

China Consular Information Sheet

January 15, 2004

COUNTRY DESCRIPTION: The People's Republic of China was established on October 1, 1949, with Beijing as its capital city. With well over 1.3 billion citizens, China is the world's most populous country and the third largest country in the world in terms of territory. China is undergoing rapid, profound economic and social change and development. Political power remains centralized in the Chinese Communist Party. Modern tourist facilities are available in major cities, but many facilities in smaller provincial cities and rural areas are frequently below international standards.

ENTRY/EXIT REQUIREMENTS: A valid passport and visa are required to enter China and must be obtained from Chinese Embassies and Consulates before traveling to China. Americans arriving without valid passports and the appropriate Chinese visa are not permitted to enter and will be subject to a fine and immediate deportation at the traveler's expense. Travelers should not rely on Chinese host organizations claiming to be able to arrange a visa upon arrival. Chinese Authorities have recently tightened their visa issuance policy, in some cases requiring personal interviews of American citizens and regularly issuing one or two entry visas valid for short periods only.

Visas are required to transit China. Persons transiting China on the way to and from Mongolia or North Korea or who plan to re-enter from the Hong Kong or Macau Special Administrative Regions should be sure to obtain visas allowing multiple entries. Permits are required to visit Tibet as well as many remote areas not normally open to foreigners.

For information about landing visa requirements and other entry requirements and restricted areas, travelers may consult the Embassy of the People's Republic of China (PRC) at 2300 Connecticut Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008, or telephone (1-202) 328-2500, 2501 or 2502. For a list of services and frequently asked visa questions and answers, travelers can view the Chinese Embassy's web sites at <http://www.china-embassy.org/>. The Chinese Embassy's visa section may be reached by e-mail at [\[log in to unmask\]](mailto:log in to unmask) There are Chinese Consulates General in Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, New York, and San Francisco. Americans traveling in Asia have been able to obtain visas to enter China from the Chinese visa office in Hong Kong and the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Seoul, South Korea.

Americans who overstay or otherwise violate the terms of their Chinese visas will be subject to a maximum fine of 5,000 RMB (approximately \$600) and departure delays and may be subject to detention. Travelers should note that international flights departing China are routinely overbooked, making reconfirmation of departure reservations and early airport check-in essential. Passengers must pay a RMB 90 airport user fee (approximately \$11 US) when departing China on international flights and RMB 50 airport fee (approximately US \$6.10) for all domestic flights.

In an effort to prevent international child abduction, many governments have initiated new procedures at entry / exit points. These often include requiring documentary evidence of relationship and permission for the child's travel from the parent(s) or legal guardian if they are not present. Having such documentation on hand, even if not required, may facilitate entry/departure.

DUAL NATIONALITY: China does not recognize dual nationality. Some U.S. citizens who are also Chinese nationals (mostly U.S.-born children of Chinese nationals or Legal Permanent Residents) have experienced difficulty entering and departing China on U.S. passports. In some cases, such dual nationals are required to use Chinese travel documents to depart China. Normally this causes inconvenience but no significant problems for affected persons; however, in child custody disputes, the ability of dual national children to depart from China could be affected. Chinese "Travel Permits" (Luxingzheng) are usually issued to U.S. citizen children of Chinese citizens in lieu of a visa. These documents are essentially one-way permits that allow entry into China, but do not permit the holder to depart. Persons holding Chinese "Travel Permits" are regarded as Chinese citizens by Chinese authorities. In addition to being subject to all Chinese laws, dual nationals may also be subject to other laws that impose special obligations on Chinese citizens. In some cases, such dual nationals are required to use Chinese documentation to enter China, in which case U.S. consular access and protection has been routinely denied. Dual nationals who enter and depart China using a U.S. passport and a valid PRC visa retain the right of U.S. consular access and protection under the U.S.-PRC Consular Convention. The ability of the U.S. Embassy or Consulates General to provide normal consular services may be extremely limited should a dual national enter China on a Chinese or other non-U.S. travel document, including PRC documents issued to persons from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macau.

If one or both parents of a child are PRC nationals who have not permanently settled in another country, then China regards their children as PRC nationals and does not recognize any other citizenship they may acquire at birth, including U.S. citizenship. This is true regardless of where the children are born. Such children are required to enter and depart China on PRC travel documents. Although Chinese consulates have frequently issued visas to such individuals in error,

they are treated solely as PRC nationals by Chinese authorities when in China. Specific questions on dual nationality may be directed to the Office of Overseas Citizens Services, Department of State, Room 4811, Washington, D.C. 20520 or to the U.S. Embassy or one of the U.S. Consulates General in China. For additional information, please see the Bureau of Consular Affairs home page on the Internet at <http://travel.state.gov/> for the Dual Nationality flyer.

