

USA Pools' International Guide

1. Before arriving to US

- The earliest you (the international visitor) can arrive to a USA Pools office for lifeguarding work is May 15 of each year. The latest an international USA Team Member can arrive to work for lifeguarding is June 4 of each year. Lifeguarding work can be provided through September 15 of each year. For a supervisory position with USA Pools, an international USA Team Member must arrive for work by April 1 of each year and work through October 1 of each year.
- You (the international visitor) must be able to speak and read English fluently.
- You (the international visitor) must know how to swim. It is a good ideal if you take the lifesaving class, lifeguard training (LGT) and CPR, in your country and receive your lifesaving certificate before you arrive to the US. Thus, you will be able to start working right away. To pass the (LGT) in America you will be required to Swim 500 yards (About 400 meters) continuously using two (2) different strokes (front crawl (free style) and the breast stroke). You will also be required to swim 20 yards using the front crawl or breast stroke, surface dive to depth of 7-10 feet, retrieve a 10 pound brick off the bottom of the pool, return to surface and swim 20 yards back to the starting point with the object held in both hands with your face above water.
- **You will need to provide a \$250 dollar non-refundable deposit to USA Pools for your company uniform and the Red Cross lifeguard course (if not currently certified).** If you already have your lifeguard certificates you will only need to provide a \$150 dollar deposit. USA Pools must receive this deposit no later than April 1 of each year to ensure a position with the company and to receive your job offer.
- **Take approximately \$1000 dollars for the immediate costs of living (rent, transportation, communication, food, etc.)** until you start receiving your paychecks from USA Pools. You will be paid every two (2) weeks according to the published pay dates. Paydays/dates will be in the USA Payroll Packet:

Items/Expenses that YOU will have each month!

Below is a quick list of expenses that each international USA Team Member will have on a monthly basis. Further information of these items are listed in more details throughout this guide.

1. **Living/Housing** (Approximately \$225 per month)
2. **Transportation** (Fixed \$150 per month fee)
3. **Insurance** (Approximately \$50 per month)
4. **Communication/Cell Phone** (Approximately \$39 per month)
5. **Food/Meals** (Will vary per person)

International USA Team Member Guide

- Be very careful in keeping up with your money and documents on your way to the US. You are not advised to carry a lot of cash since it is easy to lose or steal. Please take a small amount of money to the country where you transfer flights. The rest of the money you can take in the form of traveler's checks. A good idea is to use a multi-pocket travelers purse for your money and documents, which you can wear on your neck and under your clothes. You could also use a money-and-document belt.
- Take medicines and/or antibiotics in which you know how to use. The medicines in the US are different from European medicine and are expensive. While traveling to US, carry a rucksack with warm clothes and first-need items, as you may need them if there is a flight delay.
- You can take an electrical adapter if you carry some electric appliances with you. The electricity tension in US is 110V.

2. Upon arriving at US Atlanta Airport

- The Atlanta Airport is a little bit different from other famous airports. When you exit the plane, have your passport with the US visa inside, your IAP-66 and I-94 form filled out. You will go to the Passport Control to show these documents in which they will put a stamp in your passport. You will then proceed to go down an escalator to take your baggage. Before you exit the international arrival area, you again must give your baggage to be transferred to the Baggage Claim Area, which is in another building. Make sure you know which baggage claim number your baggage will be at. You will then catch the shuttle to the Baggage Claim Terminal. There is a map of the stops inside the shuttle, so you will not be confused. When you reach the Baggage Claim Terminal stop, go up the escalator and follow the signs. There you will claim your baggage. Please remember to hold on to your baggage claim ticket, you will need this to exit the security area.

Note: It will be very helpful if you can find a map of Atlanta and of the bus and train system MARTA from the Airport.

- **How to reach the USA Pools Corporate Office?**

To reach the office you can use Atlanta's bus and rail system MARTA. The entrance to MARTA's train station (at the airport) is located inside the western end of the Airport's main terminal. To ride MARTA you will need to buy tokens from their machines. The ticket is \$1.75. That is why you should have change in hand (several banknotes of \$1 and several quarters .25 cents). Push the button so you can take a transfer ticket for the bus system. You will need to catch the northern line train to the North Springs stop. Make sure that the train is towards North Springs and not towards Doraville. The approximate travel time is 40 min. Then you will need to take the 85 bus

towards Roswell (you will travel with your transfer ticket) and tell the driver you are traveling to Green Street, in Roswell. The bus stop is at a Fire Station on Alpharetta Highway. Green Street on the right side of the direction of traffic.

