage of this. The same ISS officer or co-optee who examines a hotel room for signs of illicit activity may also come across proprietary company data or other sensitive information during the same search. Most nations' ISS seek out such information as a secondary but critically important target. The agencies involved in such work will vary greatly from one nation to the next. There may be a single national internal security service with only security duties, or there may be more than one. It is not unusual for an element of the national or local police also to be involved. In some instances, military security or counterintelligence units may be involved, although this is increasingly rare.

Major hotels are such important venues for security and intelligence activity that some nations have specialty squads that do nothing but work the hotels for such purposes. They understand the social milieu of the hotel, know the demographic patterns of which travelers prefer which hotels, and know their physical layout. They cultivate good relations with the hotel security office, recruit informants among the employees, and in some, have permanently installed technical surveillance. They are very effective in security monitoring and intelligence collection as a result.

Laptop Computers: Any personal electronic device (PEDs) constitutes vulnerability, due to the large quantity of information they carry, but laptop computers constitute a special risk. Like other PEDs, the owner often does not pause to think about all the information that it contains. Unlike other PEDs, their size makes them more vulnerable. The owner will not take them to dinner or sightseeing, so they are left unattended for hours at a time. Increasingly, however, physical access to a laptop is no longer necessary to copy its contents. As more hotels offer direct Internet access via the hotel's system, the incidence of remote entry and copying is soaring. Even in the Third World, such exploitation is commonplace. Taking a laptop computer abroad that

contains sensitive information, whether from a security, commercial, or personal standpoint, may place that information at risk.

Technical Surveillance: Technical surveillance is quite common in major hotels abroad. Many hotels use discrete closed circuit television coverage of public areas, primarily as a means to combat crime on their premises. This need not concern most travelers, but they should bear in mind that their actions are more prone to being recorded than they may realize. There are also more intrusive means. The easiest and most widespread is the monitoring of telephone conversations. More invasive is the wiring of the room for audio and sometimes video coverage. In some countries this is done on an as-needed basis, but in many others, major upscale hotels have a number of rooms with coverage permanently in place. Most rooms do not have such installations, but the ones that do are often located in one section of the hotel for reasons of efficiency and ease of installation/maintenance. This proximity can be horizontal (located in one corridor of the same floor) or horizontal (above one another on successive floors). It is also important to know that such placements are not limited to hotel rooms. Certain hotel restaurants have been wired for this purpose as well, although it is less common.

If a traveler stays in the same hotel on a repetitive basis and is assigned the same room or nearby rooms each time, it may indicate that the traveler is being subjected to such monitoring. This is not a foolproof indicator, since there may be an innocuous explanation. Rooms obtained through a standing U.S. military, Embassy, or company arrangement may be used because they have been upgraded to meet standards required by the contract. Both explanations may, of course, be valid.

Coverage: The degree of scrutiny given to American travelers in foreign hotels varies tremendously from one nation to the next. It will depend on the overall nature of relations between the United States and that country, the perception of that nation's ISS regarding the threat posed by U.S. intelligence services, the resources (especially technology and personnel) available to the ISS, and many other factors. It is misleading to assume that a traveler to a nation hostile to the U.S. will receive more attention than in a nation on friendly terms with the U.S. Some nations who are friendly to the U.S., even allies, nonetheless regard U.S. travelers as a lucrative source of economic and technological information. In some nations, business and technology-oriented documents are routinely copied or photographed by low-level players who have little understanding of them, but know that someone up their chain can make such an assessment.

Traveler Safeguards: There is little that you can do to prevent such monitoring from taking place, but there is a great deal you can do to avoid personal or data compromise. The most important thing is to accept that such monitoring is a reality and to conduct one’s self accordingly. Avoid behavior that you would not want captured on tape. Do not carry any information into a foreign hotel that you do not want to fall into other hands. If this is unavoidable, do not leave it unattended. Do not carry any material or engage in any conduct or communications that might lead the ISS to believe that you are

connected with U.S. intelligence or security services. Do not search the room for implanted audio or video devices. If this search is detected, the host ISS is likely to interpret as a strong indicator that you are an intelligence officer. This will only intensify the coverage. (Imagine the host nation ISS watching their screen as you search the room.) Perhaps less obvious, do not carry literature regarding security precautions for traveling abroad, even if unclassified. Read it at home and leave it there. Such literature raises a red flag, albeit less so than searching the room.

Finally, your own transparency is the best safeguard of all. You should carry materials consistent with your stated purpose for visiting the country. Persons on business can carry material germane to that purpose, but should not take material pertaining to other matters, especially if it concerns the host country. Persons on vacation should not carry materials that suggest another purpose. The ISS faces the same restrictions of time, budget, and personnel that any agencies do. They must make decisions about which travelers require further scrutiny and which ones do not. You can help the ISS classify you in the "no further interest" category by giving some thought before hand to your conduct and to the materials you carry with you.

The American Domestic Violence Crisis Line:

The American Domestic Violence Crisis Line works with abused American women and children in foreign countries to provide domestic violence and child abuse advocacy, resources, and tools to help them navigate the complicated jurisdictional, legal, and social international landscapes so they can live their lives free of abuse either in the foreign country or back in the United States.

To access the free crisis line from overseas, contact the regional AT&T operator and ask to be connected to 866-USWOMEN or visit online at www.866uswomen.org. This service is also available to abused men in foreign countries.

Leaving Angola?

If you are departing Angola and you have formally registered your stay with the Embassy, please be sure to "cancel" your registration when you leave.

You can close out your registration by sending us an e-mail at ConsularLuanda@state.gov with your full name and departure date.

Useful Web Pages

- State Department Employment Opportunities - www.careers.state.gov
- The official U.S. government jobs website- www.usajobs.gov.
- Travel Advisories - http://travel.state.gov
- Internal Revenue Service (for tax forms and information) - www.irs.gov
- Department of Motor Vehicles (for driver's license renewal information) - www.dmv.org
- Social Security Administration - www.ssa.gov
- U. S. Customs - www.customs.ustreas.gov
  Medicare - http://www.medicare.gov
- Federal Voting Assistance Program website : www.fvap.gov

Us Passport Applications and Forms- http://travel.state.gov/passport/forms/forms_847.html