



MISSION OF THE UNITED STATES - TURKEY

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American Citizen Services

Citizen Liaison Volunteer (CLV) Handbook

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The U.S. Mission CLV Network: An Overview

Every U.S. Embassy and Consulate around the world is expected to have a network of volunteer American citizen CLVs. 7 FAM 070 defines the duties and responsibilities of CLVs.

What's the CLV network all about?

It's About Communication: Traditionally, the primary purpose of CLV networks has been to help Embassies and Consulates disseminate information to American citizens living in foreign countries, and that is still true, especially in countries with poor or nonexistent communication systems. Here in Turkey, we are fortunate to have a modern and reliable information infrastructure which allows us to pass information quickly and efficiently directly to Americans in even the most remote provinces via broadcast e-mails. However, CLVs still help us pass information in many ways. CLVs pass messages to people in their areas who are incapacitated or unable to use computers, and to people who have not registered with us. If there were a crisis in which the e-mail infrastructure collapsed or was overloaded, we would rely on CLVs to get emergency information to the Americans in their areas through phone trees, local town meetings, or – in the worst case – even by door-to-door visits.

It's About Service: At their best, CLVs make a difference in people's lives. When an American is sick or injured and alone in a hospital far away from the Embassy or Consulate, a visit from a CLV can work wonders – just seeing a friendly American face can cheer that person up and help him get back on his feet. When an American has a problem and doesn't know where to turn, a CLV can help point that person in the right direction, whether it's to the Embassy or Consulate or to local authorities or service providers. When the very worst happens, and an American passes away, a CLV can notify the Mission, act as liaison with local officials when necessary, and help comfort the family of the deceased.

It's About Eyes and Ears: When something happens in a distant province – a natural disaster, a shooting, a building collapse CLVs on the ground can tell us what's going on, whether media reports are accurate or not, and whether we need to send officers to the scene. CLVs extend our reach, and help us stay abreast of events that we might never learn about, from local scams victimizing American tourists, to border unrest, to anti-American incidents.

How Does The Mission Recruit New CLVs?

New CLVs are recruited in many ways. The Mission may come across an American living in an area without a CLV and ask him or her to join the CLV network, or an individual may approach us to ask if he or she can be a CLV. Current CLVs may also recommend another U.S. citizen to be a CLV in a particular area or for an organization. If you know of someone who may be interested in becoming a CLV, please let us know, and we will contact the person directly. No matter how a potential CLV comes to our attention, we will decide whether to accept their services based upon the needs of the CLV network at that time.

How Does The Mission Maintain Contact With CLVs?

The Mission stays in contact with CLVs via phone, fax, e-mail, mail, and in person. Since different CLVs have different amounts of time to commit to the CLV network, some will be in frequent touch with us, and others may only communicate once in a while. All CLVs should be on our e-mail notification list to receive emergency and non-emergency announcements. In the event of an emergency, natural disaster, or other crisis, American Citizen Services (ACS) employees will be in touch with CLVs in the affected area(s) by phone, fax or e-mail. Additionally, ACS units at the Embassy or Consulate host CLV conferences at which we make new contacts and renew old ones.

CLV Dos and Don'ts

What Are The Responsibilities Of a CLV?

As the CLV network is completely voluntary, we never assign specific responsibilities to CLVs. Your assistance is valuable to us, but you are always free to decline our requests if you feel uncomfortable. Under no circumstances would you be held liable by us for any action taken or not taken, unless your actions indicated a reckless disregard for local or U.S. laws.

What Should CLVs Do?

DO get to know the Americans in your community. This is probably the most important thing you can do to be an effective warden: you can't communicate with people if you don't know who they are! If you're a CLV for a school, company, or organization, you'll probably know the Americans in your group more or less automatically. If you're a CLV for a geographic area, getting to know people will take more effort. Make that effort!

