PASSPORT TO SAFER TRAVEL

A Guide to Americans Traveling Abroad

Safety Tips & Helpful Contacts for Victims of Crimes in Foreign Countries
When you travel for business, pleasure or study, one way to ensure a safer experience is to have relevant information before you go. This pamphlet has been prepared to assist Americans traveling abroad, including those in need of help after a crime has been committed. Inside is practical advice to help travelers plan a safe trip, and in the event of an unexpected incident, a list of useful contacts.

Travel is meant to be an enriching, enjoyable experience. Bon voyage!

Before You Go
Take an active role and become familiar with:
• Passports
• Visas
• Customs
• Immunizations, and other requirements relevant to the country you plan to visit

Travel Insurance
If you are traveling with valuables, determine if your insurance will cover items stolen or lost in foreign countries. It is advisable to leave valuables, extra credit cards and jewelry - even fake jewelry - at home. Consider purchasing luggage insurance, as well.

Passport, Visas & Immunizations
Make sure your passport is valid and you have the appropriate travel documents and visas for your destinations. For information about entry and exit requirements for particular countries, refer to the State Department’s publication, Foreign Entry Requirements. This is available online at www.travel.state.gov/foreignentryreqs.html.

Always take extra copies of important travel documents and keep them in a safe place, separate from the originals, when you travel.

Travelers Checks/ATM’s/Cash/Credit Card
Consider using a variety of means for carrying funds; small amounts are always best.

Embassies and Consulates
Keep a record of the telephone number and address of the U.S. embassy or consulate in the country you plan to visit. If you plan to stay longer than one month, register with the nearest embassy or consulate. If a country has neither, register at one in an adjacent country. This makes it easier to reach you in case of an emergency or to replace a lost passport. For information on the Internet, go to www.usembassy.state.gov.

If you are traveling with an escorted tour to a country experiencing political uncertainty or other unrest, determine if your tour operator has registered your trip through the State Department’s travel registration website (www.usembassy.state.gov/ibrs). If it has not, or in the event you are traveling on your own, you can still register with the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate through this website.

Itinerary
Provide family and/or friends with a detailed itinerary and the number, or a copy, of your passport or other citizenship documents. Include names, addresses and telephone numbers where you will be staying. Leave a copy of your flight and ticket information, as well.

In accordance with the Privacy Act, information on your welfare or whereabouts cannot be released to inquirers without your expressed written authorization, so consider signing a notarized release before you travel.

Prescription Drugs
If you take prescription medication, make sure you have an adequate supply for the duration of the trip, including extra doses in case of travel delays. Always carry your prescriptions in their labeled containers as many countries have strict trafficking laws, and unlabeled bottles can raise a red flag. Always take a copy of your medical prescription(s) with you. You must be able to document any medication.

Travel Tips
The Basics
• Always keep your documents and money in a secure place, out of sight; keep your money pouch underneath your clothing or in inside pockets; the Lonely Planet recommends using pouches that can be strapped to the back of your leg or above the elbow.
• Fanny packs and back backs are vulnerable and are not appropriate for important documents or money.
• Keep your money separated, so it is not all in one place.
• Remember, daytime is not necessarily safer than nighttime.
• Be wary of those posing as plain clothed police officers.
• Make sure taxis have door handles that work from the inside of the cab.

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• Stay awake and alert when using public transportation.
• Avoid night buses.
• Never accept food, drink or cigarettes from a stranger.
• Never offer a bribe.
• At airports, proceed through security checks and go directly to the boarding area, usually the most secure location.
• In any crowded situation, be aware of jostling, even if it appears innocent. This is often a ploy to distract you.
• Be discreet when using a telephone calling card.
• Consider renting an international mobile phone to use in a case of emergency.
• Although most locals are as interested in your visit as you are in learning about their culture, remain cautious around new acquaintances.

