



# Seychelles 2020 Crime & Safety Report



This is an annual report produced in conjunction with the Regional Security Office at the U.S. Embassy in Port Louis, Mauritius, which maintains a virtual presence for Seychelles. OSAC encourages travelers to [use this report](#) to gain baseline knowledge of security conditions in Seychelles. For more in-depth information, review OSAC's [Seychelles country page](#) for original OSAC reporting, consular messages, and contact information, some of which may be available only to private-sector representatives with an OSAC password.

## Travel Advisory

The current U.S. Department of State [Travel Advisory](#) at the date of this report's publication assesses Seychelles at Level 1, indicating travelers should exercise normal precautions. Review OSAC's report, [Understanding the Consular Travel Advisory System](#).

## Overall Crime and Safety Situation

### Crime Threats

There is minimal risk from crime in Seychelles. Most visits to Seychelles remain trouble-free. According to official police figures, there continues to be a decrease in violent crime, but there has been a slight increase in incidents of petty theft. Burglary, robbery, and other crimes of opportunity have also decreased. In early 2020, drug offenses have gone down slightly but are still of concern, as police report that illegal and abused prescription drugs impacts visitors and locals alike. However, this should not be a reason to be complacent; crime rates do fluctuate and incidents against tourists, residents, and expatriates occur frequently. Muggings and petty crime such as purse snatching and pickpocketing are reportedly on the increase and can be a problem especially in and around tourist facilities and ATMs. Theft from vehicles and on beaches or walking trails occurs in areas foreigners frequent. Exercise extra caution near ATMs and in the back streets of Beau Vallon and Victoria. Theft from vehicles also occurs in areas foreigners frequent. Criminals target trekking tours, walking trails, and beaches due to the volume of tourists. Use common sense and remain aware of your surroundings.

There have been reports in recent years of credit card scams using card-skimming devices. Review OSAC's reports, [The Overseas Traveler's Guide to ATM Skimmers & Fraud](#) and [Taking Credit](#).

Seychellois enjoy a lower tax rate due to the offshore financial services industry's significant economic contributions to the country, which has the second highest per capita income in Africa. The flexibility of the international tax system and the lack of legislation concerning high-value transactions have enabled international crime organizations to engage in money laundering using these offshore industries.

Keep valuables locked in a hotel room safe. Review OSAC's reports, [Hotels: The Inns and Outs](#) and [Considerations for Hotel Security](#).

## Cybersecurity Issues

Seychelles does not have an officially approved national cybersecurity roadmap or internationally recognized Computer Incident Response Team. The government has created several legal measures in recent years (e.g. Computer Misuse Act, the Electronic Transactions Act, and the Data Protection Act) in an effort to address cybersecurity issues. The country signed agreements with India and Cyprus in 2018 to bolster cybersecurity, but has not implemented wider security measures on public systems.

## Transportation-Safety Situation

### Road Safety and Road Conditions

Road conditions in Seychelles are fair. Driving is only practical on Praslin and Mahé. Motor vehicles are right-side drive, and traffic moves on the left. There are few safety barriers in Seychelles; roads are often adjacent to sheer drops and contain hairpin bends. Be alert while driving, especially at night, as there are minimal streetlights. Animals and pedestrians can make driving on unlighted roads at night hazardous. During the December-March rainy season, roads can often become flooded, and the narrow and winding mountain roads on Mahé can become dangerous. Drunk driving is a problem, so be particularly aware of other road users who may behave recklessly.

A domestic driver's license or an International Driving Permit is acceptable for driving in Seychelles for up to three months. Any stays longer than three months require a permit from the Seychelles Licensing Authority.

Review OSAC's reports, [Road Safety Abroad](#), [Road Safety in Africa](#), [Driving Overseas: Best Practices](#), and [Evasive Driving Techniques](#); and read the State Department's webpage on [driving and road safety abroad](#).

### Public Transportation Conditions

Several taxi services in Mahé and Praslin charge by distance, although some taxis may not be equipped with a meter. Negotiate the fare before beginning your journey.

Identify public buses by their blue color. Schedules can be unreliable. Services are infrequent on some routes, tend to be crowded during rush hours, and may require a transfer. On the islands of Mahé and Praslin, buses operate from early morning to early evening. A timetable is available from the bus station in Victoria.

### Aviation/Airport Conditions

At Seychelles Pointe Larue International Airport (SEZ), there have been reports of items stolen from checked baggage or lost. Passengers should maintain awareness of their belongings at all times, use Transportation Security Administration (TSA) approved locks, and retrieve checked bags as soon as possible. As there is no direct commercial air service to the United States by carriers registered in Seychelles, the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has not assessed the Government of Seychelles Civil Aviation Authority for compliance with International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) aviation safety standards. Review OSAC's report, [Security In Transit: Airplanes, Public Transport, and Overnights](#).

