



Emergency Message for U.S. Citizens: Nepal Holidays and Earthquake News

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9/20/2011

U.S. Embassy Kathmandu released the following Emergency Message for U.S. Citizens on September 20:

The festival season of Dashain, Tihar and Chhat is fast approaching. Dashain lasts from September 28 through October 11, 2011. Tihar will take place from October 25 through October 28, 2011. The Embassy will be closed on October 3 to 7 for Dashain, and October 26 through October 28, 2011 for Tihar. The Embassy will also be closed for upcoming U.S. federal holidays: Columbus Day on October 10, 2011 and Veterans Day on November 11, 2011.

According to police records, an increase in criminal activity such as thefts, robberies, bag and purse snatching, pickpockets, and house break-ins usually occur during this time of the year. Incidents of harassment by intoxicated individuals on the street also typically increase, and more people drive under the influence of alcohol.

The Nepal Metropolitan Police in Kathmandu will increase their patrols and security efforts to ensure safety and security during this festival period. Police will deploy additional forces (uniformed and plainclothes) in the Kathmandu valley and will utilize checkpoints to screen for a range of illegal items from fire crackers to weapons and explosives.

Consistent with last year's events, the Nepal Police predict a spike in crime in the areas of New Road, Thamel, Bhotahiti, Asan, Teku, Sankhamule, Chetrapati, Patan, Gaushala, Maharjunj, Naya Bus Park, Balaju, Swoyambhu, Kalanki and Koteshwor. The U.S. Embassy advises extra caution and increased vigilance when traveling in these areas or other crowded areas during the holidays.

In previous years, banks and ATM machines ran out of money during the holiday season. U.S. citizens should be prepared with sufficient Nepali rupees should there be a similar occurrence this year.

For additional information, please refer to "A Safe Trip Abroad" on our website, <http://travel.state.gov/>. U.S. citizens living or traveling in Nepal are encouraged to enroll in the



Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) at the following web site:
<https://travelregistration.state.gov>. U.S. citizens without internet access may enroll directly at the U.S. Embassy. By enrolling, U.S. citizens make it easier for the Embassy to contact them in case of emergency. The Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Kathmandu is located at Maharajgunj. The telephone number is 977-1-4007200 or 4007201. The number for after-hours emergencies is 977-1-4007266 or 4007269. The Consulate's e-mail address is consktm@state.gov and its internet web page is <http://nepal.usembassy.gov>. For the latest security information, U.S. citizens living and traveling abroad should regularly monitor the Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs Internet website, where the current Worldwide Caution and Country-Specific Information for Nepal can be found. Travel information is also available at <http://www.travel.state.gov/>. Up-to-date information on security can also be obtained by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll-free in the U.S.

Keep scrolling down for the Fall Newsletter --- Important Earthquake Preparedness Earthquakes, the Embassy & You Information Below!!!

The 6.8 earthquake that occurred Sunday night highlighted the need for emergency preparedness. The U.S. Embassy in Kathmandu, Nepal has been very proactive in trying to prepare our citizens for a catastrophic earthquake. We have produced an Emergency Preparedness Guide that can be found at the following website:
<http://nepal.usembassy.gov/service/emergency-services.html>. In addition, we have offered classes on first aid and presentations on both earthquakes and preparedness at our Town Hall meetings.

The U.S. Embassy is here to assist you in a crisis but you should be aware of our limitations and what your personal responsibilities will be.

If a catastrophic earthquake hits Nepal, it may be 3-7 days before we receive any assistance from outside of Nepal (this includes search and rescue, medical assistance, and supplies). You need to have enough food, water, and medical supplies for everyone in your family to last at least 2 weeks; the US Embassy is recommending that you have a month's supply (please see our lists in the Emergency Preparedness Guide). Had the earthquake Sunday night been bigger and your structure collapsed, would you have had access to shoes, a go-bag, and drinking water? If not, think about putting systems in place so you will.



In the event of a more serious earthquake, you should “shelter in place” at your residence unless your safety and security is compromised. This does not necessarily mean to stay inside your house but rather take shelter in a tent or other outdoor building away from potential hazards and rely on your own supplies. Try to make contact with your American neighbors and account for people in your neighborhood. If possible contact your warden to let them know that you are OK. Contact family and friends in the United States if possible. As evident on Sunday, mobile communication was overwhelmed but text messages did go through.

The Embassy will make every effort to contact your wardens and account for our American community. This will take time and remember that we are also experiencing the earthquake and we will be dealing with death, injuries, and accountability. We only know about the American citizens who have enrolled with us, so if you have American citizen friends who have not enrolled please encourage them to do so.

