



U.S. EMBASSY HELSINKI AMERICAN CITIZEN SERVICES NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2017

Travel Smart. Travel Safe.



Smart
Traveler
Enrollment
Program

The Department of State encourages U.S. citizens living overseas or planning to travel abroad to enroll in the [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#) (STEP).

STEP is a free service of the Department of State. The benefits of STEP enrollment include:

- Registration with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate;
- Access to foreign country safety and security information to help you make informed travel plans;
- Receive notifications in the event of an emergency, such as natural disaster, civil unrest, or security incident; and
- Help family & friends contact you during an emergency.

Enroll in STEP at step.state.gov

Message from the Consul

Serving the interests of U.S. citizens overseas is one of the Embassy's highest priorities. Only through consistent and meaningful engagement with members of the U.S. citizen community are we able to advance this goal.

As the new Consul at U.S. Embassy Helsinki I look forward to hearing from U.S. citizens residing or traveling in Finland and learning more about how the Embassy can better meet your needs.

If you have any questions or comments about the services we provide to U.S. citizens, I ask that you please contact us at HelsinkiACS@state.gov.

Best regards,
Jeremy R. Wisemiller
Consul

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Are you registered to vote? More information on page 3



Worldwide Caution

The Department of State has issued a Worldwide Caution to provide updated information on the continuing threat of terrorist actions, political violence, and criminal activity against U.S. citizens and interests abroad. U.S. citizens are reminded to maintain a high level of vigilance and to take appropriate steps to increase their security awareness. This replaces the Worldwide Caution dated March 6, 2017.

- The updated Worldwide Caution issued September 15, 2017, is available on our website, [here](#).
- The most recent Europe Travel Alert issued September 1, 2017, is available on our website, [here](#).



Selective Service System Registration



Almost all male U.S. citizens, and male alien residents, who are age 18 through 25, are required to register with the Selective Service. **Dual nationals** of the U.S. and another country are required to register, regardless of where they live, because they are U.S. nationals. The easiest and fastest way to register with the Selective Service is online through the [Selective Service System](http://www.sss.gov) website at www.sss.gov.

Registration is a way our government maintains a list of names of men from which to draw in case of a national emergency requiring rapid expansion of our Armed Forces. By registering all young men, the Selective Service ensures that a future draft will be fair and equitable.

It's important to know that although one is registered with the Selective Service, they will not automatically be inducted into the military. In a crisis requiring a draft, men would be called in sequence determined by a random lottery number and year of birth. Then, they would be examined for mental, physical and moral fitness by the military before being deferred or exempted from military service or inducted into the Armed Forces.

For specific information on the Selective Service System and how to register, please visit www.sss.gov.



Social Security Administration Services Overseas

The Social Security Administration (SSA) requires all beneficiaries and most applicants living overseas to contact their specially-designated SSA Federal Benefits Units abroad for SSA provided services.

If you reside in Finland, your designated SSA Federal Benefits Unit is located at U.S. Embassy Oslo. Please send all inquiries regarding SSA provided benefits and services, including social security number and card applications, to fbu.oslo@ssa.gov. You may also contact the Oslo Federal Benefits Unit via their website, [here](#).

For additional information on the SSA's services abroad, please [Service Around the World](#) on SSA.gov.

Stay Connected with U.S. Embassy Helsinki		FACEBOOK	http://www.facebook.com/finland.usembassy
		TWITTER	http://twitter.com/usembfinland
Questions? Comments? HelsinkiACS@state.gov		YOUTUBE	http://www.youtube.com/USEmbassyHelsinki
		INSTAGRAM	https://www.instagram.com/u.s._embassy_helsinki/
		FLICKR	https://www.flickr.com/photos/usembfinland/

Americans can vote. Wherever they are.



Did you know active duty military members, their spouses and overseas citizens can exercise their right to vote from anywhere in the world?

The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) works to ensure that Americans living away from their voting residence can cast an absentee ballot in federal elections.