SAFETY AND SECURITY: Americans visiting or residing in China are advised to take the normal safety precautions travelers take when in any foreign country. Specifically, travelers should remain aware of their surroundings and of events that are happening around them. Travelers should respect local police requirements to temporarily avoid travel in some areas. In light of the greatly increased numbers of older Americans traveling to China, U.S. tour operators should check that local guides are familiar with medical facilities and emergency medical evacuation procedures.

American citizens who rent apartments with gas appliances should be aware that in some areas, natural gas is not scented to warn occupants of gas leaks or concentrations. In addition, heaters may not always be well vented, thereby allowing excess carbon monoxide to build up in living spaces. Due to fatal accidents involving American citizens, travelers are advised to ensure all gas appliances are properly vented or install gas and carbon monoxide detectors in their residences. These devices are not widely available in China, and they should be purchased prior to arrival.

Chinese security personnel may place foreign government officials, journalists, and business people with access to advanced proprietary technology under surveillance. Hotel rooms and personal computing devices for these categories of visitors may be subject to search without the consent or knowledge of the traveler.

Terrorism is rare in China, although a small number of bombings and incidents of unrest have occurred in areas throughout China. Recent bombings have largely been criminal activity, frequently the result of commercial disputes between Chinese. There is no indication that acts of public violence have been directed against foreigners or that foreign elements in China have carried out terrorist attacks.

For the latest security information, Americans traveling abroad should regularly monitor the Department's Internet web site at <http://travel.state.gov>, where the current Worldwide Caution Public Announcement, Travel Warnings and Public Announcements can be found.

Up to date information on security can also be obtained by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll free in the U.S., or, for callers outside the U.S. and Canada, a regular toll line at 1-317-472-2328. These numbers are available from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays).

Security personnel may at times place foreign visitors under surveillance. Hotel rooms, telephones and fax machines may be monitored, and personal possessions in hotel rooms may be searched. Taking photographs of anything that could be perceived as being of military or security interest may result in problems with authorities.

CRIME: Overall, China is a safe country, with a low but increasing crime rate. Pickpockets target tourists at sightseeing destinations, open-air markets and in stores, often with the complicity of low-paid security guards. Violence against foreigners occurs, but it is rare. Over the past year incidents of violence against foreigners have usually taken place in urban areas where bars and nightclubs are located. The number of violent incidents against Americans in China is very low on a worldwide basis (there were nine reported violent attacks on American citizens in 2003), but such incidents do occur. Robberies, sometimes at gunpoint, have occurred in western China, and there have been some reports of robberies and assaults along remote mountain highways near China's border with Nepal. Travelers are sometimes asked by locals to exchange money at a preferential rate. It is illegal to exchange dollars for RMB except at banks, hotels and official exchange offices. Due to the large volume of counterfeit currency in China, unofficial exchanges usually result in travelers losing their money and possibly left to face charges of breaking foreign exchange laws. If detained by police under suspicion of committing an economic crime involving currency, travelers may be delayed for weeks or months while police investigate the allegations.

Travelers should have small bills (RMB 10, 20 and 50 notes) for travel by taxi. Reports of taxi drivers using counterfeit RMB 50 and 100 notes to make change for large bills are increasingly common. Be sure to get a receipt from the taxi driver.

Throughout China, women outside hotels in tourist districts frequently use the prospect of companionship or sex to lure foreign men to isolated locations where accomplices are waiting for the purpose of robbery. Travelers should not allow themselves to be driven to bars or an individual's home unless they know the person making the offer. Hotel guests should refuse to open their room doors to anyone they do not know personally.

American visitors to China should carry their passports with them out of reach of pickpockets. Americans with Chinese residence permits (juliuzheng) should carry these documents, and leave their passports in a secure location except when traveling. All Americans are encouraged to make photocopies of their passport bio-data pages and Chinese visas and to keep these in a separate, secure location, and to register with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate General. Please note the contact information below for registration by e-mail addresses.

The loss or theft abroad of a U.S. passport should be reported immediately to the local police and the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate. If you are the victim of a crime while overseas, in addition to reporting to local police, please contact the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate for assistance. The Embassy/Consulate staff can, for example, assist you to find appropriate medical care, to contact family members or friends and explain how funds could be transferred. Although the investigation and prosecution of the crime is solely the responsibility of local authorities, consular officers can help you to understand the local criminal justice process and to find an attorney if needed.