## Maritime Security

Most of the inner islands are accessible by boat or ferry; there are also a number of day trips available to tourists. Check that there is sufficient safety equipment including life jackets and ship-to-shore radio. Travel by ship to the outer islands, including the Amirantes, Cosmoledo, and Aldabra groups requires prior approval from the Seychelles Maritime Safety Authority. Mariners planning travel to Seychelles should also check for U.S. [maritime advisories and alerts](#). Information may appear on the U.S. Coast Guard [homeport website](#) and the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA) broadcast warnings [website](#).

Reports of pirates operating in the western region of Seychelles have decreased substantially in recent years. Refer to the U.S. Maritime Administration ([MARAD](#)) website for additional information and advisories.

## Terrorism Threat

There is minimal risk from terrorism in Seychelles. Seychelles has not experienced any terrorist incidents. There are no known terrorist organizations operating in Seychelles.

## Political, Economic, Religious, and Ethnic Violence

### Civil Unrest

There is minimal risk from political violence in Victoria. While demonstrations and protests occur, they are not common and usually relate to elections. Most protests, both scheduled and spontaneous, end peacefully. Review OSAC's report, [Surviving a Protest](#).

## Post-specific Concerns

### Environmental Hazards

Seychelles is an island nation subject to a range of natural disasters, including tropical cyclones, tsunamis, coastal floods, storm surge, and landslides due to the mountainous terrain on Mahé, Praslin, and La Digue. Seychelles lies outside the cyclone belt, so severe storms are rare. Tropical Storm Felleng in 2013 led to severe flooding and landslides. The country experiences occasional short droughts. The water supply depends on catchments to collect rainwater.

The popular tourist beach in Beau Vallon is host to powerful rip currents. Exercise caution by staying alert to changes in sea conditions. Do not fish, swim, or snorkel alone. Always seek expert local advice about which areas are safe for swimming, as this can differ based on seasonal weather patterns and time of day. Many beaches have varying strong/rip currents. Most beaches do not have a regular lifeguard presence.

### Critical Infrastructure

In recent years, the installation of fire alarm detectors and fire suppression equipment in homes and businesses has increased, but coverage continues to be sporadic. Most popular tourist hotels have implemented evacuation plans and installed smoke detectors. Review OSAC's reports, [Hotels: The Inns and Outs](#), [Considerations for Hotel Security](#), and [Fire Safety Abroad](#).

Cellular phones are in widespread use on the main islands, and service is generally adequate, though there are coverage gaps in some remote areas. Travelers can purchase local SIM cards to use with compatible cell phones.

### Economic Concerns

As a very small open economy dependent on tourism, Seychelles remains vulnerable to developments such as economic downturns in countries that supply tourists, natural disasters, and changes in local climatic conditions and ocean temperature. Seychelles is a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). However, stores continue to sell pirated copies of movies, television shows, music, counterfeit clothing, jewelry, and other luxury goods.

Seychelles fared very well in Transparency International's [2019 Corruption Perception Index](#) ratings, ranked #27 in the world, only four spots behind the United States.

### Personal Identity Concerns

Rape, spousal rape, and domestic abuse are criminal offenses for which conviction is punishable by up to 20 years' imprisonment. Nevertheless, rape remains a problem, and the government generally does not enforce the law effectively. Authorities in general do not prioritize domestic abuse cases, and police lack proper training in handling sexual assault cases. Many victims do not report rape due social stigma and a reluctance to enter into lengthy court case. Review the State Department's webpage on security for [female travelers](#).

Same-sex sexual activity is legal in Seychelles. Seychelles is one of the more progressive countries (relative to other countries in Africa) regarding LGBTI+ rights and protections, as the law prohibits employment discrimination based on sexual orientation. There are few reports of discrimination against LGBTI+ persons, although activists state discrimination and stigma are common. Review the State Department's webpage on security for [LGBTI+ travelers](#).

Persons with disabilities face limited access to transportation, accommodations, and public buildings. There are few sidewalks. Most buildings lack functioning elevators. Although the constitution and law provide for special protections for persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental disabilities, including reasonable provisions for improving quality of life, no laws address access to public buildings, transportation, or government services, and the government does not provide such services. Review the State Department's webpage on security for [travelers with disabilities](#).

The constitution prohibits discrimination on religious grounds, as well as laws establishing any religion. The government has begun drafting a proposed amendment to the law that regulates religions and associations, to make it stricter. The Seychelles Interfaith Council said it would like the amendment to impose new criteria for registering heads of religious groups and establish mechanisms to detect financial fraud and terrorism financing through religious groups. Review OSAC's report, [Freedom to Practice](#), and the State Department's webpage on security for [faith-based travelers](#).

## Drug-related Crimes

Seychelles suffers from the highest rate of heroin abuse in the world; nearly 10% of the working population is addicted to heroin, according to the Agency for the Prevention of Drug Abuse and Rehabilitation (APDR). Importation of Afghan heroin is difficult to stop, given the porous nature of national borders in a country comprising more than 100 islands. The popularity of synthetic drugs is also on the rise.