We ask that if you are safe and secure, do not come to the Embassy. We may be overwhelmed with large crowds and you may not be let into the Embassy and will have to return to your home. Stay in place; try to communicate with us or your warden. If your environment is not safe, move to the closest rallying point. Remember the rallying points do not have supplies for the public; please bring your own. The rallying point is merely a place to congregate and is not overseen by Embassy staff. We cannot guarantee it will be standing or how they will handle crowds. We will try to get to these points as soon as possible to provide information to you and to assess the situation, but this will also take time.

If you are injured or in a collapsed building, remember it will be your neighbors that will be helping you in the first few days (don’t forget to wear a whistle!!). Get to know them, talk about earthquakes, and learn about what you can do in an earthquake. It is great to implement Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT’s) which help account for the people in your community. Please see the following website on how to implement the program and for training information: <http://www.citizencorps.gov/cert/IS317/>

Emergency and Crises

Do you ever wonder what the U.S. Embassy can and cannot do for you in an emergency or crisis?

The following are services we can provide:

Report of Death of an American citizen abroad

Visit of arrested/detained American citizens abroad



Help with sending Money
Help for American Victims of Crime Overseas
American citizens missing abroad
Abduction of a American citizen child abroad
Assistance with lost and Stolen U.S. Passports Abroad

For more information please see the following website:
http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/tips/emergencies/emergencies_1212.html

Are you a long-term resident of Nepal (living in Nepal for more than 6 months)? If you have not done so previously, we are asking that all long-term residents provide the U.S. Embassy with the Wikimapia coordinates to their residence. The U.S. Embassy is committed to earthquake preparedness. A useful tool for this is the online mapping tool Wikimapia, which helps to map your house via satellite photos. In the event of a major natural disaster, like an earthquake, roads might become impassible, and even unrecognizable. By providing the Wikimapia coordinates to your house, we will be better able to coordinate emergency assistance to U.S. citizens in the event of an emergency.

Long-term (6 months plus) residents can use this site to identify the location of their home in Nepal. By sliding the underlying map until the white marker (+) in the middle of the screen is right on top of your home you will get a GPS reading in the URL at the top of <http://wikimapia.org> page. By copying the URL, pasting and sending it to us via email at wardenktm@state.gov, we can place it in a spreadsheet and find your house with one click. This system produces minimal errors. We think Wikimapia has terrific potential as an extremely accurate and efficient way to map residents so we can find you in the event of an emergency. Wikimapia has a function to actually mark your house onto the map for everyone to see. If you use the site you will see many people have done this. We are not asking nor do we want American citizens to do this, just use the tools to find your house and copy/paste/email the URL link, without marking anything permanently. For those residents who do not have access to a computer and/or high speed internet, we have set up the computer in our consular section lobby for residents to come in and find their coordinates and email them to us.

To assist you in becoming familiar with Wikimapia, please follow the link to the U.S. Embassy in Kathmandu: <http://wikimapia.org/#lat=27.7381623&lon=85.3365612&z=16&l=0&m=a&v=2>. Note that the embassy is marked on the map with a description. Please do not do this to your private residence. Now you can use the mouse to drag across the page to your neighborhood and house, or use the bar at the left hand side to zoom out (-) or zoom in (+) one click at a



time until you can orient yourself and find your neighborhood. Simply find your home, with the middle of the screen marker (+) right on top of your house, and copy the URL link at the top of your screen. Then paste it in an email to us following the format below. The link you send should begin with <http://>

If you require further assistance please call or stop by the consular section during American citizen service hours, Monday-Friday from 1:30pm-4pm. ****Please follow the following format when sending your coordinates to wardenktm@state.gov **** Use "GPS" in the subject line. At the top of the body of the email, state your zone number and warden's name(s). If you have moved, are not sure what zone you are in, or your warden's name, please give us a general location such as Sanepa or Baluwatar. Include your last name, first name. Copy and paste Wikimapia coordinates from the URL link at the top of the screen when your house is in the middle of the screen, on the + marker. Before you hit send, you can test by clicking on the link you have pasted in the email to wardenktm@state.gov to see if you are routed to your home. You should be able to click on the pasted URL link and end up at your house.

Please be assured that as with all personal information, access to registrant data is limited and controlled. Unless you mark your home yourself, no information about you will appear on Wikimapia for others to see. For additional instructions or explanation, please contact wardenktm@state.gov.