



May 2007
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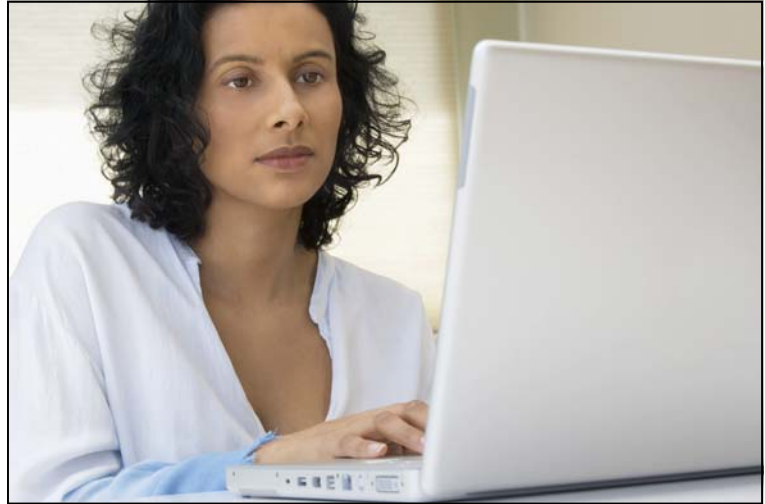
Consul's Corner

Your search is over

On April 2, we launched a new website for the Consulate General in Amsterdam at <http://amsterdam.usconsulate.gov>. Our site's new navigation system guides users with clear labels and content organization. One of our primary goals was to streamline the site's search capabilities.

The comprehensive website redesign project was based on extensive feedback from U.S. citizens living in the Netherlands. The new site has been in operation for over a month now and we have received positive feedback.

We look forward to continuing to receive your input. Send us an e-mail at: ConsularAmster@state.gov



Coming soon to a city near you

On **Wednesday May 9**, U.S. Consular Officer Christopher Degnan and Consular Associate Carlos Gallardo, in cooperation with Connect International, will visit **Groningen** to provide consular services to American citizens. They are authorized to:

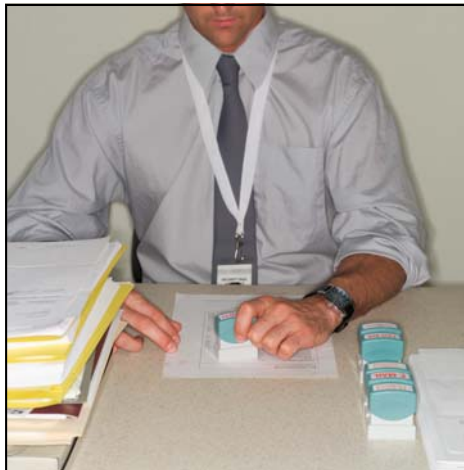
- accept **passport applications**
 - register children for **U.S. citizenship** (Consular Report of Birth Abroad)
 - provide **notarial services**.
- *Please note that they will not be able to provide any visa services.**

Location: N.V. NOM building, Paterswoldseweg 810, 9728 BM Groningen.

Hours: 2-6 pm. Please contact **Karen Prowse** at **050-521-4541** or connect@connect-int.org to set up an appointment.

Payments: must be in cash (Dollars or Euros), and exact change only can be accepted. Fees for the services to be provided are as follows:

Passports: The typical fee for an adult passport (16 and over) is \$67 or €53.60. A \$30 (€24.00) execution fee applies in some cases. Passports for children under 16 cost \$82 (€65.60). Please see the Consulate General's new website at http://amsterdam.usconsulate.gov/passport_svcs2.html [Continues on Page 2]



Attention Military Retirees

The USAG Schinnen Local Retiree Council cordially invites all military retirees to attend its inaugural meeting on May 16, 2007, from 1700-1830 hrs.

The purpose of this meeting is to establish a USAG Schinnen, Local Retiree Council. A general meeting and elections for members will take place. Please join them in the USAG Schinnen Headquarters, Vorgerweg 10, Building #8, second floor conference room (room 201).