DO encourage Americans to register with us. The easiest way for Americans to register is online via the State Department’s website at <https://step.state.gov> This website allows them to register and update their contact information at any time, making it easier for them to keep their information current. This website also provides up-to-date travel information customized to unique travel itineraries.

DO learn about the Mission. Americans will often approach CLVs with problems or issues to which the proper answer should be “contact the Embassy or Consulate-General.” You’ll be able to refer people to us with confidence if you know what we do. Familiarize yourself with the wide range of services provided by the ACS unit, which are outlined on our website at <https://tr.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/local-resources-of-u-s-citizens/information-for-travelers/> We encourage you to refer people to this website. For questions that are not answered on the website, or if you just want to discuss our services in more detail, feel free to call the ACS unit to talk with a consular officer.

DO tell us about deaths and arrests. If you learn of the death or arrest of an American citizen in your area, contact the ACS Unit *immediately* at any time at +90 312 455-5555 for Ankara, +90 212 335-9000 for Istanbul, +90 322 455-4100 for Adana. If you’ve been notified by local authorities, please ask them to contact the Mission directly. There are specific laws and regulations governing how these cases can be handled, and we are responsible for making sure that everything is done properly.

DO keep us informed. We always want to hear about whatever problems or issues you’re seeing where you live, but we also want to hear about you. Surprisingly, some of the same CLVs who are so good at keeping us informed about other Americans forget to let us know when they themselves move, change contact information, or leave Turkey! So that we can keep our CLV lists up to date and accurate, please notify us of any changes in your address, phone/fax numbers, or e-mail address, and especially if you’re moving out of the country. If you’ll be away for an extended period of time and someone else will be filling in for you as an alternate CLV, please let us know that as well.

DO remember the Privacy Act. As you’ll remember from your CLV appointment letter, the Privacy Act of 1974 was passed to protect individuals against possible Federal Government invasions of personal privacy. When you’re acting in a private capacity, the Act doesn’t affect you, but when you’re acting as a CLV, you are obligated under the Act to protect the personal information of American citizens. This obviously means keeping address and phone lists private, but it also means that you can’t, for example, call the relatives of an American in trouble unless he or she specifically says that you can or speak to the press. There are certain exceptions to these requirements when people’s lives are in danger, but you shouldn’t make any exceptions on your own. Instead, call us, explain the situation, and we’ll see what – if anything – can be done. (A more complete description of the Privacy Act will be found later in this Handbook.)

The Privacy Act of 1974

Congress passed the Privacy Act on December 31, 1974, and President Ford signed the act into law on January 1, 1975. A major purpose of the act is to provide safeguards for individuals against federal government invasions of personal privacy. The Privacy Act states in part:

No agency shall disclose any record which is contained in a system of records by any means of communication to any person, or to another agency, except pursuant to a written request by, or with the prior written consent of, the individual to whom the record pertains....

Congress determined that the privacy of an individual is directly affected by the collection of personal information by federal agencies, that the increasing use of computers and other sophisticated technology has increased the potential harm to individual privacy, that the right to privacy is a personal and fundamental right protected by the constitution, and that in order to protect the privacy of individuals federal agencies must practice certain safeguards.

In brief, the act addresses the way in which federal agencies collect, maintain, use, and disseminate information that is specifically linked to an individual.

As the act relates to the CLV system, it requires that the Department of State collect, maintain, use, or disseminate records of identifiable personal information in a manner that assures that such action is for a necessary and lawful purpose, and that adequate safeguards are provided to prevent misuse of information.

Upon becoming a CLV, each volunteer must sign the Memorandum of Understanding, which states that he or she agrees to abide by the Privacy Act of 1974. Therefore, information provided to you by the Mission and by individual American citizens based on your status as a Mission CLV must be accorded full protection under the law. Without the express written consent of the individual, the personal information of American citizens should not be disseminated unless in accordance with your duties as a CLV. Access to information should be limited to authorized participants in the CLV system. Storage and control of information such as phone or address lists must be adequate to prevent access by unauthorized persons.