**Hotel/Accommodations**
• Always inquire about hotel security.
• When inside your room, check windows and doors for security locks and bars.
• Check fire exits for security.
• Use the door chain and/or bolt lock whenever you are in your room.
• When traveling alone, consider staying in a room above the ground floor.
• Avoid hotel rooms at the end of a hall.
• When inside your room, check windows and doors for security locks.
• Keep your room number private, as you would your address when at home.
• If the management of a hotel insists you leave your room key at the front desk, consider changing hotels.
• Keeping your room neat will help you notice disturbed or missing items quickly.

**Social Situations**
• Whenever possible, stay with your travel companions and friends, especially when drinking at a bar or party.
• Alcohol impairs judgment. Many assaults on foreigners involve alcohol consumption.
• Never leave your drink unattended. Someone could add a drug. If someone offers to buy you a drink, be sure you watch it mixed or poured.
• Never put an inebriated friend in a cab alone. Always ride in legitimate taxis.
• Thoroughly research tour companies, particularly if you plan to travel to remote areas alone.
• If you are traveling with a companion, always keep them informed about your activities.
• Communicate your limits firmly and directly. If you say no, be convincing - loud, clear, and firm - in body language, as well as in words.
• Trust your instincts. Do not feel obligated to do anything against your will. “I don’t want to” is always a good enough reason.

**Women Traveling Alone**
There is an abundance of literature available on the Internet and in books and journals for solo women travelers. Take the time to search the web, your local library and/or bookstore for helpful advice.
• Be aware and respectful of local customs. Many destinations request a visitor to respect local dress, particularly women’s apparel, so dress appropriately.
• Stay on the beaten track.
• Take along a “wedding” ring for extra precaution, whether or not you are married.
• If accepting a social engagement make sure someone you trust knows the address, as well as your time of departure and estimated time of return.
• Keep the address of where you are staying private.
• Jewelry, whether real or costume, can attract unwanted attention.
• If you are assaulted, contact the U.S. embassy or consulate immediately. Personnel will help you obtain police reports and proper documentation. They can also help with emergency counseling and other important contacts. If you make important decisions.

**Victims of Assault**
If you are assaulted, contact the U.S. embassy or consulate immediately. Personnel will help you obtain police reports and proper documentation. They can also help with emergency counseling and other important contacts. If you decide to report the incident, do not bathe, brush your teeth or get rid of any clothing you wore. Write down as many details as you can recall.

**After a Crime Occurs**
Reactions to Crime
Everyone reacts differently to crime. Factors that influence reactions vary from person to person. How a person handles stress, the nature and duration of the crime, and the support network in a person’s life are important factors.

Some of the most common reactions to crime include physical, emotional and cognitive issues. After a crime, you might experience nausea, headaches, fatigue, hyperventilation, and trouble falling asleep or oversleeping. Emotional reactions often include anger, fear, guilt, repeated memories of the event, memory problems, restlessness and feelings of isolation. These reactions are normal when you experience an extraordinary event.

If the event happens when you are traveling, this can exacerbate your sense of insecurity. Language, customs and cultural differences can be barriers, contact someone you trust who can help you make important decisions.
If you plan to seek financial compensation on return to the U.S., you will need a copy of the police report.

U.S. embassy staff can advise where to seek medical attention, testing and preventative treatment. If you have been sexually assaulted, it is important to test for Sexually Transmitted Diseases and pregnancy, as well as receive HIV counseling. For drugs to be effective, many must be taken within 48-hours of exposure.

If you think you might have been drugged, collect a urine sample for analysis by a laboratory within 48 hours after the assault.

When you arrive in the U.S., the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 1-800-656-HOPE (4673) is available 24 hours a day. This hotline, operated by RAINN (Rape Abuse Incest National Network) provides free, confidential counseling. RAINN is the nation’s largest anti-sexual assault organization.