U.S. citizens may refer to the Department of State's pamphlet, A Safe Trip Abroad, for ways to promote a trouble-free journey. The pamphlet is available by mail from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402, via the Internet at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov>, or via the Bureau of Consular Affairs home page at <http://travel.state.gov>.

MEDICAL FACILITIES: Western-style medical facilities with international staffs are available in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and a few other large cities. Many other hospitals in major Chinese cities have so-called VIP wards (gaogan bingfang). These feature reasonably up-to-date medical technology and physicians who are both knowledgeable and skilled. Most VIP wards also provide medical services to foreigners and have English-speaking doctors and nurses. Most hospitals in China will not accept medical insurance from the United States, with the exception of the following hospitals, which are on the BlueCross BlueShield's worldwide network providers - overseas network hospitals' list (<http://www.fepblue.org/wasite/wabenefits/wa-benefitoverseas04.html>): Hong Kong Adventist Hospital, Beijing United Family Hospital, Beijing Friendship Hospital, International Medical Center in Beijing, and Peking Union Medical Center. Travelers will be asked to post a deposit prior to admission to cover the expected cost of treatment. Hospitals in major cities may accept credit cards for payment. Even in the VIP/Foreigner wards of major hospitals, however, American patients have frequently encountered difficulty due to cultural and regulatory differences. Physicians and hospitals have sometimes refused to supply American patients with complete copies of their Chinese hospital medical records, including laboratory test results, scans, and x-rays. All Americans traveling to China are strongly encouraged to buy foreign medical care and medical evacuation insurance prior to arrival. Travelers who want a list of modern medical facilities in China can access that information at the Embassy's website.

Ambulances do not carry sophisticated medical equipment, and ambulance personnel generally have little or no medical training. Therefore, injured or seriously ill Americans may be required to take taxis or other immediately available vehicles to the nearest major hospital rather than waiting for ambulances to arrive. In rural areas, only rudimentary medical facilities are generally available. Medical personnel in rural areas are often poorly trained, have little medical equipment or availability to medications. Rural clinics are often reluctant to accept responsibility for treating foreigners, even in emergency situations.

Foreign-operated medical providers catering to expatriates and visitors are available in China.

* SOS International, Ltd., operates modern medical and dental clinics and provides medical evacuation and medical escort services in Beijing, Nanjing, Tianjin and Shekou, as well as 24hr Alarm Centers in Beijing and Shanghai. Through clinics in Beijing (24 hours), Tianjin, Nanjing and Shekou, SOS offers international standard family practice services, emergency medical services and a range of clinical services.

The emergency assistance services SOS offers through alarm centers in Hong Kong, Shanghai and Beijing compliment their clinics. Each Alarm Center provides 24-hour hotline services to all our global members when they are in China. Any problem from lost luggage to a serious medical condition can be reported to the alarm center, where multilingual coordinators and doctors are on duty to respond to all manners of emergencies.

To provide these services, SOS has developed an external network of hospitals, airlines and local authorities with whom they work to deliver a fast and efficient response. These services also support the many remote site medical staff, equipment and facilities that SOS provides to clients.

For medical emergencies anywhere in mainland China, Americans can call the SOS International, Ltd., 24-hour "Alarm Center" in Beijing at telephone (86-10) 6462-9100 or in Shanghai at (86-21) 6295-0099 for advice and referrals to local facilities. SOS International Alarm Centers can also be contacted in Hong Kong at telephone (852) 2428-9900 and in the

United States at (215) 245-4707. For a full list of SOS locations and phone numbers, consult the SOS website at <http://www.internationalsos.com>.

*Beijing United Family Hospital and Clinics ("BJU") is the first and remains the only foreign-invested full service international standard 50 bed hospital operating in Beijing, China. BJU was opened in 1997 by Chindex International, an American company, which in 2002 was awarded the US Secretary of State's Award for Corporate Excellence. BJU offers the full range of specialties including Family Practice, Internal Medicine, Surgery, Obstetrics/Gynecology, Pediatrics, Dentistry, Psychiatry and Physiotherapy, in addition to a 24 hour Emergency Room staffed solely by Expatriate Staff Specialists. These Physicians are all board qualified (or equivalent) in their respective fields and include specialties such as Anesthesiology, and Intensive Care Medicine. Additionally, staff are fluent in not only English, but also a wide range of languages including French, German, Japanese, Spanish, Swedish, and Finnish to name a few.

