



Croatia 2020 OSAC Crime & Safety Report



This is an annual report produced in conjunction with the Regional Security Office at the U.S. Embassy in Zagreb. OSAC encourages travelers to [use this report](#) to gain baseline knowledge of security conditions in Croatia. For more in-depth information, review OSAC's [Croatia 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 Croatia 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

The U.S. Department of State has assessed Zagreb as being a **LOW**-threat location for crime directed at or affecting official U.S. government interests. Zagreb is a safe city by U.S. and European standards. There are no specific security or safety concerns for U.S. businesses or U.S. nationals living in or visiting the city. The popular Adriatic beach cities and other tourist destinations are generally safe, but do experience a rise in petty crime such as pickpocketing and purse snatching during the summer tourist season. Review OSAC's reports, [All That You Should Leave Behind](#).

Residential burglaries constitute the most reported types of crime in Zagreb, in which unoccupied, less secure, residences are targets. Generally, thieves are looking for cash, jewelry, and other non-traceable small items.

Avoid "gentlemen's clubs." In the past, such establishments have presented foreign customers with inflated bills and threatened those who refuse to pay with violence.

It is largely safe to use credit/debit cards throughout the country. Review OSAC's reports, [The Overseas Traveler's Guide to ATM Skimmers & Fraud](#) and [Taking Credit](#).

Cybersecurity Issues

Cybercrime is not as prevalent as in other parts of the region. However, spear phishing, social engineering, and other Internet scams do exist. Review OSAC's reports, [Cybersecurity Basics](#), [Best Practices for Maximizing Security on Public Wi-Fi](#), [Traveling with Mobile Devices: Trends & Best Practices](#), and [Satellite Phones: Critical or Contraband?](#)

Transportation-Safety Situation

Road Safety and Road Conditions

Streets are often narrow and crowded, and parking is often tight, making a mid- to compact-sized vehicle more practical. The number of cars has been growing steadily over the last decade, so rush hour traffic can be congested. Roads are in fair shape and undergo regular maintenance and cleaning.

During the winter, the main roads are plowed often, but secondary and side roads are not always clear of snow and ice. The twisting roads in the hills outside of Zagreb are often treacherous in bad weather. During summer, roads along and leading to the coast may be congested, especially on weekends.

Croatia has a well-developed highway network that provides good connections throughout the country. Construction work continues on the highway extension south from Split to Dubrovnik. Primary roads are generally adequate but may have only one narrow lane in each direction.

Pay attention to trams (streetcars) in Zagreb, which travel at high speeds through the narrow streets. Drivers must stop for pedestrians, who have the right of way when crossing in designated white-striped crosswalks.

Croatian radio broadcasts programs in foreign languages on several frequencies. From mid-June to mid-September, Channel 2 broadcasts foreign news, traffic information, and important information in English and German.

Emergency roadside assistance is available by calling **1987** or +385 1 1987.

Drivers who stay longer than twelve months must have a Croatian driver's license. Seat belts for drivers and passengers are mandatory. Infants must travel in child-safety seats. Children shorter than 150cm in height and younger than 3 years may not ride in the front seat. Turning right on red at traffic lights is illegal unless allowed by an additional green arrow. Headlight use is mandatory from the start of November until the end of March, as well as during fog and other inclement weather. It is illegal to talk on a cell phone while driving unless using a hands-free device.

The maximum legal blood-alcohol limit for drivers is 0.05% (0.00% for drivers with less than two years' experience, drivers under 24 years of age, and truck or bus drivers). Police routinely spot-check for drunk driving and administer breath-analyzer tests at the scene of all accidents. Refusal to take a breath test is a de facto admission of driving while intoxicated. Penalties may include fines up to 2,500€ and/or prison sentences.

For traffic accidents involving a foreign-registered vehicle, the responding police officer must issue a vehicle damage certificate to the owner of the foreign-registered vehicle; this is necessary to cross the border out of Croatia. Upon written request, the police station in the area where the accident occurred will issue a traffic accident investigation record.