Emergency Contacts in Foreign Countries

Consular Assistance to American Crime Victims

The United States Department of State maintains embassies and consulates in nearly 250 cities throughout the world. Consuls are responsible for assisting U.S. citizens who are traveling, working or residing abroad. Consular personnel are familiar with local government agencies and resources and can provide valuable assistance to crime victims. They can help American crime victims

- Replace a stolen passport
- Contact family, friends or employers; if family members need to reach you due to an emergency, they can call the State Department’s Overseas Citizens Services at (202) 647-5225
- Address emergency needs that arise as a result of the crime, such as medical care or evacuation
- Provide general information about the local criminal justice process and information about your case
- Obtain emergency funds
- Offer information about local resources to assist victims, including foreign crime victim compensation programs if available
- Provide information about crime victim assistance and compensation programs in the U.S.
- Furnish a list of local attorneys who speak English
- Make transportation arrangements in the event of a death of an American
- Visit you in jail; consuls cannot get you out of jail (when you are in a foreign country you are subject to its laws). However, they can help protect your legitimate interests and ensure you are not subject to discrimination.

Consular officials cannot investigate crimes, provide legal advice, represent you in court, serve as official interpreters or translators, or pay legal, medical or other fees. Consular officers cannot act as travel agents, employment brokers, bankers, lawyers, investigators or law enforcement officers.

How to Contact Embassies, Consulates and Consular Agencies

The Overseas Citizens Services (OCS) in the State Department’s Bureau of Consular Affairs is responsible for the welfare and whereabouts of U.S. citizens traveling and residing abroad. Consular duty personnel are available for emergency assistance 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. To contact the Office of Overseas Citizens Services in the U.S., call 1-888-407-4747 (during business hours) or 202-647-5225 (after hours). Contact information for U.S. embassies, consulates and consular agencies overseas is on the Internet at http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/emergencies/emergencies_1748.html

State Department Website

It is a good idea to research the country you intend to travel before setting sail. www.travel.state.gov provides a wide range of essential information for international travelers, from consular travel advisories to safety tips. For example, women should be aware that the Bahamas, northern Honduras and Costa Rica have high rates of sexual assault.

Assistance for Crime Victims

Victim Assistance Overseas

If you are the victim of a crime while overseas, you can benefit from crime victim assistance programs in some countries. For further information, please visit the Directory of International Crime Victim Compensation Programs on the Internet at http://www.ovc.gov/publications/infores/intdir2005/welcome.html or by calling 1-800-627-6872. A list of countries offering Victim Compensation Programs is at the end of this pamphlet.

Victim Compensation in the United States

All states operate crime victim compensation programs and many offer benefits to their residents who are victims of violent crime overseas. State compensation programs provide financial assistance to eligible victims for reimbursement of expenses such as medical treatment, counseling, funeral costs, lost income or loss of support, and other issues.

Often victim compensation programs require the victim to report the crime to local law enforcement in the country where the crime was perpetrated and obtain a copy of the police report.

The U.S. Department of Justice’s Office of Victims of Crime can offer assistance once you return to the U.S. It has advocates available to facilitate victim compensation applications and the criminal justice process. Contact information: www.ojp.usdo.gov/ovc and click on “Help for Crime Victims” or 1-800-851-3420 or (TTY) 1-877-712-9279.
It Happened to Alexa

This program can help rape victims in the U.S. who are about to testify in a criminal trial with financial assistance to cover the expenses of a support person or to accompany them to court.

Contact information: www.ithappenedtoalexa.org or 1-716-754-4676.

U.S. Based Organizations to Assist Victims of Crime

Crime Victim Websites

Information about each state’s crime victim compensation program, and how to apply for financial compensation for losses incurred from the crime, is available at the website of the National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards, www.nacvcb.org.

RAINN

The toll-free, 24-hours a day, 7-days a week hotline for sexual assault crisis counseling and referrals in the United States is 1-800-656-HOPE. It is operated by the non-profit organization, RAINN (Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network), which also provides information on the Internet at www.rainn.org.

National Center for Victims of Crime

The National Center for Victims of Crime is the nation’s leading resource and advocacy organization for crime victims. It works with victims of crime to obtain resources, information and assistance after a crime occurs. Contact information: www.ncvc.org or 1-800-FYI-CALL (394-2255) or (TTY) 1-800-211-7996; Monday - Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. EST.