Facilities include 2 Operating Theatres, international standard 5 star LDRP birthing suites, Neonatal ICU, a 4-bed Adult ICU, General Inpatient facilities, and standard support services such as Digital Radiology, Ambulance services, Pharmacy, Laboratory and a 24 hour on-site Blood Bank with emergency blood pre-screened to the American Blood Bank standard.

Bayley & Jackson Beijing Medical Center
#7 Ritan Dong Lu, Chaoyang District, Beijing 100020
(8610) 8562-9998 Fax: (8610) 8562-3497
email: [\[log in to unmask\]](#)
Website: www.bjhealthcare.com

Beijing United Family Hospital and Clinics
#2 Jiang Tai Lu, Chaoyang District, Beijing 100016
(8610) 6433-3960 Fax: (8610) 6433-3963
Emergency Hotline: (8610) 6433-2345
Website: www.bjunitied.com.cn Beijing United Family Clinic - Shunyi

Pinnacle Plaza, Unit # 818, Tian Zhu Real Estate Development Zone, Shunyi District, 101312
(8610) 8046-5432 Fax: (8610) 8046-4383
Peking Union Medical Hospital
1 Shui Fu Yuan, Dong Cheng Distict, Beijing 100730
Tel: 010-6529-6114 (registration); 010-6529-7292 (information); 010-6529-5284 (24 hours)
Modern Facilities with English speaking staff. Separate ward for foreign patients.

World Link Shanghai Clinics. Expatriate doctors and imported vaccines.

Portman Clinic:
Shanghai Center #203 W, 1376 Nanjing Xi Lu, 200040
Tel: 6279-7688. For appointments: 6279-8678
Fax: 6279-7698
Hong Qiao Clinic:
Mandarin City Unit 30, 788 Hong Xu Lu, 201103
Tel: 6405-5788; Fax: 6405-3587

Shanghai United Family Hospital and Clinics - To open in 2004
1111 Xian Xia Xi Lu, Chang Ning District, Shanghai 200336 PRC
Website: <http://www.shanghaiunited.com/>

GlobalDoctor, Ltd., has opened clinics staffed by English-speaking doctors within the VIP wards of government-run hospitals in Chengdu, Nanjing, and Beijing. GlobalDoctor can be reached by telephone from China at 86-10-8456-9191 or on the Internet at <http://www.eglobaldoctor.com/>.

Additional information on medical providers specializing in treating foreigners for general medical, dental and orthodontic problems are available at <http://www.usembassy-china.org.cn/>.

MEDICAL INSURANCE: The Department of State strongly urges Americans to consult with their medical insurance company prior to traveling abroad to confirm whether their policy applies overseas and if it will cover emergency expenses such as a medical evacuation. U.S. medical insurance plans seldom cover health costs incurred outside the

United States unless supplemental coverage is purchased. Further, U.S. Medicare and Medicaid programs do not provide payment for medical services outside the United States. However, many travel agents and private companies offer insurance plans that will cover health care expenses incurred overseas, including emergency services such as medical evacuations.

When making a decision regarding health insurance, Americans should consider that many foreign doctors and hospitals require payment in cash prior to providing service and that a medical evacuation to the U.S. may cost well in excess of \$50,000. Uninsured travelers who require medical care overseas often face extreme difficulties. When consulting with your insurer prior to your trip, ascertain whether payment will be made to the overseas healthcare provider or if you will be reimbursed later for expenses you incur. Some insurance policies also include coverage for psychiatric treatment and for disposition of remains in the event of death.

Two private emergency medical assistance firms, SOS International, Ltd., and Medex Assistance Corporation, offer medical insurance policies designed for travelers. Both of these companies have staff in China who can assist in the event of a medical emergency.

SOS International, Ltd.

Beijing Clinic address: Building C, BITIC Leasing Center

No. 1 North Road, Xingfu Sancun, Sanlitun, Chaoyang District, Beijing 100027

Beijing SOS International Clinic, telephone: (86-10) 6462-9112, Fax (86-10) 6462-9111.

For medical emergencies, please telephone the SOS International Alarm Center at (86-10) 6462-9100 from anywhere in Mainland China. From Hong Kong: (852) 2528-9900. From the U.S.: 1-215-245-4707. These phone lines are answered 24 hours by SOS International Alarm Center personnel. For information on purchasing health or travel insurance from SOS International, please telephone (1-800) 523-8930 (8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday) in the U.S. or visit <http://www.intsos.com/> on the Internet or e-mail: [\[log in to unmask\]](#)

SOS members calling with a medical emergency should first telephone the Alarm Center in Beijing at (86-10)6462-9100.