The address of USA Pools, Inc. is:
1073 Green Street
Roswell, GA 30075
Phone: (770) 248-1872

If you have any problems finding the MARTA station, you can call MARTA's Customer Service at (404) 848-3498. An internal US call is .35¢.

3. When you are in US

- **Social Security Card**

The first thing you should do after you arrive in the US and get settled in to your living arrangements is to apply (*in person*) for a social security card. You will be given a social security number within 2 to 3 weeks. It is very important to have this number since you cannot receive a paycheck without it. Ask the administrator at the SS office for a temporary certificate or form proving that you have applied for the card. This form is a SSA-5030 form. You may call the toll free number to learn what your SS number will be within 5-6 business days after you have applied for a number. When calling, talk to a "live person" by hitting the "0" button on the phone keypad after listening to the menu choices. You will need to have your passport and IAP-66 copy with you during the call.

The Social Security Administration office, which is closest to the USA Pools office, is located at the following address:

Social Security Administration
1395 S Marietta Pkwy
Marietta, GA
Toll-free phone: 1-800-772-1213
Working hours: 8:30 am-3:30 pm Mondays-Fridays
www.ssa.gov

You should bring your passport, IAP-66, I-94 form, a sponsor letter, birth certificate and/or at least one official picture ID that is older than one year. If the passport and the driver's license are both less than one year old, a birth certificate is required. There is no fee.

- **Taxes**

Federal, state and local taxes will be withheld from your paychecks. You are NOT supposed to pay social security tax. If a deduction has been made by mistake, contact the corporate office. You may find tax information from this site: www.irs.gov.

During your interview process you will be given an Applicant Packet, provided by USA Pools. In that packet you will fill out a W-4 tax form (federal) and a G-4 tax form (State). At the end of January, US Businesses (USA Pools) must mail to your home a W-2 form, which reports all the wages you have earned and all the taxes withheld from your paychecks. This is used with the 1040 form NR to file your US tax returns. It would be helpful if you would leave a self-addressed envelope in the corporate office to send you these forms. Information about different forms can be found at www.irs.ustreas.gov.

More information:

Federal International Taxpayer Services: 1-202-874-1460

Internal Revenue Service (IRS): 1-800-829-1040

For tax refunds after you have returned back home, you may request an application/documents from ESS Tax Refunds:

20 Eden Quay

Dublin 1, Ireland

Phone: + 353 1 670 6959

E-mail: info@ess.ie

Register online: www.ess.ie

• **Bank Accounts and Money**

To open a bank account you can go to any bank and ask an administrator for help. You should bring your passport and social security card with you (if it is not ready, you can bring it later). You can apply for a VISA debit card, in which you can pay for almost anything, anywhere (i.e. malls, markets, stores, restaurants, etc). You CANNOT use your debit card in fast food restaurants (i.e. MacDonal'd's, Dunkin Donuts, etc). There you pay in cash!

You can have two (2) accounts on your VISA card:

- Checking Account – this account you can use for expenses
- Savings Account –this account you can use to save money

Local Banks are:

Bank of America

Atlantic State Bank

Wachovia

Banks may charge a fee of \$1 -\$2 per withdrawal for using an ATM machine from another bank.

Currency

The basic unit of currency is the dollar (\$1.00). Bills (notes) are printed in the value of \$1, \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50, \$100, and larger. The coins are:

- * 1 ¢ - a cent or penny
- * 5 ¢ - a nickel
- * 10 ¢ - a dime
- * 25 ¢ - a quarter

* 50 ¢ - a half a dollar

- **Checks**

You will receive your wages in the form of a paycheck. You may cash your paycheck at your bank or deposit it in your account. You may deposit either from a Bank teller (person) or through an ATM machine.

- **Driver's License**

It is very likely that your transportation method will be a car. You can drive with your countries driver's license for 30 days after your arrival in US. After this period you should take the exam for the Georgia driver's license. The exam is not difficult. You do not go out in the street for the driving test-you do it in a designated area. If you can really drive, it won't be a problem!

The driver's license center is located at:

8610 Roswell Rd.

Loeman's Plaza

Tel: (770) 551-7373

Driver's License Automated 24 hour information Tel: (404) 657-9300

- **Transportation**

- **Car**

There will be a \$150 per month transportation fee per person. Vehicles will be furnished for everyone so that they can get to and from work. The work locations are too far for biking and walking options. Bus transportation is also not an option. In order to drive a car at least one person must have an international driver's license or a Georgia driver's license.

- 1) USA Pools will help arrange for a common Used Car Dealership so that you can get a discount on a purchase of a car.
- 2) You can buy a car from an auction; (Cars are cheap there but there is always a chance that some part of the car may not work properly, they do not repair cars at auctions)
- 3) You can buy a car from a car dealer; (there cars are more expensive than from an auction but at least the car is checked and repaired).
- 4) You can also rent a car. If 4 people share a rented car, it will break down to approx. \$750 a person. The advantage of the rented car is that you don't run the risk of having a part broken and repairing it.