U.S. Department of Justice Violence Against Women Office.

Information about local sexual assault victim assistance programs in the U.S. is available from each state’s sexual assault coalition. Contact information for these state coalitions is on the website of the U.S. Department of Justice Violence Against Women Office at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/vawo/help.htm.

National Domestic Violence Hotline

The toll-free number, 24-hours a day, 7-days a week crisis counseling and referral line for families and friends of those who have died by violence is 1-800-799-SAFE (7233).

The National Organization of Parents of Murdered Children

The National Organization of Parents of Murdered Children

The toll-free, 24 hours a day, 7-days a week crisis counseling and referral line for families and friends of those who have died by violence is 1-888-818-POMC (7662). It is operated by the non-profit organization, POMC, Inc., (The National Organization of Parents of Murdered Children), which also has information on the Internet at www.pomc.org.

 Victim Assistance Services

Contact information for non-emergency victim assistance services in communities throughout the U.S. is available at the web site of the U.S. Department of Justice Office for Victims of Crime, www.ovc.ncjrs.org/findvictimservices.

National Crime Victim Center

Information for crime victims on the impact of crime, safety planning, legal rights and civil legal remedies, as well as options for assistance and referrals to local programs is available from the National Crime Victim Center. The toll free number is 1-800-FYI-CALL (394-2255); 8:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. EST. The TTY number for hearing impaired is 1-800-211-7996; 8:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. EST. Information is also available on the Internet at: www.ncvc.org.

National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA)

Information and referral to victim assistance programs is available from the National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA). Call toll-free, 24/7, 1-800-TRY-NOVA (879-6682). Information is also available on the Internet at www.try-nova.org.

Victim Assistance Programs

Information about victim assistance programs in approximately 20 countries is available at the web site of Victim Assistance On-line, www.vaonline.org.

Travel Warnings

The State Department issues Travel Warnings, based on relevant information, to recommend Americans avoid travel to certain countries. Travel Warnings also provide Consular Information Sheets. You may also want to review specific country background notes.

Public Announcements

Public Announcements (PAs) are a means to disseminate information about terrorist threats and other relatively short-term and/or trans-national conditions posing significant risks to the security of American travelers. PAs are issued when there is a specific threat that cannot be countered. In the past, PAs have dealt with short-term coups, violence by terrorists and anniversary dates of specific terrorist events.

Consular Information Sheets

Consular Information Sheets are available for every country of the world. They include information such as location of the U.S. embassy or consulate in the subject country, unusual immigration practices, health conditions, minor political disturbances, unusual currency and entry regulations, crime and security information, and drug penalties. If an unstable condition exists in a country that is not severe enough to warrant a Travel Warning, a description of the condition(s) may be included under an optional section entitled Safety/Security.
State Victim Assistance and Compensation Contact Numbers for Victims of Crime

Alabama
Victim Compensation
354-242-4007
Fax: 334-353-1401
Web site: www.oes.ca.gov

Victim Assistance
334-242-5811
Fax: 334-242-0712
Web site: www.ago.state.al.us/victim.cfm

Alaska
Victim Compensation
907-465-5525
Fax: 907-465-2379
Web site: www.state.ak.us/admin/vcvc/

Victim Assistance
907-465-4356
Fax: 907-465-3627
Web site: www.dps.state.ak.us/cdvsa/index.htm

American Samoa
Victim Assistance
011-684-633-5221
Fax: 011-684-633-2269
E-mail: Leleaga L. at ascjpa@samoatelco.com

Arizona
Victim Compensation
602-364-1146
Fax: 602-364-1175
Web site: www.azjce.gov

Victim Assistance
602-223-2446
Fax: 602-223-2943
Web site: www.azvictims.org

Arkansas
Victim Compensation
501-682-1323
Fax: 501-682-5313
Web site: www.ag.state.ar.us

Victim Assistance
501-682-1074
Fax: 501-682-5206
Web site: www.arkansas.gov/dfa/igs/igs_voca.html

California
Victim Compensation
916-323-3432
Fax: 916-322-1487
Web site: www.boc.ca.gov