MEDEX Assistance Corporation

871 Poly Plaza

Beijing 100027

Toll Free Number from China to U.S.: 10811-800-527-0218

Email: [\[log in to unmask\]](#) (Baltimore, Maryland)

U.S. telephone: (1-800) 537-2029 or (1-410) 453-6300 (24 hours)

Emergencies (members only): (1-800) 527-0218 or (1-410) 453-6330

Web site: <http://www.medexassist.com/>

Medex members calling with a medical emergency should call Medex-Emergency in China at telephone (86-10) 6595-8510.

Other Evacuation Insurance Options:

Heathrow Air Ambulance

Heathrow is an air evacuation service with offices in the United States and England. Travelers can pre-arrange air evacuation insurance and other emergency travel assistance. This service also has a business plan to assist foreigners who lack travel insurance. Heathrow Air Ambulance Service,

15554 FM, Suite 195 Houston, TX. 77095-2704. Office telephone 1-800-513-5192.

Office fax 1-832-934-2395. E-mail: [\[log in to unmask\]](#)

Useful information on medical emergencies abroad, including overseas insurance programs, is provided in the Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs brochure, Medical Information for Americans Traveling Abroad, available via the Bureau of Consular Affairs home page.

OTHER HEALTH INFORMATION: Most roads and towns in Tibet, Qinghai, parts of Xinjiang, and western Sichuan are situated at altitudes over 10,000 feet. Travelers in these areas should seek medical advice in advance of travel, allow time for acclimatization to the high altitude, and remain alert to signs of altitude sickness. Reuse or poor sterilization practices are problems in China, contributing to transmission of diseases such as Hepatitis, which is endemic in China. In order to protect themselves from blood and other tissue borne disease such as Hepatitis and HIV, travelers should

always ask doctors and dentists to use sterilized equipment and be prepared to pay for new syringe needles in hospitals or clinics. Tuberculosis is endemic in China. Air pollution is also a significant problem throughout China. Travelers should consult their doctor prior to travel and consider the impact seasonal smog and heavy particulate pollution may have on them. Travelers are advised to consult the CDC's traveler's health website at: <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/eastasia.htm> prior to departing for China.

Alcoholics Anonymous can be reached in Beijing at telephone (86-10) 139-1138-9075, e-mail: [\[log in to unmask\]](#) On the Internet, <http://members.cox.net/mppowers1/aa-china3.html> lists AA meeting locations and contact information for other cities in China. Visit the U.S. Embassy web page in advance of travel to China for additional contact numbers. There is an Al-Anon chapter in Beijing that can be reached at (86-10) 6940-3935. Information on vaccinations and other health precautions may be obtained from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's hotline for international travelers at 1-877-394-8747; fax -888-232-3299, or via the CDC's Internet site at <http://www.cdc.gov/>. For information about outbreaks of infectious diseases abroad consult the World Health Organization's website at <http://www.who.int/en>. Further health information for travelers is available at <http://www.who.int/ith>.

LifeLine Shanghai is a community-based, confidential hotline providing emotional support and information to Shanghai's expatriate community. HOTLINE: (86 21) 6279-8990

TRAFFIC SAFETY AND ROAD CONDITIONS: While in a foreign country, U.S. citizens may encounter road conditions that differ significantly from those in the United States. The information below concerning the People's Republic of China is provided for general reference only, and may not be totally accurate in a particular location or circumstance.

Driving etiquette in China is developing. As a result, traffic is often chaotic, and right-of-way and other courtesies are often ignored. Travelers should note that cars and buses in the wrong lanes frequently hit pedestrians and bicyclists on sidewalks. Pedestrians should always be careful while walking near traffic.

Road/traffic conditions are generally safe if occupants of modern passenger vehicles wear seatbelts. Most traffic accident injuries involve pedestrians or cyclists who are involved in collisions or who encounter unexpected road hazards (e.g., unmarked open manholes). Foreigners with resident permits can apply for PRC driver licenses; however, liability issues often make it preferable to employ a local driver. Child safety seats are not widely available in China. Americans who wish to ride bicycles in China are urged to wear safety helmets meeting U.S. standards:

Safety of Public Transportation: Good

Urban Road Conditions/Maintenance: Good

Rural Road Conditions/Maintenance: Fair

Availability of Roadside Assistance: Fair in or near large cities; unavailable in rural areas.