For additional information and membership please contact Retirement Services Officer, Mr. Ron Holland, no later than May 11, 2007 at 046-443-7320.



The Consulate General will be closed on May 17 (Ascension Day), May 28 (Memorial Day) and May 30. In cases of emergency involving American citizens outside of normal business hours, please call 070-310 2209.





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for details on what documents to bring to apply for or renew a passport (please note the special instructions for children under 14, especially that the child and both parents must be present and that the parents sign the application in the presence of a consular officer: http://amsterdam.usconsulate.gov/passport_minors.html). Please bring two U.S. size passport photos (5 cm. by 5 cm.). Photo specifications, and a list of some Dutch shops that make the proper size photos can be found at http://amsterdam.usconsulate.gov/us_photo_instr.html.

Consular Reports of Birth Abroad (CRBAs): The fee for a CRBA, primary evidence of U.S. citizenship for a child born abroad, is \$65 (€2.00). The child and at least one parent or legal guardian must be present to apply. Please see <http://amsterdam.usconsulate.gov/crba.html> for complete instructions on what to bring. If both parents are present, they can apply for the CRBA and the child's first passport simultaneously, for a total cost of \$147 (€17.60).

Notarial acts: The fee for each separate notarial act is \$30 (€24.00). For more information please see http://amsterdam.usconsulate.gov/notary_svcs.html.

If you have any questions, please check the Consulate General's website at <http://amsterdam.usconsulate.gov/>, write us an e-mail at this address: USCitizenServicesAms@state.gov, or call 020-575-5309 between 1:30 and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Watch Out for Pickpockets!

Amsterdam is a world famous tourist destination and like many others unfortunately also attracts its share of pickpockets. In recent days, the Consulate General in Amsterdam has registered an increase of American citizens reporting passports stolen by pickpockets, bag snatchers and other petty burglars.

While thieves may operate anywhere, the U.S. Consulate General in Amsterdam receives frequent reports of thefts from specific areas. Within Amsterdam, thieves are very active in and around train and tram stations, the city center and on public transport. More specifically, trains to and from Schiphol Airport are considered to be high risk, and the theft of laptop computers has increased. Thieves often work in pairs; one distracts the victim, often by asking for directions, while the accomplice moves in on the victim's momentarily unguarded handbag, backpack, laptop or briefcase. The timing of these thefts usually coincides with train stops, enabling the thieves to escape.

In addition, many Americans have reported that their purses and briefcases have been stolen while eating in downtown restaurants, including hotel breakfast rooms. A good rule of thumb is to never leave your personal items unattended when going to the restroom, buffet table, etc. 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. In the Netherlands, the U.S. Consulate General in Amsterdam can usually replace your passport within one working day, if you have immediate travel plans. It is a good idea to make a photocopy of the "biographic page" of your passport, to bring extra passport photos, and to keep these separate from your actual passport in case it is lost or stolen. If you are the victim of a crime while in the Netherlands, please contact the U.S. Consulate General for assistance, in addition to reporting it to local police. Consulate staff can, for example, help you find appropriate medical care, contact family members or friends and explain how funds can be transferred. Although investigation and prosecution of the crime is solely the responsibility of local authorities, consular officers can help you understand the local criminal justice process and provide a list of attorneys if needed.



How to get U.S. vital or civil records

Vital records are documents such as birth, death or marriage certificates. In the U.S., state, county or city governments, depending on location, usually hold such records. Please follow the link to [The National Center for Health Statistics](http://www.nchs.gov) for more information on obtaining vital records. The Embassy or Consulate **cannot** obtain documents on your behalf.

There are also fee-based on-line services that help obtain records :

- www.Vitalchek.com (0800-255-2414), which allows you to request birth, death and marriage certifications online, by phone, or by fax.
- www.usbirthcertificate.net can help you obtain or amend a Consular Report of Birth Abroad, in addition to obtaining a birth certificate.



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