Victim Assistance
800-842-8467
Web site: www.oes.ca.gov

Colorado
Victim Compensation
303-239-4442
Fax: 303-239-4411
Web site: dej.state.co.us/ovp/

Victim Assistance
303-239-4429
Fax: 303-239-4411
Web site: dej.state.co.us/ovp/voca.htm

Connecticut
Victim Compensation
860-747-6070
Fax: 860-747-6428
Web site: www.jud.state.ct.us

Victim Assistance
860-747-6070
Fax: 860-747-6428
Web site: www.jud.state.ct.us

Delaware
Victim Compensation
302-995-8383
Fax: 302-995-8387
Web site: courts.state.de.us/vccv

Victim Assistance
302-577-8693
Fax: 302-577-3440
Web site: www.state.de.us/cjc/victim.htm

District of Columbia
Victim Compensation
202-879-4216
Fax: 202-879-4230
Web site:
www.mpdc.dc.gov/mpdc/cwp/view,a,1241,q,539157,mpdcGID,1523,mpdcNav.asp

Victim Assistance
202-727-0436
Fax: 202-727-1617
Web site:
www.mpdc.dc.gov/mpdc/cwp/view,a,1241,q,539164.asp

Florida
Victim Compensation
850-414-3500
Fax: 850-487-1595
Web site: myfloridalegal.com/victims

Victim Assistance
850-414-3300
Fax: 850-487-3013
Web site: myfloridalegal.com/victims

Georgia
Victim Compensation
404-559-4949
Fax: 404-559-4960
Web site: www.ganet.org/cjcc

Victim Assistance
404-559-4949
Fax: 404-559-4960
Web site: www.ganet.org/cjcc

Guam
Victim Compensation
9-1-671-475-3324, ext. 285
Fax: 9-1-671-472-2493

Victim Assistance
9-1-671-475-3324, ext. 285
Fax: 9-1-671-472-2493

Hawaii
Victim Compensation
808-587-1143
Fax: 808-587-1146
Web site: www.hawaii.gov/cvcc

Victim Assistance
808-586-1151
Fax: 808-586-1373
Web site: www.state.hi.us/cjpd/ag/cvcc

Idaho
Victim Compensation
208-334-0000
Fax: 208-334-5145
Web site: www2.state.id.us/iic/index.htm

Victim Assistance
208-334-5580
Fax: 208-332-7353
Web site: www2.state.id.us/iic/index.htm

Illinois
Victim Compensation
312-814-2581
Fax: 312-814-5079
Web site: http://www.ag.state.il.us/victims/victimcomp.html

Victim Assistance
312-793-8550
Fax: 312-793-8422
Web site: www.state.il.us/agencies/cppr/cvcc/

Indiana
Victim Compensation
317-232-2560
Fax: 317-232-4979
Web site: www.in.gov/cjvi/victim/

Victim Assistance
317-232-2560
Fax: 317-233-3912
Web site: www.in.gov/cjvi/victim/

Iowa
Victim Compensation
515-281-5044
Fax: 515-281-8199
Web site: www.state.ia.us/government/ag/CVAD/index.html

Victim Assistance
515-281-5044
Fax: 515-281-8199
Web site: www.state.ia.us/government/ag/CVAD/index.html

Kansas
Victim Compensation
878-296-2359
Fax: 875-296-0652

Victim Assistance
785-291-3868
Fax: 785-291-3204
Web site: www.ksagovernor.org/grants_vocapp.html

Kentucky
Victim Compensation
502-573-2290
Fax: 502-573-8417
Web site: www.state.ky.us/agencies/cppr/cvcc/

Victim Assistance
502-564-3251
Fax: 502-564-5244

Louisiana
Victim Compensation
225-925-1997
Fax: 225-925-1998
Web site: www.cole.state.la.us/cvr.htm

Victim Assistance
225-925-1757
Fax: 225-925-3889
Web site: www.cole.state.la.us/cva.htm

