



## UPDATED INFORMATION FOR US CITIZENS FROM AMUDIM AND CHAIM V'CHESSED

March 9, 2021

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With Pesach rapidly approaching and many still up in the air about their *yom tov* plans, we have been working around the clock to facilitate arrangements. We are cautiously optimistic that new guidelines will be released within the coming week providing clarity for would-be travelers.

We have been in continuous communication with official agencies and departments involved in the various aspects of this matter. We've seen significant progress and hope that certain restrictions will be eased so that applications which previously required personal appearances will be able to be made by email, mail and other avenues. While we have been working on these matters for several weeks, the main delays we have experienced are a result of various fraudulent acts such as falsifying medical records, selling appointments and more.

We have been told that the consulates in Israel will be adding more daily appointments, allowing a greater number of clients to be served. Please keep in mind that those with true life and death emergencies will be a higher priority than those seeking travel.

**As of now, foreign students studying in Israel, regardless of their vaccination status, will NOT be allowed to enter Israel should they leave for Pesach. This applies to single students as well as married.** While this policy can change at any time, any non-Israeli who does not need to leave Israel for a true emergency should consider deferring travel plans if they hope to return to Israel after Pesach.

Meanwhile, anyone requiring assistance from the U.S. Consulates should email either the Jerusalem **or** Tel Aviv Consulate, **but not both**. Include the last name of the person in need of assistance as well as the matter that requires resolution on the subject line, with clear details of the request listed in the body of the email, including your phone number and email address, so that consulate staff can contact you easily. Be sure to attach all relevant documentation such as passports, marriage licenses, medical documentation, travel itineraries, proof of loss of health coverage etc.

**All emergency requests will be verified.** If you are making a request for medical purposes, be advised that the physician who wrote the letter, or the hospital, will likely be contacted for confirmation.

Currently, **all appointment requests should be emailed to either [JerusalemACS@state.gov](mailto:JerusalemACS@state.gov) or [TelAvivACS@state.gov](mailto:TelAvivACS@state.gov)**, (email one location only, **not** both) and **must** come directly from the individual(s) in need of assistance - third party requests will generally not be accepted. Attempts to deceive officials by submitting fraudulent documentation have created a tremendous *chilul Hashem*. This has undermined the trust we have built with government agencies, hampered our ability to serve the public and created lengthy delays and significant frustrations for everyone.

Switching appointments will **not** be allowed, as there have been incidents of fraud, with people selling their appointments to others.

As far as U.S. Citizens who have expired U.S. Passports, at this time, the only suggestion we have is that you go to the airport 4 hours before your scheduled departure time. Bring along documentation to prove identity and citizenship, such as the expired U.S. Passport, U.S. Birth Certificate or CRBA, Marriage License, Driver's License, and/or any other documents that may be helpful. In these cases, the airlines will contact the appropriate authorities to determine if you are eligible to board the flight. We are aware that many people in such circumstances have been granted permission to board, while others have not. This determination is made by the airport authorities, at their own discretion. If you have an immediate emergency such as life, death, or medical, you can email [travelhelp@amudim.org](mailto:travelhelp@amudim.org), and clearly describe your specific situation, including any relevant documents and ID, in order for us to better assist you.

Please keep in mind that both Amudim and Chaim V'Chessed are receiving numerous requests, in addition to the daily responsibilities of our organizations' respective core missions. We are doing the best we can to assist, so please indicate on the subject line if you are contacting us regarding a truly \*urgent\* matter.

We urge anyone who has a scheduled appointment that is no longer needed (for any reason) to cancel the appointment online or to email the consulate where the appointment was scheduled so that it can be available to someone else. If you have an appointment and aren't sure if you need it because of a change in travel plans, we strongly suggest that you keep the appointment and go to the consulate as scheduled in case assistance is required.

We understand that the current lack of clear information has been challenging and have been doing our best to assist people facing these difficulties. At the same time, we extend our gratitude to the many professional agencies and officials who have been working with us to provide clarity and solutions and hope that new details will be emerging shortly that will further shed light on these matters.

**Zvi Gluck**

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**Paysach Freedman**

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