

American Citizen Services Consular Mission Ecuador



A Newsletter for the U.S. Community in Ecuador

Welcome from the U.S. Ambassador

My Fellow U.S. Citizens,

It gives me great pleasure to greet you in this inaugural issue of the American Citizen Services (ACS) Newsletter. It's fitting that this issue go out in conjunction with July 4th – the birth of our nation. The ACS Newsletter is an important tool for us to reach all of the U.S. citizens residing in Ecuador.

On July 4th, we commemorate the Independence of the United States and honor the great history of our country. This year, we also take this opportunity to celebrate a new era in U.S.-Ecuadorian relations with the new presidency of Lenin Moreno. The deepening and growing ties between our two countries include new areas of cooperation and build upon the diplomatic relationship shared between our two countries over the last nearly 200 years.

I have confidence that the United States and Ecuador will be able to leverage common interests to work together in various topics including education, security, health, business, English language instruction, and natural disaster preparedness in addition to other areas of cooperation. These opportunities to collaborate will provide important opportunities for U.S. citizens living and working or traveling to Ecuador.

We look forward to serving you in the year to come and beyond.

Best wishes,

Todd C. Chapman
Ambassador



Amb. Todd Chapman

This newsletter is also available on our website at: <https://ec.usembassy.gov/>

Please pass this newsletter on to any other U.S. Citizens in Ecuador and encourage them to enroll in STEP (<https://step.state.gov/step/>) to receive our newsletters in the future.

Did You Know?

In 2007, the Department of State experienced an unprecedented surge in passport applications, issuing over 18 million passports as a result of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI). Those passports are now beginning to expire. Renew your passport well ahead of planned travel to avoid possible delays! See page three for information about renewing.

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Upcoming Holiday Closures

Independence Day (U.S.)
(July 4)

Founding of Guayaquil
(Consulate General only)
(July 25)

Independence Day (Ecuador)
(August 11)

Labor Day (U.S.)
(September 04)

A complete list of all of our holiday closings for 2017 is available online at <https://ec.usembassy.gov/holiday-calendar-2017/>



Words from the Country Consular Coordinator

I am very happy to share this inaugural issue of the revamped U.S. Consular Mission Ecuador American Citizen Services Newsletter. This newsletter is intended to provide tips and information of interest to U.S. citizens either living in or traveling through Ecuador. Our hope is that this resource will provide timely and useful information about services provided in both the U.S. Embassy in Quito and the U.S. Consulate General in Guayaquil as well as general interest information related to health and safety.

Every year we see more U.S. citizens choosing to make Ecuador their new home or choosing to visit to enjoy the incomparable wildlife, beautiful sights, and amazing culture. Our goal is to provide you with the best services that we can, whether you require routine services such as passport renewal, Consular Reports of Birth or Death Abroad, or Social Security and Federal Benefits assistance, or non-routine services such as help in an emergency.

In an effort to provide the best customer service possible, the U.S. Embassy is publishing a newsletter to provide information that we believe U.S. citizens living and traveling in Ecuador will find useful.

As the Country Consular Coordinator, I hope that this newsletter will be just one of the ways that we can improve the customer experience for U.S. Citizens in Ecuador. We welcome your feedback at ACSQuito@state.gov.



Country Consular Coordinator
Alexander P. Delorey

Respectfully,
Alexander P. Delorey
Country Consular Coordinator

Did You Know?

Celebrations of the Fourth of July became more common as the years went on—and in 1870, almost a hundred years after the Declaration was written, Congress first declared July 4 to be a national holiday.



Why We Celebrate July 4th?

U.S. citizens around the world celebrate U.S. Independence Day on the Fourth of July every year. We think of July 4, 1776 as a day that represents the Declaration of Independence and the birth of the United States of America as an independent nation. However the Continental Congress actually declared independence from the British monarchy on July 2, 1776.

So what did happen on July 4, 1776?

The Continental Congress approved the final wording of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. The date the final changes were approved, therefore, became the date that was included on the Declaration of Independence, and the formal handwritten copy that was signed in August (the copy now displayed at the National Archives in Washington, D.C.)