Maine
Victim Compensation
207-626-8800
Fax: 207-624-7730
Web site: www.state.me.us/ag/index.php?r=crime-andvictims&s=victimscompensation

Victim Assistance
207-287-5060
Fax: 207-287-5014
Web site: http://www.state.me.us/dhs

Maryland
Victim Compensation
410-585-3331
Fax: 410-764-3815
Web site: www.dpscs.state.md.us/victimservs/vs_cicb.shtml

Victim Assistance
410-767-7176
Fax: 410-333-0256
Web site: www.dhr.state.md.us/victim
South Dakota
Victim Compensation
605-773-3656
Fax: 605-773-6834
Web site: www.state.sd.us/social/cvc/index.htm
Victim Assistance
605-773-3656
Fax: 605-773-6834
Web site: www.state.sd.us/social/ASA/domesticabuse/index.htm

Tennessee
Victim Compensation
615-741-2734
Fax: 615-532-4979
Web site: www.treasury.state.tn.us/injury/
Victim Assistance
615-741-8277
Fax: 615-532-2989
Web site: www.state.tn.us/finance/rds/ocjp.htm

Texas
Victim Compensation
512-936-1200
Fax: 512-320-8270
Web site: www.oag.state.tx.us/victims/victims.shtml
Victim Assistance
512-463-1929
Fax: 512-475-2440
Web site: www.oag.state.tx.us/victims/cvc.shtml

U.S. Virgin Islands
Victim Compensation
340-774-1166
Fax: 340-774-3466
Victim Assistance
340-774-6400
Fax: 340-776-3317
Web site: www.islands.vi/~vilepc

Utah
Victim Compensation
801-238-2360
Fax: 801-533-4127
Web site: www.crimevictim.utah.gov/about.htm
Victim Assistance
801-238-2360
Fax: 801-533-4127
Web site: www.crimevictim.utah.gov/about.htm

Vermont
Victim Compensation
802-241-1250
Fax: 802-241-1255
Web site: www.ccvs.state.vt.us
Victim Assistance
802-241-1250
Fax: 802-241-1255
Web site: www.ccvs.state.vt.us

Virginia
Victim Compensation
804-378-3434
Fax: 804-378-4390
Web site: www.vwc.state.va.us/cicf/cicf_start_page.htm
Victim Assistance
804-786-4000
Fax: 804-786-7980
Web site: www.dcjs.state.va.us

Washington
Victim Compensation
360-902-5540
Fax: 360-902-5333
Victim Assistance
360-725-2895 or 800-822-1067

West Virginia
Victim Compensation
304-347-4850
Fax: 304-347-4915
Web site: www.legis.state.wv.us/Joint/victims/main.cfm
Victim Assistance
304-558-8814
Fax: 304-558-0391
Web site: www.state.wv.us/Justiceprograms/victimsofcrime.html

Wisconsin
Victim Compensation
608-266-6470
Fax: 608-264-6368
Web site: www.wdcjs.com/justiceprograms/victimsofcrime.html
Victim Assistance
608-267-2251
Fax: 608-264-6368
Web site: www.doj.state.wi.us/cvs/CVCompensation/Compensation_Brochure.asp

Wyoming
Victim Compensation
307-777-7200
Fax: 307-777-6863
Web site: http://vssi.state.wy.us
Victim Assistance
307-777-7200
Fax: 307-777-6863
Web site: http://vssi.state.wy.us/index.asp

Countries with Compensation Programs for Victims of Violent Crime

For further information, please visit the Directory of International Crime Victim Compensation Programs on the Internet at www.ovc.gov/publications/infores/intdir2005/welcome.html.

Australia
Austria
Belgium
Bermuda
Canada
Columbia
Cyprus
Czech Republic
Denmark
Estonia
Finland
France
Germany
Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Hong Kong (SAR)
Hungary
Iceland
Ireland
Israel
Italy
Japan
Luxembourg
Netherlands, The New Zealand
Norway
Philippines
Poland
Portugal
Republic of Korea
Sweden
Switzerland
Taiwan
Trinidad and Tobago
United States