Please keep in mind that at the end of your stay in the US you can sell the car back to the car dealership and retrieve some of your money back. After you buy a car, you should buy 6 months of car insurance that will cost approx. \$500-\$600 that breaks down to \$125-\$150 per person, which is mandatory. It is a good ideal to have a Georgia driver's license in order to buy car insurance. You will also need to get a car tag. (Cost approx. \$20) You must have the "title" to the car to purchase the car tag. This is usually given to you when you buy the car. The auto tag office in Roswell is at 7741 Roswell Rd., tel.: (770) 551-7620.

➤ **Public Transportation**

MARTA is Georgia train and bus system. This mode of transportation, however, will not take you to every pool that USA Pools operates. To receive a schedule of the train and bus routes you can call MARTA's Customer Service at (404) 848-4800 and press the "1" key when prompted. MARTA's web site is: www.itsmarta.com

• **Housing**

You can rent an apartment (UNFURNISHED) for about \$800 per month or even less. If you have 4 persons sharing the monthly payment it comes down to approx. \$225 a person per month. Hot and cold water are included. As the apartment is unfurnished you should provide beds, linens, eating utensils, a table and chairs etc. You can buy inflatable beds (very comfortable!!!) from any market or mall (the cheapest are in Wal-Mart and Target). The rest you can buy from garage sales. You can search for an apartment at www.citysearch.com or www.digitalcity.com. These types of websites will give you an idea what the cost of housing and living is in your job placement community. Grocery stores like Wal-Mart and Kroger's usually carry free real estate guides. There are three types of renting:

- 1) Rent: You sign a lease or agreement with your landlord for a specific period of time. Be clear with your landlord that you need the housing for short period of time.
- 2) Sublet: You do not sign the lease with the landlord. Instead, you lease the apartment from a leaseholder.
- 3) Share: You live with someone who has already rented the place and you share the expenses with this person.

Rental agreements: If you rent or sublet, make sure you sign a rental agreement and keep a copy for yourself. This agreement protects the tenant and the landlord by stating the rental price and the time period for which you will reside in the apartment and pay rent. Before you sign any agreement, read the contract thoroughly. Only written information on a rental agreement is legally binding; verbal agreements are not.

You can also live in a hotel room. This will cost (with 4 persons) approx. \$900-\$1000 per month which comes down to \$225-\$250 per person per month. The advantage of a hotel room is that it is already furnished with most of your living needs.

If you live in a hotel or if you change your address frequently, it is better to rent a P.O. Box (\$30-40) where you will receive all your letters, bank

statements, mail, etc. Some of the banks do not accept hotel addresses since privacy is lost.

NOTE: *USA Pools will help assist you in the arrangements of setting up a pre-determined apartment or hotel.*

- **Telephone and E-mail communication**

Each international USA Team Member must purchase a cellular phone with local US service to have communication with the USA Pools office, their pool location and the other people that they will be working with. Local cell phone service usually can be purchased for as little as \$39 per month. USA Pools recommends that each international USA Team Member purchases a mobile phone with local US service prior to arriving to the United States. This will help in having means to communicate with the USA Pools office while the international USA Team Member is traveling and does not yet have a permanent place of residence.

There are a big variety of phone cards, especially for Europe. Each phone card company gives a specific amount of minutes for a given sum of money. You can buy a phone card from almost any store or market. For example: the cheapest card for Eastern Europe is Atlantic Special Card. If you have a VISA card, you can also buy phone cards through the Internet at: www.justphonecards.com

E-mail is free in the libraries. The Roswell library is very close to the USA Pools office – 115 Norcross St. Tel.: (770) 640-3075

- **Fun**

First, look for the Visitors Center. You can find books and brochures with discount coupons in it!!!

Driving directions: **www.mapquest.com**

- Six Flags amusement park (770) 739-3400
You can find flyers in Kroger's market for a \$10 discount on Six Flags tickets.
- White Water amusement park (770) 424-9283
- Stone Mountain Park (770) 498-5600
- Lake Lanier Islands (770) 932-7200
- Zoo Atlanta, 800 Cherokee Av SE. (404) 624-5600
- Atlanta Botanical Garden Piedmont Ave at The Prado, (404) 876-5859
- CNN Center: 1 CNN Center, Marietta St. at Techwood Dr., (404) 827-2491
- Attraction in Chattanooga, Tennessee

