



# Mexico Issues New FM-2 Cards

**M**exico's National Immigration Institute (INM) recently began issuing the FM-2 residency document in a new, card-sized format, and are encouraging long-term expats to exchange their old, grey-colored FM-2 "booklets" for the more convenient, blue cards. Changing to the FM-2 card is generally free of charge.

Here are some fast facts from INM regarding the FM-2

and the **CARD-SIZED RESIDENCY DOCUMENT REPLACES OLDER FM-2 BOOKLETS** process of exchanging

old identity documents for new ones:

- The FM-2 is a document for foreigners who are legal permanent residents in Mexico, otherwise known in Spanish as "inmigrado".
- The existing formats of the FM-2 issued in previous years (either the booklet or the pink plastic card) remain valid and are accepted as identity documents. Currently there is no date of expiration for the older FM-2s.
- The older FM-2 booklet and pink plastic card can still be used when entering and exiting Mexico.
- To exchange the older FM-2 for the new card, inmigrados should



Pictured above are the older, grey FM-2 booklet and the new FM-2 card, which is featured front and back.

present their valid passport and old FM-2.

- For the foreseeable future, there is no charge for changing FM-2s that contain the same basic biographic information. Legal permanent residents can update their photo, address and occupation for no fee.
- Other changes to biographic data will incur a charge of MX\$1,261.

*For more information on the new FM-2 or to exchange cards, legal permanent residents in Mexico City can visit INM's main service center at Homero 832, Colonia Polanco, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Residents outside Mexico City can visit the nearest INM delegations in their state capital.*

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# Passports Required for Entry into Mexico by Land, Sea, and Air

As of March 1, 2010, all U.S. citizens — including children — must present a valid passport, book or card, to travel beyond the “border zone” into the interior of Mexico. It doesn’t matter how you enter — by plane, bus or car — you must have a passport. The border zone is generally defined as an area between 20 to 30 kilometers of the border with the U.S. If you stay in the border zone for less than 72 hours you do not need a visa or tourist card.



U.S. citizens traveling as tourists beyond the border zone or entering Mexico by air must pay a fee to obtain a tourist card, known as an FM-T. This is available from Mexican border crossing points, Mexican tourism offices, airports within the border zone and most airlines serving Mexico. It is automatically given to travelers entering by air. **Travelers entering by land generally have to insist on getting the card. Do not lose this card.** While you may not need it if you drive out of Mexico, if your plans change and you attempt to fly out of Mexico without it, you may have to pay a fine of up to US\$500.

When they enter Mexico, business travelers must complete and submit a form (Form FM-N 30 days) authorizing the conduct of business, but not employment, for a 30-day period.

Travelers entering Mexico for purposes other than tourism or business, or for stays of longer than 180 days, require a visa and must carry a *Please see Travel Tips on page 4*

## PASSPORT FAQs



**Q: I lost my passport while traveling in Mexico. What should I do?**

**A:** In the event that your passport is lost or stolen while in Mexico, please make a passport appointment online. When you arrive for your appointment, you will need proof of citizenship (an original or certified copy of a U.S. birth certificate, Consular Report of Birth Abroad, or a Naturalization Certificate) and a photo ID, such as a driver’s license. All regular passport fees apply.

In the event that you have urgent travel, you can visit ACS without an appointment between 8:30 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. ACS will only issue emergency passports that are needed for urgent travel. Applicants requesting an emergency passport will be required to provide proof of immediate travel plans such as a valid itinerary or airline tickets, as well as an explanation for why the travel plans cannot be changed to allow sufficient time for the processing of a full-validity passport. In most cases, same-day issuance is possible for emergency passports.

*For information on passport services and how to make an appointment, and for downloadable application forms, log on at <http://mexico.usembassy.gov>.*

## Smart Travelers Get in STEP



The State Department’s new and improved **Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)** will be up and running on Nov. 10. Travelers and expats are encouraged to sign up for STEP to receive free travel information and country-specific updates. Enrolling in the program is easy, fast, and free. Remember: A well-informed traveler is a safer traveler! To sign up

for STEP, log on to the State Department’s website at <http://www.travel.state.gov>.

# Consular Agent touches base with Amcits

**U**.S. citizens are called to service in Mexico in a number of ways. For consular agent Mark Leyes, it started with a baseball game.

“I was invited to play baseball [in Mexico] on a traveling exhibition team,” Mark explains.

After a year, Mark left the team but stayed in Mexico. Four decades

**FORMER BALLPLAYER MARK LEYES HEADS UP OAXACA AGENCY**

later, the California-born expat continues to call his adopted country home. And since 1990, Mark has served as our consular agent in Oaxaca, one of the busiest consular districts in all of Mexico, where, according to Mark, “an atypical” mix of U.S. citizens live, work or just pass through enjoying the sights.