And What Should CLVs Not Do?

DO NOT put yourself in physical danger. If a situation arises where assisting an American requires you to put yourself at physical risk, don't do it! Turkish authorities are ultimately responsible for safety and security of visitors here, and they have people such as police officers, doctors, and soldiers whose job is to deal with risky situations. Please let us know ASAP if any situation like this comes up in your area.

DO NOT try to deal with people who appear mentally unstable or violent. Dealing with mentally ill Americans is one of the most difficult and challenging aspects of consular work, as their behavior can be unpredictable and illogical. While some of the people you'll run across as a warden might have mild psychiatric problems, you should be very wary with anyone whose mental illness seems severe. Again, don't put yourself in danger, insist that Turkish officials fulfill their responsibilities in dealing with these cases, and notify us of what's going on.

DO NOT deal with an arrest or death case. As mentioned above, death and arrest cases require special handling because of statutes and regulations which dictate certain specific procedures. Help us fulfill duties by notifying us whenever you come across one of these cases.

DO NOT speak to press without specific Mission authorization. Needless to say, you're completely free to speak to journalists about your personal business, the restaurant you're opening, your organization or club, and so on. When you're acting as a CLV, however, or when a journalist is looking to you as a representative of the Mission or the U.S. Government, you should refer him or her to the Mission press officer and decline to continue the conversation. Exactly the same restriction applies to all of us at the Mission; only the Consul General and the press officer, or their designees, are authorized to speak on the Mission's behalf for public consumption. This policy allows the Mission to speak with one voice, and helps prevent situations in which we might be misquoted or our message misconstrued.

DO NOT incur expenses without specific authorizations from us. U.S. Government regulations on finances are complicated and not always straightforward. Unless we have specifically told you in advance to expend funds on a case, and promised to reimburse you, it is very unlikely that we will be able to cover your expenditures. We also don't want or expect you to spend your own money on any case (our officers are prohibited from doing this), but that is ultimately your own personal choice.

DO NOT present yourself as an officer of the Mission. It may sometimes seem that pretending to be a regular officer assigned to the Mission will help you assist an American in need without causing anybody harm. Any such deception, though, however well-meant, has the potential to cause great difficulties for the Mission and our dealings with the Turkish

Government. Always make clear to local officials and American citizens that you're a *volunteer* CLV. If they refuse to deal with you on that basis and insist on speaking to an accredited diplomat, direct them to us and we will take it from there.

DO NOT use your CLV status for personal gain. Again this seems obvious, but we have to emphasize it. Please don't use your position to try to obtain special privileges unconnected to your warden duties, such as your Turkish immigration status, personal business dealings, personal legal problems, and so on, as this can cast doubt on the legitimacy of the CLV program. On the same note, never, ever charge for your services as a CLV, and avoid directing Americans who approach you in your role as a CLV to your family members, friends or employees who will charge for services. Again, this can cast the CLV program and subsequently the Mission in a bad light. Help us maintain the integrity of the CLV program!

What is the Difference Between a CLV and an Alternate CLV?

Some of you are the sole CLV for your zone or organization, but others have alternate CLVs working beside them. With e-mail broadcasts we can easily communicate with all CLVs simultaneously. However, in the event of a large disaster that prevents e-mail communication, we will first attempt to contact primary wardens to distribute information to Americans in your zone. If we cannot contact the primary warden, we will try to find the alternate in each zone. Please let each other, and the ACS Unit know.

CONTACT INFO

U.S. Embassy, Ankara

+90-312-455-5555

<https://tr.usembassy.gov>

U.S. Consulate General, Istanbul

+90-212-335-9000

<https://tr.usembassy.gov/embassy-consulates/istanbul/>

U.S. Consulate, Adana

+90-322-455-4100

<https://tr.usembassy.gov/embassy-consulates/adana/>

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