First visit [Chattanooga's Visitors Bureau](#) to have brochures and discount coupons: 2 Broad St., Chattanooga, TN 37402 (close to the Aquarium)

- * Tennessee Aquarium-the biggest in the world

1 Broad St., Chattanooga, TN 37401-2048, Tel.: (800) 262-0695,
www.tnaqua.org

* **Ruby Falls**

Lookout Mountain, 1720 South Scenic Hwy. Chatt. TN 37409,
Tel.: (423) 821-2544, www.rubyfalls.com

* **Rock City Gardens**

1400 Patten Rd., Lookout Mtn., GA 30750, Tel.: (706) 820-
2531, www.seerockcity.com

➤ **Discotheques-in Buckhead**

Travel Information

Student Travel Agencies:

STA Agency: 1-800-836-4115

Council Travel Agency: 1-800-226-8624

The following site lists most airlines' toll-free telephone numbers:

www.neurophys.wisc.edu/travel/airphone.htmlx.

Greyhound Bus Service: 1-800-246-8572 or 1-800-231-2222

Amtrak Trains: 1-800-872-7245

- **Climate** – hot and humid in the summer; mild winter

- **Holidays**

There might be two major US holidays during your stay in the US: Independence Day (July 4) and Labor Day (September 3). The weekends surrounding these holidays are popular times for traveling and relaxing, so you will probably be required to work those weekends.

- **Drinking and smoking**

If you are under 21 years of age, you are NOT allowed to drink and to enter most of the discos.

Generally, smoking is not as popular in America as it is internationally. Most restaurants have designated smoking areas and many public buildings do not allow smoking at all. Non-smoking Americans find it rude if you smoke in their homes without first asking for permission.

- **General Attitudes**

Americans are generally frank and outspoken. You should avoid extremely personal questions such as those about salary, religion or romantic interests unless they are close friends.

When speaking, Americans tend to stand approximately two feet away from each other. However, they may spontaneously touch each other on

the arm or shoulder during conversation. Generally, Americans feel uncomfortable when someone stands too close to them while speaking.

Both men and women usually shake hands when greeting. In casual situations, people may wave instead of shaking hands. Americans may greet strangers on the street by saying; *Hello* or *Good Morning*, although they may pass without any greetings. Americans may also greet you with; *How are you doing!* But usually they don't expect you to answer.

- **Tipping**

It is typical in the United States to tip 15% on a full service restaurant bill. Less than 15% is normally interpreted as a sign that the service could be improved.

- **Sending money home**

- If you have an account in your home country, you should be able to transfer money to it fairly easily, especially if it is a US dollar account. The transfer usually costs around \$30 and may take three to four weeks to appear in your account-usually it is even faster. In most countries the bank will charge between 0.5 –1% of the total sum to withdraw cash from the amount.
- You can find it convenient to buy traveler's checks. It is a safe way to carry money, you can use what you need as you travel and change the checks back into cash at home is relatively easy. The most important part of traveler's checks is that they are refundable if lost or stolen. You can repurchase traveler's checks at any bank. There are some fees involved in converting traveler's checks to cash in most of the countries. In some places it is as low as 1%.
- International postal money may also be a good option. The fee varies depending on the destination country and is either \$3 or \$8.50 per money order. Each money order can be a maximum of \$700 and there is no limit to how many can be sent in a given time period. International postal money orders are generally issued in US dollars and then converted into local currency at the time they are cashed according to the current exchange rate. Most large post offices should be able to offer this service. The process may seem a little complicated at first but is relatively easy once you become familiar with the steps.
- You may also leave your US account open and use your ATM card to withdraw money as you travel as well as after you turn back home. There may be ATM fees that vary from country to country. It is also easy for you to close your account by mail after returning home.

Useful Phone Numbers and web sites

- USA Pools–(770) 248-1872; 1-877-248-1USA www.usapools.com
- Police, Ambulance, Fire Station – 911
- Information - 411
- Social Security Administration – (770) 934-1320 www.ssa.gov
- MARTA – (404) 848-4800 www.itsmarta.com
- New Comer Associations in Roswell – (770) 992-3178
- Embassy and Consulate Info www.EmbassyWorld.com

Measures:

- Fahrenheit and Celsius Degrees Formula
 $C = (F-32) \cdot \frac{5}{9}$
- 1 foot = appr. 30 cm
- 1 yard = 3 feet = appr. 1 m
- 1 mile = appr. 1600 m
- 1 Libra = appr. 0.4 kg
- 1 inch = 25.5 mm
- 1 ounce = 28 gr
- 1 gallon = 4.5 liters

Time zones

Eastern:	12 noon	Mountain:	10 a.m.
Central:	11 a.m.	Pacific:	9 a.m.