It's also the date that was printed on the Dunlap Broadside, the original printed copies of the Declaration that were circulated throughout the new nation. As a result, July 4, 1776 became the date ingrained in people's minds as U.S. Independence Day.

NO GLASSES IN YOUR NEW PASSPORT



Example of Acceptable Photo That Follows the New Photo Guidance

Eyeglasses Are No Longer Permitted in Photos

Please remove your eyeglasses when you take your next passport or visa photo. Did you know that the majority of passport applications that had delays in processing last year were due to issues stemming from eyeglasses? As of November 1, 2016, eyeglasses are no longer allowed in U.S. visa and passport photos.

A Few Reminders:

- Your head must face the camera directly with full

face in view

- You must have a neutral facial expression or a natural smile, with both eyes open
- You cannot wear a hat or head covering (unless for medical or religious reasons)
- You cannot wear eyeglasses (unless for medical reasons)

The photo should be:

- Taken in clothing normally worn on a daily basis

- Taken in the last 6 months
- Use either a plain white or off-white background
- Be sized correctly (2 x 2 inches or 51 x 51 mm)
- Printed in color

For more information about passport photo requirements, visit the U.S. State Department [website](https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/passports/photos.html), at <https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/passports/photos.html>

Did You Know?

Forbes Magazine and *International Living* have ranked Ecuador as one of the top five retirement destinations for the last several years.

Important IRS ITIN and Tax Updates

As of January 1, 2017, the IRS mandates that all Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers (ITINs) will no longer be valid for use on a tax return if they have not been used at least once in the last three years.

To find out more information, please visit IRS.gov.

Did You Know?

If you are a U.S. citizen or resident alien residing overseas, or are in the military on duty outside the United States, you may be allowed an automatic two month extension to file your return without requesting an extension.

For a calendar year return, the automatic two month extension is to June 15.

Note that you must pay any tax due by April 15 or interest will be charged starting from April 15.

Please check IRS.gov to see if this extension applies to you.



Passports – Apply Now to Avoid Delays

In 2007, we experienced an unprecedented surge in passport applications as a result of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative. Nearly ten years later, those passports are beginning to expire.

We are expecting an increase in passport applications through 2018. Submit your passport application well ahead of your planned travel dates in order to avoid possible

delays!

The U.S. Embassy and Consulate General accept U.S. passport applications and forward them to the United States for processing. A passport, once approved, normally arrives at the Embassy or Consulate General and is typically ready for pick-up in about 10 to 15 working days. Some more complicated cases may require additional processing time, so please apply well in

advance of your passport expiration date and travel plans.

Please visit the U.S. Embassy and U.S. Consulate General's [web page](https://ec.usembassy.gov/) at <https://ec.usembassy.gov/> for information about applying for a first time passport or renewal.

Zika Information Sheet

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) updated its assessment regarding the Zika virus in Ecuador on March 10, 2017. Public health officials have reported that mosquitoes in Ecuador are infected with Zika virus, which is spreading to people. The CDC recommends that travelers to Ecuador use a variety of measures to protect themselves from mosquito bites.

Zika Virus in Pregnancy

A pregnant woman can pass Zika virus to her fetus. Infection during pregnancy can cause serious birth defects. CDC recommends special precautions for the following groups:

- Women who are pregnant
- Women who are trying to become pregnant

NOTE: Mosquitoes that spread Zika usually do not live at elevations about 6,500 feet (2,000 meters) because of environmental conditions.

Check out the CDC's [website](https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/alert/zika-virus-ecuador) (https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/alert/zika-virus-ecuador) for more information and tips on how to protect yourself.



Mosquitoes Transmit the Zika Virus

What Can You Do To Prevent Zika?

There is no vaccine or medicine for Zika. Protect yourself by preventing mosquito bites:

Cover exposed skin by wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants.

Use EPA-registered insect repellents containing DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, IR3535, or 2-undecanone (methyl nonyl ketone). Use as directed.

Pregnant and breastfeeding women **should consult with their attending physician.**

While most repellents, including DEET, can be used on children older than two months, we urge parents to **consult with their physician.**

Use permethrin-treated clothing and gear (such as boots, pants, socks, and tents).

