

CONSULAR ADVICE

PASSPORTS DEPARTMENT WARNING

The Saudi Passports Department has urged all expatriates to carry their original iqamas with them when they move around. The Department made this announcement after discovering that many expatriates carry only copies of the documents. We know that many sponsors insist on holding the original passport and/or iqamas of their employees. You should, therefore, draw the Passport Department's warning to the attention of your sponsor if he holds your original documents.

MENINGITIS ACWY VACCINATION

Vaccination against meningitis A and C infection has been routinely recommended for Saudi Arabia for some years. However, a new strain of the meningococcal disease, known as W135, has become more prevalent in the Kingdom over the past 18 months. The usual meningitis vaccines do not protect you against the new strain. You should review the vaccinations you and your family have had, and consult your doctor about vaccination against this new strain.

HEPATITIS A VACCINE

The British Department of Health has recently recalled the Hepatitis A Vaccine "VAQTA Paediatric" and "VAQTA Adult", manufactured by Aventis Pasteur MSD, due to decreased potency in some syringes. The recall applies to all batches of vaccine whether or not they are within their expiry date. The Department of Health recommends, and the Embassy strongly agrees, that:-

- a) people immunised with VAQTA should restart their immunisation schedule with another Hepatitis A vaccine;
- b) people immunised with VAQTA who anticipate travel to areas with a risk of Hepatitis A should arrange reimmunisation immediately with another vaccine, completing the full course with a second dose after six months;
- c) people who received VAQTA and another vaccine as part of their Hepatitis A immunisation should receive a further dose of an alternative Hepatitis A vaccine. At least six months should pass between the two doses of the alternative vaccine.

SECURITY

Fortunately there has been no major security alert since the bombing in Al Khobar on 6 October. However, we must not become complacent.



Mike Hurley



Richard Hyde

ANTHRAX

Please remain alert and vigilant, and ensure that any suspicious packages are handled correctly until they are proved to be harmless. The essential guidance is:

- (a) Remain calm. Anthrax powder is only dangerous if it comes into contact with skin or is inhaled. Therefore the best way to contain the risk is NOT to open any package or envelope of which you are suspicious. Instead, gently put it in a plastic bag, seal the bag without expelling the air and alert the emergency services/incident control officers.
- (b) If a package has been opened and you suspect it may contain anthrax, leave it where it is and take everyone out of the room, sealing the room as far as possible.
- (c) Close off any air conditioning units and shut doors and windows. Reducing airflow and leaving the package undisturbed are critical to minimising further spread.
- (d) All the people who were in the room with the package should be isolated in another room very close by, which you should seal off as far as possible.
- (e) Notify the local emergency services.
- (f) Record the names of everyone present, and the details of their proximity to the incident.

REGISTRATIONS 2002

We advise All British Nationals to REGISTER with the British Embassy if they have not already done so. It is in your interest that we know of your presence in the Kingdom and have your contact details. Please note that we do not pass on information to third parties without your permission.

WARDENS' VACATIONS

Wardens: please remember to let us know when you are away on vacation and who will be taking over as Deputy in your absence.

STAFF CHANGES

On the staffing front, I recently arrived in Riyadh to take over from Mike Nithavrianakis as First Secretary (Commercial) at the Embassy. Previously I was Consul (Commercial) at the British Consulate General Jeddah where I have been succeeded by Richard Hyde who is new to the Kingdom. Since the last issue of the magazine, Mike Hurley has also arrived in the Eastern Province to take over from Roger Sykes.