All drivers should be aware of the Chinese regulations regarding traffic accidents. These include the requirement that drivers:

1. Not move their vehicles or disturb the scene of the accident unless and until ordered to by the Traffic Police.
2. Summon the Traffic Police and wait at the scene until the police arrive and complete their investigation.

If called to an accident, the police may take 30 minutes or longer to arrive. Once the police arrive, they will complete a preliminary investigation and arrange a time for you to report to the police station responsible for the accident scene. The police will prepare a written report, in Chinese, describing the circumstances of the accident. They will present the report to you either at the scene, or more likely at the police station, and ask you to sign it verifying the details of the accident. Do not sign the report as is, unless your Chinese is good enough to completely understand the report and you find it totally accurate. If you either do not understand it or believe it is partly or wholly inaccurate, you may either:

- A. Write a disclaimer on the report to the effect that you cannot read and understand the report and cannot attest to the accuracy thereof, but are signing it because of the police requirement that you do so, and then sign, or
- B. Write your own version of the accident, in English, on the police form and indicate that your signature only attests to the accuracy of the English version.

Most incidents (such as an accident) will draw a crowd. Drivers should remain calm. A crowd will usually move in very close to the accident and participants. In many cases the bystanders consider themselves to be an ad hoc jury. They

may call for money, usually from RMB 100 to 1,000, to be paid by the party they consider at fault. The amount is not necessarily relevant to the amount of damage. A certain amount of bargaining is normal, even at accidents involving two Chinese parties. Though a crowd may seem threatening, crowd assaults on foreigners at accidents have not been reported. If a Traffic Police booth is nearby, you may wish to leave the vehicle and walk there to await the arrival of the police accident team. Alternatively, you may walk to a shop, restaurant, or other location in the immediate vicinity and wait for police.

You should not leave the scene of an accident. Your actions may serve to further incite the crowd if they perceive that you are fleeing to evade responsibility for your share of blame or payment of damages. The crowd may attempt to keep your vehicle at the accident scene by standing in the way or blocking the roadway with vehicles, bicycles and other objects.

For additional information about road safety, click here.

AVIATION SAFETY OVERSIGHT: The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has assessed the civil aviation authority of the government of the People's Republic of China as Category 1 - in compliance with international aviation safety standards for oversight of China's air carrier operations. For further information, travelers may contact the Federal Aviation Administration within the United States at telephone (1-800) 322-7873, or visit the FAA's Internet web site at <http://www.faa.gov/avr/iasa/index.cfm>.

CUSTOMS REGULATIONS: Chinese customs authorities may enforce strict regulations concerning temporary importation into or export from China of items such as antiquities, banned publications, some religious literature, or vehicles not conforming to Chinese standards. It is advisable to contact the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Washington or one of China's consulates in the United States for specific information regarding customs requirements. In many countries around the world, counterfeit and pirated goods are widely available. Transactions involving such products are illegal and bringing them back to the United States may result in forfeitures and/or fines. A current list of those countries with serious problems in this regard can be found at <http://www.ustr.gov/reports/2003/special301.htm>.

China's customs authorities encourage the use of an ATA (Admission Temporaire/Temporary Admission) Carnet for the temporary admission of professional equipment, commercial samples, and/or goods for exhibitions and fair purposes. ATA Carnet Headquarters, located at the U.S. Council for International Business, 1212 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10036, issues and guarantees the ATA Carnet in the United States. For additional information call (212) 354-4480, send an e-mail to [\[log in to unmask\]](#), or visit www.uscib.org for details.

CRIMINAL PENALTIES: While in a foreign country, a U.S. citizen is subject to that country's laws and regulations, which sometimes differ significantly from those in the United States and do not afford the protections available to the individual under U.S. law.

Americans in China who are not staying at hotels, including Americans who are staying with friends or relatives, must register with local police. Americans who are questioned by police should immediately notify the U.S. Embassy or the nearest consulate. Foreigners detained for questioning may not be allowed to contact their national authorities until the questioning is concluded. Foreigners detained pending trial have often waited over a year for their trial to begin. Foreigners suspected of committing a crime are rarely granted bail. Criminal punishments, especially prison terms, are much more severe than in the United States. Persons violating the law, even unknowingly, may be expelled, arrested or imprisoned. Criminal penalties for possession, use, or trafficking of illegal drugs are strict, and convicted offenders can expect severe jail sentences and fines. Non-American foreigners have been executed for drug offenses. Several Americans currently incarcerated in China have been implicated in financial fraud schemes involving falsified bank or business documents, tax evasion schemes and assisting alien smuggling, including selling passports to provide aliens with travel documents.