HERE'S HOW:

GO TO [FVAP.GOV](https://fvap.gov) AND SELECT THE STATE OF VOTING RESIDENCE TO REGISTER AND REQUEST A BALLOT OR TALK TO SOMEONE AT FVAP



vote@fvap.gov



1-800-438-VOTE



FILL OUT AND SEND IN THE *FEDERAL POST CARD APPLICATION (FPCA)*

It is both a voter registration form and absentee ballot request form.



HOW? Use FVAP's online assistant or fill out the FPCA by hand and then mail to the election office. Some States allow email, too. State-specific requirements and contact info are at [FVAP.gov](https://fvap.gov).

FILL OUT THE ABSENTEE BALLOT WHEN IT ARRIVES



WHEN WILL THAT BE?

For the General Election, the ballot should arrive by early October.

ANYTHING ELSE?

Some States require a signed affidavit or envelope.



WHAT IF THE BALLOT DOESN'T ARRIVE BY THE DEADLINE?

Fill out the *Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB)* at [FVAP.gov](https://fvap.gov) and send it



MAKE SURE THE BALLOT WAS RECEIVED

HOW? Select the State at [FVAP.gov](https://fvap.gov) to check its status

Don't Forget!

- Register to vote & request an absentee ballot from the **FEDERAL VOTING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM** at [FVAP.gov](https://fvap.gov)
- Complete a [Federal Post Card Application \(FPCA\)](#) *each year*.
- Never Resided in the U.S.? Go to [FVAP.gov](https://fvap.gov) for voter registration information.



Notarial Services

Notarizing officers at U.S. Embassy Helsinki provide services similar to the functions of a notary public in the United States. Notarial services are provided for U.S. citizens and non-U.S. citizens whose documents are intended for use in the United States. Each notarial service is by [appointment only](#).

For complete information, including requirements, scheduling, and examples of notarial services provided, please visit the Embassy's [notarial services](#) page & review the following useful tips and requirements.

Notarial Services Tips and Requirements

- The fee per Consular seal is \$50, payable in cash or by credit card.
- Bring valid government issued identification such as a passport, driver's license, or national I.D. card. Your name must be spelled correctly in the document/s and must match the identification presented.
- Please review your document/s carefully and clearly identify all places where the notarizing officer needs to sign prior to your appointment. **DO NOT SIGN THE DOCUMENT IN ADVANCE.**
- You must understand the document you are signing, Embassy staff are not able to explain documents or provide legal advice.
- If two people need to sign the same document, or if a witness is required, the names of all attendees must be submitted in advance. Embassy staff are not able to serve as witnesses.
- Appointments should be made using the Embassy's [online reservation system](#).

Processing Time

Notarial services take approximately 30 - 45 min.

Please Note

U.S. Embassy Helsinki is not authorized to issue apostilles or authenticate U.S. academic credentials. For information on apostilles or the authentication of American academic credentials please review the U.S. Department of State [Authentications and Apostilles](#) website.

Diversity Immigrant Visa Program (DV-2019)

The U.S. Department of State is accepting entries for the 2019 Diversity Immigrant Visa Program (DV-2019). Due to a technical glitch the online registration period has been revised. Online entries are accepted from **Tuesday, October 18, 2017**, through noon (EDT), on **Wednesday, November 22, 2017**. Please note, all entries made prior to October 18, 2017, will need to be resubmitted for the entrant to be considered.

For the DV-2019 year, 50,000 Diversity Visas will be made available. There is no cost to submit an electronic entry form, however, applicants must submit their entry at dvlottery.state.gov no later than **Wednesday, November 22, 2017**. Late or incomplete entries will not be accepted. Applicants are advised not to wait until the last week of registration to enter, as heavy demand could result in website delays.



Please visit the [Diversity Visa \(DV-2019\) entry instructions](#) page for additional information. A video with step-by-step guidance on submitting a DV-2019 entry is also available [here](#).

Travel Reminders and Recommendations

In response to inquiries about restrictions of personal electronics on international flights entering the United States, we would like to direct members of the U.S. citizen community to current aviation security guidance provided by the Department of Homeland Security.