Stay in places with air conditioning and window and door screens to keep mosquitoes outside. Sleep under a mosquito net if air conditioned or screened rooms are not available or if sleeping outdoors.

Post-Travel Recommendations

Many people infected with Zika virus do not feel sick. If a mosquito bites an infected person while the virus is still in that person's blood, it can spread the virus by biting another person. If you travel to Ecuador, you should take steps to prevent mosquito bites for three weeks after your trip, even if you don't feel sick, so that you don't spread Zika to uninfected mosquitoes that can spread the virus to other people.

If you feel sick and think you may have Zika:

Talk to your doctor if you develop a fever with a rash, joint pain, or red eyes. Tell him or her about your travel.

Remember to get lots of rest and drink plenty of liquids.

If you are pregnant:

Talk to a doctor or other health care provider after your trip, even if you don't feel sick.

Additional Info for Travelers:

[Zika Travel Information](#)

[Avoid Bug Bites](#)

[Insect Repellent Use and Safety](#)



Low Elevation (Dark Purple) vs. High Elevation (Light Purple) Areas of Ecuador

Travel Alerts and Warnings; U.S. Citizen Messages

Travel Alerts and Warnings

The Department of State issues a Travel Warning when we want you to consider very carefully whether you should go to a country at all.

Examples of reasons for issuing a Travel Warning might include unstable government, civil war, ongoing intense crime or violence, or frequent terrorist attacks. We want you to know the risks of traveling to these places and to strongly consider not going to them at all. Travel Warnings remain in place until the situation

changes; some have been in effect for years.

We issue a Travel Alert for short-term events we think you should know about when planning travel to a country.

Examples of reasons for issuing a Travel Alert might include a specific period that is bound to have many strikes, demonstrations, or disturbances; a health alert such as an outbreak of H1N1 flu; or evidence of an elevated risk of terrorist attacks. When these short-term events are over, we cancel the Travel Alert.

Messages for U.S. Citizens

At times, the U.S. Embassy or Consulate General may release information specific to Ecuador that may be of interest to U.S. citizens that either are living in or traveling to the country. Such messages are posted to the Embassy's website (<https://ec.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/security-and-travel-information/>) and, if conditions merit, sent via email to STEP enrollees.

To enroll in STEP, please visit the link <https://step.state.gov/step/>.



Worldwide Travel Caution (March 7, 2017)

As part of the Department of State's continuous efforts to provide U.S. citizens traveling abroad with information about safety and security events, we have updated the Worldwide Caution with information on the continuing threat of terrorist actions, political violence, and criminal activity against U.S. citizens and interests abroad. This replaces the Worldwide Caution dated September 9, 2016.

As terrorist attacks, political upheaval, and violence often take place without any warning, U.S. citizens are strongly encouraged to maintain a high level of vigilance and take appropriate steps to increase their security awareness when traveling. To better prepare for possible emergencies, U.S. citizens are encouraged to read Country Specific Information pages, Travel Warnings, and Travel Alerts on travel.state.gov before planning a trip.

Travelers are urged to enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) at <https://step.state.gov/step/> to receive security messages and

make it easier to locate you in an emergency. The Department uses these security messages to convey information about terrorist threats, security incidents, planned demonstrations, natural disasters, etc. In an emergency, please contact the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate or call the following numbers: 1-888-407-4747 (toll-free in the United States and Canada) or 1-202-501-4444 from other countries.

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. U.S. citizens abroad are urged to monitor the local news and maintain contact with the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.

Terrorist groups including ISIS, al-Qa'ida, their associates, and those inspired by such organizations, are intent on attacking U.S. citizens wherever they are. Extremists

may use conventional or non-conventional weapons to target U.S. government and private interests. Terrorists are increasingly using less sophisticated methods of attack to more effectively target crowds, including the use of edged weapons, pistols, and vehicles as weapons. Extremists increasingly aim to assault "soft" targets, such as:

- high-profile public events (sporting contests, political rallies, demonstrations, holiday events, celebratory gatherings, etc.)
- hotels, clubs, and restaurants
- places of worship
- schools
- parks
- shopping malls and markets
- tourism infrastructure
- public transportation systems
- airports

In multiple regions, terrorists, guerrilla groups, and criminals

seek to kidnap U.S. citizens to finance their operations or for political purposes. In the wake of well-publicized attacks against commercial aircraft in Egypt by ISIS and Somalia by al-Shabaab, the Department remains concerned that terrorists could again seek to down aircraft using concealed explosives or hijack commercial flights.