By his estimation, the consular district has around 5,000 long-term U.S. expats. Hundreds of thousands of tourists from the U.S. also put scenic Oaxaca and Chiapas on their travel itineraries. Just as important are the people Mark identifies as the sometimes “forgotten American citizen” – the children born in the U.S. to migrant-worker parents.

“These are children born in the U.S. to Mexican parents, and then who returned to Mexico to grow up and go to school in their parents’ villages, with the parents’ extended families,” Mark explains. “This group represents the bulk of our



Mark Leyes takes a break from consular work in one of Mexico’s busiest consular districts. (Photo courtesy of Leyes)

satisfying to provide our many citizen services to these American citizens.”

ACS recently held a successful passport drive aimed at those citizens that Mark helped organize.

Mark says, “We’re active in providing outreach services to some remote regions in Oaxaca by offering passport services and delivery in their indigenous communities. Oaxaca is the state in Mexico with the highest number of indigenous population and ethnic diversity — over 15 indigenous languages are spoken here. So these outreach services are very special.”

work. They are an extremely vulnerable group, whether in the U.S. or in Mexico, and they have numerous disadvantages and needs.”

Mark adds, “It has been very

*The Oaxaca Consular Agency is located at Macedonio Alcalá No. 407, Office 20, Oaxaca 68000. The phone number is (951) 514-3054, or (951) 516-2853.*

## Virtual Presence Post in Chiapas and Tabasco goes online



Recognizing the importance the Internet plays in our lives, the United States of America has created an online **Virtual Presence Post** for Chiapas and Tabasco. The website provides information on traveling and living in the area, and introduces the American Citizens Services (ACS) section. ACS also holds regular webcasts to answer questions and address concerns that U.S. citizens may have. **Log on to the Virtual Presence Post at <http://chiapas-tabasco.usvpp.gov/>.**

# Coping with Death Abroad

The death of a loved one abroad can be especially stressful for the deceased's next-of-kin, who have to deal with the laws and customs of a foreign country just as they begin the grieving process. American Citizens Services (ACS) and its consular officers recognize the difficulty of the situation and can assist next-of-kin by liaising with the appropriate Mexican government agencies, providing information on transporting the deceased's remains back to the U.S., and by preparing the **Consular Report of Death**



Abroad of an American Citizen. This report is based on the Mexican death certificate and serves in the U.S. as proof of death in most legal proceedings. Please note that the next-of-kin is responsible for covering all costs related to the preparation and return of the deceased's remains to the U.S. ACS representatives can help next-of-kin explore options, and will assist with required documentation.

## DEATH & ESTATES

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For more information on ACS notary, children's issues, welfare and whereabouts, arrests and detentions, death and estates, and passport services, log on to the Embassy's website at [www.usembassy-mexico.gov](http://www.usembassy-mexico.gov).

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# Travel Tips

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valid U.S. passport. U.S. citizens planning to work or live in Mexico should apply for the appropriate Mexican visa at the Embassy of Mexico or at any Mexican consulate in the U.S. prior to their intended departure.

**Entry to the U.S. by land or sea:** All U.S. citizens age 16 or over must present either a valid U.S. passport book or a valid passport card to re-enter the

U.S. by land or sea. Minors under the age of 16 may enter the U.S. via the land border with a certified birth certificate, a Consular Report of Birth Abroad, Citizenship Certificate, or Naturalization Certificate.

**Entry to the U.S. by air:** All citizens, regardless of age, entering the U.S. by air must present a valid U.S. passport book. A U.S. passport card is not acceptable for entry to the U.S. by air.

### U.S. Embassy Contact Information

**Address:** 305 Paseo de la Reforma, Col. Cuauhtemoc, 06500 Mexico D.F.

**Phone:** (011)(52) 55-5080-2000

**For passport information,** ext. 4325

**For other services,** ext. 4780

**For afterhour emergencies,** ext. 0

The U.S. Embassy, Mission Mexico wishes you a

# Happy 2010 Holiday Season

The U.S. Embassy will be closed to the public for public holidays and administrative days on Nov. 2, Nov. 11, Nov. 15, Nov 25-26, Dec. 8, Dec. 23-24, and Dec. 31. For a complete listing of 2011 U.S. Embassy and American Citizen Services closures, log on to [www.usembassy-mexico.gov](http://www.usembassy-mexico.gov).



## ACS Coming to Mexico City, Cuernavaca



An ACS team, led by vice consul Kara Preissel (third from left), recently visited Morelia to field questions from U.S. citizens.