Current DHS guidance on [aviation security](#) indicates there are currently no airlines under restrictions for large personal electronic devices. The latest DHS [press release](#) on the issue states: There are currently no airlines under restrictions for large personal electronic devices. The Transportation Security Agency (TSA) has lifted the restrictions on large personal electronic devices for the ten airports/nine airlines in the Middle East and North Africa, which were announced in March 2017. These airports and airlines have also successfully implemented the first phase of enhanced security measures.

Department of State On-line

Travel Resources

- [State Department Country Specific Information Pages](#)
- [State Department U.S. Bilateral Relations Fact Sheets](#)
- [U.S. Embassy, Consulate, and Diplomatic Mission Websites](#)
- [State Department Travel Information Page](#)
- [Information for Women Travelers](#)
- [Faith-Based Travel Information](#)
- [LGBTI Travel Information](#)
- [Information for Cruise Ship Passengers](#)
- [Consideration for Older Travelers](#)

Even the most experienced traveler sometimes needs a friendly reminder. U.S. Embassy Helsinki encourages travelers to do the following when planning their next trip. **BON VOYAGE!**



GET INFORMED about where you are going, at travel.state.gov/destination.



GET REQUIRED DOCUMENTS, such as your passport and visas.



GET ENROLLED in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (step.state.gov) for security & emergency alerts.



GET INSURED for medical, evacuation and other unexpected expenses.



GET IN CONTACT with family and friends, make sure they have your itinerary & contact information in case you need to be reached during your trip.



**Be Prepared for Changes to ID Requirements for Domestic Flights
The U.S. Passport and Passport Card are REAL ID Compliant**

Beginning January 22, 2018, domestic air passengers with driver’s licenses issued by a state that is not yet compliant with REAL ID and that has not received an extension will need to show an alternative form of acceptable identification for domestic air travel. Both the U.S. passport card and passport book are REAL ID compliant. If you already have a REAL ID compliant driver’s license, it will remain valid for domestic air travel.

The REAL ID Act, which became law in 2005, requires driver’s licenses to meet minimum security standards for issuance and production. For air travel and certain other purposes, federal agencies are prohibited from accepting driver’s licenses and identification cards from states not meeting the Act’s minimum standards unless those states have been granted extensions.

The U.S. passport book and the U.S. passport card are REAL ID compliant and are acceptable identification to board domestic flights. The U.S. passport card is the same size as a driver’s license and only costs \$55 for first time applicants or \$30 for those who have already had a passport. **A U.S. passport BOOK is always required for international air travel – passport cards are not valid for international air travel.**

For more information on the acceptable forms of identification for boarding aircraft, please see TSA’s website tsa.gov. To find out if your state’s driver’s license or ID are Real ID compliant visit the Department of Homeland Security’s website dhs.gov/real-id.



U.S. Passport Card

The passport card is a wallet-size travel document that can only be used to re-enter the United States at land border-crossings and sea ports-of-entry from Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Bermuda. The card provides a less expensive, smaller, and convenient alternative to the passport book. The card is REAL ID compliant.

Embassy Holiday Closures

U.S. Embassy Helsinki will be closed in observance of the following Finnish and U.S. holidays:

Friday, November 10, 2017	Veterans’ Day	(U.S. Holiday)
Thursday, November 23, 2017	Thanksgiving Day	(U.S. Holiday)
Wednesday, December 6, 2017	Independence Day	(Finnish Holiday)
Monday, December 25, 2017	Christmas Day	(U.S. & Finnish Holiday)
Tuesday, December 26, 2017	Second Christmas Day	(Finnish Holiday)
Monday, January 1, 2018	New Year’s Day	(U.S. and Finnish Holiday)

**U.S. Embassy Helsinki
American Citizen Services
Itäinen Puistotie 14 B
00140 Helsinki, Finland**

**Email: HelsinkiACS@state.gov
Web: <http://fi.usembassy.gov>
<http://travel.state.gov>**