Private U.S. citizens should not travel to any country to participate in armed conflict. U.S. citizens are reminded that fighting on behalf of or providing other forms of support to designated terrorist organizations can constitute the provision of material support for terrorism, which is a serious crime that can result in penalties, including prison time and large fines.

In addition to concerns stemming from terrorism, travelers should be alert to the possibility of political unrest, violence, demonstrations, and criminal activities when traveling. Country-specific information pages and Travel Warnings should be consulted to obtain the latest data on such threats.

American Citizen Services (ACS) Hours in Quito

U.S. Embassy Quito ACS Hours					
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
WALK INS/NO APPOINTMENTS					
8:00 am - 09:00 am					Submission of Follow Up Documentation (90 Day Letters)
11:00 am - 12:00 pm	Form DS-82/DS-5504 Passport Renewals Passport Pick Up		Form DS-82/DS-5504 Passport Renewals Passport Pick Up		Form DS-82/DS-5504 Passport Renewals Passport Pick Up
BY APPOINTMENT ONLY					
8:00 am - 9:30 am	Consular Report of Birth Abroad	Consular Report of Birth Abroad	Consular Report of Birth Abroad	Consular Report of Birth Abroad	
1:15 pm - 3:30 pm	Form DS-11 Passport Applications	Form DS-11 Passport Applications	Form DS-11 Passport Applications	Form DS-11 Passport Applications	
1:30 pm - 3:30pm	Notarial Services			Notarial Services	

Contacting the ACS Unit in Quito

The Consular Section is open Monday – Friday from 8:00 am – 5:00 pm with the exception of U.S. and Ecuadorian holidays.

If you require ACS assistance during normal business hours, please email ACSQuito@state.gov. For emergency assistance outside of these hours, please call (02) 398-5000 and ask to be connected to the Duty Officer.

Please note that staff members do not have access to the ACSQuito email inbox overnight or on weekends.

How Can American Citizen Services (ACS) Help in an Emergency?

ACS seeks to ensure the welfare of U.S. citizens in emergency situations (e.g. in the event of robbery, assault, death, or medical emergency). In addition to speaking with an ACS Officer or the Duty Officer, we have numerous resources on our website including translation resources, medical facilities, info sheets on judicial process, and lists of lawyers you may wish to consider.

For lost or stolen U.S. passports, we are able to assist with replacement documents during the next business day. People seeking these services should consult our website and look for the drop down section entitled “Lost or Stolen Passport” for information regarding what you will need to bring to the appointment.

If you are seeking emergency services during work days from 8:00 am—5:00 pm, please ask the guards to call the ACS section to request entry.

American Citizen Service Hours in Guayaquil

U.S. Consulate Guayaquil ACS Hours					
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
WALK INS/NO APPOINTMENTS					
11:00 am - 12:00 pm	Form DS-82/DS-5504 Passport Renewals Passport Pick Up	Form DS-82/DS-5504 Passport Renewals Passport Pick Up	Form DS-82/DS-5504 Passport Renewals Passport Pick Up		

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
BY APPOINTMENT ONLY					
Form DS-11 Passport Applications	7:45 - 10:00 am				
Notarial Services					09:00 - 11:00 am
Consular Report of Birth Abroad	10:00 - 11: 00am; 12:45- 2:00 pm				

Contacting the ACS Unit in Guayaquil

The Consular Section is open Monday – Friday from 8:00 am – 5:00 pm with the exception of U.S. and Ecuadorian holidays.

If you require ACS assistance during normal business hours, please email ACSGuayaquil@state.gov. For emergency assistance outside of these hours, please call (04) 371-7000 and ask to be connected to the Duty Officer.

Please note that staff members do not have access to the ACSGuayaquil email inbox overnight or on weekends.