In the past, protesters detained for engaging in pro-Falun Gong activities have been quickly deported from China after being questioned. Several of these protesters alleged they were physically abused during their detention. In addition, they alleged that personal property including clothing, cameras and computers have not always been returned to them upon their deportation. Chinese authorities report while they have deported these foreigners quickly after public demonstrations in favor of the Falun Gong, future adherents who intentionally arrive in China to protest against Chinese policy may receive longer terms of detention and possibly face prison sentences. In one instance, an American Falun Gong practitioner who was traveling in China on personal business was detained and asked to provide information on other Falun Gong sympathizers in the U.S.

Several Americans have been detained and expelled for passing out non-authorized Christian literature. Sentences for

distributing this material may range from three to five years imprisonment, if convicted.

Under the PROTECT Act of April 2003, it is a crime, prosecutable in the U.S., for U.S. citizens or permanent resident aliens to exploit children sexually via pornography, the Internet or other means or to engage in illicit sexual conduct with a person under the age of 18 in a foreign country, regardless of whether there was intent.

CONSULAR ACCESS: The U.S.-PRC Consular Convention of 1980 provides that detained U.S. citizens have the right to contact a U.S. consular officer, that U.S. consular officers shall be notified within four days whenever an American is taken into custody, and that a consular officer may visit detained Americans. Note, however, that U.S. consular officers do not always receive timely notification of the detention or arrest of a U.S. citizen. U.S. citizens who are detained or arrested should request contact with the U.S. Embassy or one of the U.S. Consulates General during their initial detentions. As explained in the section on "Dual Nationality" found earlier in this document, China does not recognize dual nationality. Naturalized U.S. citizens who enter China on Chinese passports or PRC-issued Hong Kong or Taiwan travel documents can be denied access to U.S. consular officials. The U.S. Government strongly recommends that all Americans enter China using only American passports containing Chinese visas.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES: Travel to Tibet - It is possible to make travel arrangements to Tibet from outside of China. Once in China, travelers wishing to visit Tibet must join a group, which can be arranged by almost any Chinese travel agency. The travel agency will arrange for the necessary permits and collect any fees. The Chinese government requires foreigners (including U.S. citizens) wishing to visit Tibet to apply in advance for approval from the tourist administration of the Tibetan Autonomous Region. More information is available from the Chinese Embassy or one of the Chinese consulates in the United States, or, while in China, from the U.S. Embassy or nearest U.S. consulate general. (Please see the above section on Entry Requirements.) Recently, some Americans with long-term Chinese visas have experienced difficulty obtaining permits to visit Tibet.

ENGLISH TEACHERS/SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS - Many Americans have enjoyed their teaching experience in China; others have encountered significant problems. Some Americans travel to China under a contract with promises of good salary, bonuses and other amenities, only to find themselves in tenuous situations often lacking funds to return to the United States. The U.S. Embassy cannot act as a legal advisor or negotiate business or personal grievances on behalf of individual citizens. Americans experiencing problems can contact the Embassy's American Citizens Services Unit at telephone (86-10) 6532-3431, extension 5648, 5028, 5609 or 5344, or via e-mail to [\[log in to unmask\]](#) to report problems with school employment contracts.

Americans considering teaching English in China should check that their contracts specify the maximum number of classroom hours per day and per week, maximum workdays per week, and vacation periods. Americans teaching in China, particularly at newly established private secondary schools and private English training centers, have often found their employers unable or unwilling to honor contract terms or to assist in obtaining Chinese employment-based visas and other permits required for foreigners to teach lawfully in China. Prospective teachers should always ask for references from other foreign teachers who have completed a contract teaching term and have returned to their home country. Prospective teachers should never come to China without first receiving the proper "Z" or work visa from the Chinese Embassy. Prospective teachers should not accept a promise by a school or organization to obtain the correct visa after their arrival. Health insurance provided by Chinese employers should be supplemented as described above. (Please see the section on Medical Insurance.)

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS: Some areas of China frequented by Americans, notably Yunnan and Xinjiang Provinces, are prone to earthquakes. Coastal areas of Hainan, Guangdong, Fujian, and Zhejiang Provinces are subject to typhoons during the summer rainy season. General information about natural disaster preparedness is available via the Internet from the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) at <http://www.fema.gov/>. Travelers should check weather conditions for cities and areas in China prior to departure. Winter weather and summer typhoons often cause the closure of airports in some parts of the country.