**D**o you have a question about renewing your passport? Are you wondering how to register to vote abroad? Are you trying to document your newborn child as a U.S. citizen? **American Citizens Services (ACS)** continues to host town halls around Mexico to address any issues or concerns U.S. citizens might have. ACS also often invites representatives from other U.S. government agencies to join in the town halls, including representatives from the **Federal Benefits Unit (FBU)** and **U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)**. FBU can answer questions about Social Security benefits. USCIS deals specifically with immigration issues.

### TIME & DATE

**Mexico City:** ACS plans to hold a town hall in Mexico City on Nov. 22 at 3:30 p.m. at the Benjamin Franklin Library (Liverpool 31, Col Juarez). Attendees should bring valid photo ID.

**Cuernavaca:** ACS will be in Cuernavaca on Nov. 17 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at St. Michael's Church (Calle Minerva, No. 7).

*Town halls will be held in English and Spanish. For updates on ACS events open to the public, log on at [www.usembassy-mexico.gov](http://www.usembassy-mexico.gov).*



## Veterans Day Event Honors U.S. Heroes

To honor America's heroes in uniform past and present, the American Battle Monuments Commission will hold its annual **Veterans Day Commemoration Ceremony** on Nov. 11 from 11 a.m. at the **American Battle Monuments Commission Cemetery in Mexico City**. The ceremony is free and open to the public. The American Battle Monuments Commission maintains 24 permanent American burial grounds on foreign soil, including the one-acre cemetery in Mexico City (which is pictured below).

*The American Battle Monuments Commission Cemetery is located at Virginia Fabregas 31, Colonia San Rafael (about one mile north of the U.S. Embassy). Log on to ABMC's website at <http://www.abmc.gov>.*



## U.S. Citizenship for Children Born into 'Union Libres'

**A**re you, or is someone you know, a U.S. citizen who has fathered children outside a civil marriage, such as while living in a "union libre?" Is the children's mother not a U.S. citizen? If so, there is an important requirement for transmitting U.S. citizenship that many people are not aware of.

In order to transmit U.S. citizenship to any children born out of wedlock after November 14, 1986, the father must provide a signed, notarized document agreeing to provide financial support for his children until they turn 18. That document must be signed before the children turn 18. If the father dies before the children turn 18, this requirement does not apply.



### CITIZENSHIP ISSUES

**Other requirements for transmitting citizenship to a child born out of wedlock to a U.S. citizen father after November 14, 1986 include:**

- The child must be able to establish a blood relationship to the father,
- The father was a U.S. citizen at the time of birth,
- The father (unless deceased) has agreed in writing to provide financial support for the child until he or she is 18 years old,
- The father must have been physically present in the U.S. for at least 5 years before the child was born, with at least 2 of those years occurring after the father was 14 years old, and ...

#### **While the child is under 18:**

- He or she is legitimated under Mexican law (or)
- The father acknowledges paternity in writing under oath,
- The paternity of the person is established by a court.

Failure to meet these requirements, including execution of the referenced, notarized document, before the child turns 18 will permanently prevent the child from acquiring U.S. citizenship.

The U.S. Embassy encourages parents to document their children as early as possible.

For more detailed information, please visit the State Department's website at [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) or contact an immigration attorney.

## List of American Organizations

**Below is a listing of clubs and associations with an international membership, along with their websites:**

#### **American Benevolent Society**

[www.abs.org.mx](http://www.abs.org.mx)

#### **American Chamber of Commerce**

[www.amcham.com.mx](http://www.amcham.com.mx)

#### **American Legion**

[www.amlegion-mexico.org](http://www.amlegion-mexico.org)

#### **American Society of Mexico, A.C.**

[www.americansocietyofmexico.com](http://www.americansocietyofmexico.com)

#### **Benjamin Franklin Library**

<http://www.mexico.usembassy.gov/eng/library.html/>

#### **Hash House Harriers**

[www.mchhh.com](http://www.mchhh.com)

#### **Newcomers Club**

[www.newcomers.org.mx](http://www.newcomers.org.mx)

#### **Rotary International**

[www.rotarymexico.com](http://www.rotarymexico.com)

#### **Salvation Army**

[www.salvationarmy.org](http://www.salvationarmy.org)

#### **YMCA**

[www.ymca.org.mx](http://www.ymca.org.mx)

### **INTRODUCTIONS ARE IN ORDER**

Are you a member of a non-profit American club? If so, we'd love to know. Please send us an email introducing your organization and its services to [acsmexicocity@state.gov](mailto:acsmexicocity@state.gov)