

The AmCit

U.S. Embassy Luanda's American Citizen Newsletter

April 2017



CONSULAR LEADERSHIP

PRINCIPLES

The U.S. State Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs has a set of principles we live by. There are ten of these principles, and, over the next several newsletters, we will introduce you to them. This quarter, the two principles we have focused on are **Inspire** and **Model Integrity**.

Credit: diaryofapatrioticnigerian.wordpress.com

INTEGRITY IS
choosing
COURAGE OVER COMFORT;
CHOOSING WHAT IS RIGHT
over what is
FUN, FAST, OR EASY;
AND CHOOSING TO
PRACTICE OUR VALUES
rather than simply
PROFESSING THEM.

When we **inspire**, we look at ways to improve your day and ours by giving you the most efficient and effective customer service experience possible. We want you to leave knowing we are doing our best to help you, to answer your questions, and to make things go right for you.

When we **model integrity**, we are honest with you, our customers, and take responsibility when we make a mistake. We hold ourselves to the highest standards of conduct, meaning we do not accept gifts or favors from our clients and that we enforce U.S law and the embassy's rules fairly and impartially. We strive to treat you the way we would want to be treated in your place.

If you have an opinion on how well we are living up to these tenets or ideas on how we can improve, please tell us. Your views and recommendations make us better.



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HOW DOES CONSULAR AFFAIRS WORK?

The Bureau of Consular Affairs was founded by the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1952. Consular services, though, go back to the founding of the country. The United States has always had consular officers, though they were not part of the Department of State until 1924. Consular work encompasses a wide range of activities. For American citizens living abroad, we provide certificates for life events, notarial services, passports, notifications of danger, and prison and hospital visits. We also help Americans who die abroad return home. For non-Americans, we issue immigrant and non-immigrant visas and perform notarial services. Most of our work is with the general public, and we are always happy to answer questions.

While you may see only our small consular section here in Luanda, we are backed up by a large support staff in Washington, DC, Lisbon, and Johannesburg. Most legal questions, including child custody disputes, are referred back to Washington. They're the experts! Your new passport is usually printed in

Tucson, Arizona, then expressed back to us for you to pick up. We have people who help us with legal issues, with safety, with programming and maintaining our computer systems, and with complex visa cases. Our office here in Luanda is small, but it's just one part of a larger team that helps serve you and keep you safe.

When we have questions about Social Security issues, we reach out to Lisbon; an office in our embassy there supports us. In Johannesburg are security experts with the Customs and Immigration Service (USCIS) who assist us with immigration issues.

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[History of the American Passport](#)

[History of the consular service](#)



FILING YOUR TAXES

It's tax time again! Filing from overseas can be daunting, but there are resources to make the process easier on you. We at the consular section are not able to help you with taxes, including forms, but this newsletter will provide a link to the IRS's filing page for people overseas.

It will be much easier to file online than by paper. Filing online ensures your tax return is received; the IRS does not accept the "it's in the mail" explanation without a receipt from a known and trusted postal carrier. Filing online gives you proof that you have filed. Being overseas, you also automatically have a deadline extension to file to June 15th. The extension is for the return only; to avoid penalties and interest, you must pay any tax owed by the normal deadline.

To find out more about filing from overseas, [click this link](#).

There is one new wrinkle this year with the IRS: the possibility of passport revocation due to delinquent taxes. It's very tough to get to this point – it will be used for people who owe over \$50,000, have not entered into a repayment plan, and are not actively disputing the tax bill. The IRS says it will be implementing this provision of the tax law during the first half of this year. When we have more information we will let you know.

[Here is an informative article regarding the new passport revocation policy.](#)



Picture courtesy of irs.com

SHELTERING IN PLACE

One of our section employees came across an overturned tanker truck while on the way home a little while ago. It was on fire and she had to take a long detour. We don't think much about it, but Luanda and the rest of Angola are full of these kinds of hazards. There are chemical plants in residential neighborhoods and refineries and other oil processing facilities scattered about. Considering these and other risk factors, we all need to be prepared to take shelter in our homes in case of emergency.

What should you do; what should you have?

The very basic is to retreat to your home. Lock your doors, secure your windows. Bring your pets inside. If you are afraid of water or electricity going out, get flashlights and draw water into containers. Remember, your bathtub and sink are water containers too!

If the shelter in place is due to environmental factors, you may need to seal your family into a room with some food, some water, and a means of communication. Stay inside this area until you receive the all-clear.

If the shelter in place is a result of unrest, close all curtains and shutters and make sure all doors are locked and dead bolted. Be sure your cell phone and radio are charged. Tune in to the local news if you can.

Either way, settle in and get comfortable. Be prepared to spend anywhere from a few hours to a week in your shelter area. Medicines, food, water, entertainment – all are necessary to your wellbeing in a situation like this. Have enough on hand and ready, just in case.

The embassy will use all the methods it can to contact you with information that you need. The first order of business is to keep yourself safe.

Here are some articles for further reading:

[Guidelines for Sheltering In Place](#)

[Sheltering from a Chemical Emergency for Kids](#)

[Medicines for Sheltering in Place](#)

[Tips For Shelter In Place](#)



Picture courtesy of Hamilton.ca/emergency-services

Consular Contact Information

By Email: consularluanda@state.gov

On the web: <https://angola.usembassy.gov/>

By Phone: (244) 222-641-000

Our American Citizen Services hours are 14:00-16:30,
Monday through Thursday.

For notaries and non-emergency passport services, please
make an appointment at : <https://angola.usembassy.gov/>.



Closure Dates

The Embassy will be closed on the following dates:

April 4	Peace Day
April 14	Good Friday
May 1	Workers' Day
May 29	Memorial Day

Request for Ideas

This newsletter is for American citizens in Angola.
What topics would you like to be informed about?
How can we make this forum as useful as possible?
Please send your comments and suggestions to:

ACSLuanda@state.gov.

STEP On It!

The **Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)** registers you with the American Embassy during your time overseas. It allows us to contact you in case someone back home asks us to, or in case of a larger emergency or other announcement. You can go into the STEP system and specify what country you'll be in on any given date. Please keep your and your family's information updated - it may be the only way we can find you in an emergency. You can enroll and edit your information online at:

<https://step.state.gov/step/>

You may also come in to the Consular Section and update your information during normal American Citizen Services hours.