Police have increased enforcement of drug trafficking and drug abuse since 2016. Authorities strictly enforce drug possession laws. Penalties for possession of any amount include fines and possible jail time.

The UN Office on Drugs and Crime announced in 2018 its intent to reestablish a presence in Seychelles to increase drug trafficking security measures, reduce the demand for drugs, and enact prison reform. Among the reforms enacted is consideration of drug addiction as a disease rather than a crime, allowing greater possibilities for treatment and rehabilitation among drug abusers.

## Kidnapping Threat

There is minimal threat from kidnapping in Seychelles. Review OSAC's report, [Kidnapping: The Basics](#)

## Other Issues

Prohibited items and those items requiring permits for importation include pharmaceuticals, tobacco, alcohol, radio equipment, and any fruits or vegetables. Read the State Department's webpage on [customs and import restrictions](#) for information on what you cannot take into or out of other countries.

## Police Response

The emergency line in Seychelles is **999**. Report all incidents of crime to the local police authorities. Remain calm and polite when interacting with the police to avoid misunderstandings. Download the State Department's Crime Victims Assistance [brochure](#).

The Seychelles Police, which includes the unarmed police, the armed paramilitary Police Special Support Wing, the Anti-Narcotics Bureau, and the Marine Police Unit, have primary responsibility for internal security, and report to the Minister of Home Affairs. The Seychelles People's Defense Forces, including infantry, the Special Forces Unit, the Coast Guard, and the Air Force, are responsible for external security, and assist police with internal security as needed. These military services report to the president, who acts as Minister of Defense.

Arrested, detained, or harassed U.S. citizens should contact the American Citizen Services (ACS) section at the U.S. Embassy in Mauritius at +230-202-4400 / 32 during business hours, or the U.S. Embassy Duty Officer phone +230-5253-3641 after hours. Find more information at the ACS [webpage](#).

For administrative calls to local fire and police posts, dial:

Mahé	Fire: (+248-432-3242)	Police: (+248-428-8000)
Praslin	Fire: (+248-423-2149)	Police (+248-428-8123)

## Medical Emergencies

The medical emergency line in Seychelles is **999**. Road and ambulance conditions may limit emergency response. In the event of an injury, appropriate medical treatment is typically available only on the main islands of Mahé, Praslin, and La Digue. First responders are generally unable to access more remote islands to provide urgent medical treatment, and emergency facilities and/or medical personnel on individual islands vary, or may not exist at all. Seychelles Hospital is the national referral hospital, located in Mahé. The hospital offers most general services and provides specialist inpatient and outpatient care. Carry adequate supplies of any needed prescription medicines, along with copies of prescriptions, the generic name of the drugs, and a supply of preferred over-the-counter medications.

Find contact information for available medical services and available air ambulance services on the Embassy's [Medical Assistance page](#).

While Seychelles citizens receive free healthcare from the government, international visitors must pay for treatment. Doctors and hospitals expect immediate cash payment for health services rendered.

Persons with medical emergencies may require medical evacuation (medevac) to Kenya or South Africa, likely costing thousands of dollars and considered only if the patient has adequate insurance or pays up front. In some cases, medevac may require a medical visa. The U.S. Embassy recommends all travelers have travel and medical insurance. Note that you usually must purchase medevac insurance separately from other policies. Review OSAC's report, [Medical Evacuation: A Primer](#).

The following diseases are prevalent: Chikungunya, Dengue Fever, Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, Rabies, and Typhoid. Passengers traveling from plague-infected countries may face temporary quarantine during seasonal plague outbreaks. The CDC offers additional information on vaccines and health guidance for [Seychelles](#).

Review OSAC's reports, [The Healthy Way](#), [Traveling with Medication](#), [I'm Drinking What in My Water?](#), [Shaken: The Don'ts of Alcohol Abroad](#), and [Health 101: How to Prepare for Travel](#).

## OSAC Country Council Information

There is no OSAC Country Council in Seychelles. Interested private-sector security managers should contact OSAC's [Africa team](#) with any questions.

## U.S. Embassy Contact Information

U.S. Consular Agency Seychelles: Suite 23, 2nd floor, Oliaji Trade Centre, Victoria  
Telephone: +248-422-5256  
Emergency After-Hours Telephone: +248-251-5256  
Email: [ConAgencySeychelles@state.gov](mailto:ConAgencySeychelles@state.gov)

## [U.S. Virtual Presence Post Seychelles website](#)

U.S. Embassy in Mauritius  
Telephone: +230-202-4400  
Emergency After-Hours Telephone: + 230-5253-3641  
Website: <https://mu.usembassy.gov>

## Helpful Information

Before you travel, consider the following resources:

- [OSAC Risk Matrix](#)
- [OSAC Travelers Toolkit](#)
- [State Department Traveler's Checklist](#)
- [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#)
- [Seychelles](#) Country Information Sheet