DOCUMENT SEIZURES: Chinese authorities have seized documents, literature, and letters that they deem to be pornographic, political in nature, or intended for religious proselytism. Persons seeking to enter China with religious materials in a quantity deemed to be greater than that needed for personal use may be detained and fined. Chinese customs authorities may seize books, films, records, tapes, and compact disks to determine if they violate Chinese prohibitions. Individuals believed to be engaged in religious proselytism or in conduct Chinese officials consider immoral or inappropriate have been detained and expelled.

PASSPORT CONFISCATION: PRC authorities occasionally confiscate passports and levy exit bans against persons involved in commercial or other disputes. The U.S. Embassy or Consulate General will make inquiries with local

authorities to ensure that the U.S. citizen's rights under the U.S. - China Bilateral Consular Convention are honored. The individual usually is not taken into custody, but is sometimes confined to a hotel or other facility until the dispute is resolved. The U.S. Embassy or Consulate General will issue another passport to any U.S. citizen who applies for one under these circumstances; however, even with a new U.S. passport, Chinese authorities will often block departure by refusing to provide a visa for exit purposes.

CHILDREN'S ISSUES: For information on international adoption of children and international parental child abduction, please refer to our Internet site at http://travel.state.gov/children's_issues.html or telephone Overseas Citizens Services at 1-888-407-4747. This number is available from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays). Callers who are unable to use toll-free numbers, such as those calling from overseas, may obtain information and assistance during these hours by calling 1-317-472-2328.

REGISTRATION/EMBASSY AND CONSULATE LOCATIONS: Americans living in or visiting China are encouraged to register at the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in China and obtain updated information on travel and security within China.

Beijing: The U.S. Embassy in China is located at 2 Xiu Shui Dong Jie, Beijing 100600, telephone:

(86-10) 6532-3431, 6532-3831, and after-hours: (86-10) 6532-1910; fax (86-10) 6532-4153. The U.S. Embassy web site address is <http://www.usembassy-china.org.cn/> and the e-mail address is [\[log in to unmask\]](#) The Embassy consular district includes the following provinces/regions of China: Beijing, Tianjin, Shandong, Shanxi, Inner Mongolia, Ningxia, Shaanxi, Qinghai, Xinjiang, Hebei, Henan, Hubei, Hunan, and Jiangxi.

Chengdu: The U.S. Consulate General in Chengdu is located at Number 4, Lingshiguan Road, Section 4, Renmin Nanlu, Chengdu 610041, telephone: (86-28) 558-3992, 555-3119; fax (86-28) 8558-3520 and the e-mail address is [\[log in to unmask\]](#); after-hours (86-0) 13708001422. This consular district includes the following provinces/regions of China: Guizhou, Sichuan Xizang (Tibet), and Yunnan, as well as the municipality of Chongqing.

Guangzhou: The U.S. Consulate General in Guangzhou is located at Number 1 South Shamian Street, Shamian Island 200S1, Guangzhou 510133; telephone: (86-20) 8121-8418; after-hours:

(86-)139-0229-3169; fax: (86-20) 8121-8428 and the e-mail address is [\[log in to unmask\]](#) This consular district includes the following provinces/regions of China: Guangdong, Guangxi, Hainan, and Fujian.

Shanghai: The Consular Section of the U.S. Consulate General in Shanghai is located in the Westgate Mall, 8 th fl, 1038 Nanjing Xi Lu, Shanghai 200031 telephone: (86-21) 3217-4650, ext. 2102, 2013, or 2134; after-hours: (86-21) 6433-3936; fax: (86-21) 6217-2071; e-mail address: [\[log in to unmask\]](#) This consular district includes the following provinces/regions of China: Shanghai, Anhui, Jiangsu, and Zhejiang.

Shenyang: The U.S. Consulate General in Shenyang is located at No. 52, 14th Wei Road, Heping District, Shenyang 110003, telephone: (86-24) 2322-1198, 2322-0368; after-hours: (86-0) 13704019790; fax (86-24) 2322-2374 and the e-mail address is [\[log in to unmask\]](#) This consular district includes the following provinces/regions of China: Liaoning, Heilongjiang, and Jilin.

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This replaces the Consular Information Sheet dated May 24, 2004, to update sections entitled Medical Facilities, Other Health Information, Aviation Oversight, and Registration/Embassy and Consulate Locations.

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***** See http://travel.state.gov/travel_warnings.html for State Department Travel Warnings

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