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

Public Transportation Conditions

Zagreb boasts an efficient, extensive public transportation system that is inexpensive, reliable, convenient, and safe. Purchase tickets individually or in booklets at most kiosks and newspaper stands, or buy a ticket on-board the tram/bus (single ticket costs 15 kuna). Tickets are good for 90 minutes of travel in one direction regardless of the number of transfers, but you must validate them upon entry. Plainclothes inspectors randomly check passengers, and fines for riding without a validated ticket are steep (500-800 kuna).

Trains are not generally the most efficient method of travel, because some routes may cross national borders multiple times. Other rail routes are infrequent, slow, or more expensive than comparable bus service.

Domestic bus service is more frequent and far less expensive than rail service.

Taxis are available at taxi stands throughout Zagreb or reachable by phone. Taxis and rideshares are safe and plentiful. The most well-known are Uber, Radio Taxi Zagreb, Cammeo, and Eko Taxi. Average meter rates are 9.90 kuna to start and an additional 4.90 kuna per kilometer. Rates are 20% higher from 2000 to 0500 hours, and on Sundays or holidays. Most taxi companies do not charge an additional fee for luggage.

Review OSAC's report, [Security In Transit: Airplanes, Public Transport, and Overnights](#).

Other Travel Concerns

Passenger and car ferry services serve Croatia's coastal towns frequently. A "coast-hopper" ferry runs regularly along the coast from Rijeka to Dubrovnik, and there are links to Croatia's 66 inhabited islands, though inter-island links are few. During the summer tourist season (late May – late September), ferry sailings are much more frequent and include fast hydrofoil services. The largest passenger ferry terminals are in Rijeka, Zadar, Split, and Dubrovnik. International lines include connections to Ancona, Pescara, Bari, and Trieste (Italy), and Igoumenitsa (Greece).

Terrorism Threat

The U.S. Department of State has assessed Zagreb as being a **LOW**-threat location for terrorist activity directed at or affecting official U.S. government interests.

Croatia is not a major source country for foreign fighters traveling to the conflict areas of the Middle East. The Ministry of Interior reports only a few (non-fighting) Croatian spouses of Bosnian fighters who have traveled to conflict areas in the Middle East. However, it is quite possible that terrorists use Croatia as a transit country.

Political, Economic, Religious, and Ethnic Violence

The U.S. Department of State has assessed Zagreb as being a **LOW**-threat location for political violence directed at or affecting official U.S. government interests.

Ethnic discrimination is the most prevalent form of discrimination, particularly against Serbs and Roma, whose populations suffered several violent episodes in 2019. Some Jewish community leaders reported anti-Semitic rhetoric, including the use of symbols affiliated with the Ustaša, a Croatian fascist and ultranationalist group, and continued instances of historical revisionism.

Post-specific Concerns

Environmental Hazards

Croatia is seismically active, and the State Department's Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations rates Zagreb as high (3) on its seismic risk scale.

Economic Issues

Exercise due diligence when considering purchasing real estate in Croatia. Consult with an attorney before undertaking a real estate purchase, and be careful to understand the implications of all parts of a real estate contract. Hiring a translator can help protect your rights. There is little the U.S. Embassy can do to assist U.S. citizens who enter into private land or business disputes, which may end up in local courts. Review U.S. Embassy [webpage on real estate in Croatia](#).

Personal Identity Concerns

There are no legal restrictions regarding same-sex sexual relations in Croatia. Although LGBTI+ individuals have full rights in Croatia, same-sex couples may face legal challenges in the areas of adoption and next-of-kin determinations. In 2014, Croatia allowed for formal registration of same sex unions. Anti-discrimination laws protect the LGBTI+ community, and there are no legal or governmental impediments to the organization of LGBTI+ events. However, there have been incidents against LGBTI+ groups, notably during annual pride events, both in Zagreb and Split. Individual cases of attacks on members of the LGBTI+ community have also occurred. Review the State Department's webpage on security for [LGBTI+ travelers](#).

Croatian law prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities. It also mandates access to transportation, communication, and public buildings for persons with disabilities. However, there is a marked difference in new construction compared to old construction, where access can still be limited. Croatia's geography is hilly and often steep, particularly along the coast, and it can present challenges to persons with disabilities. Access to public transportation may not always be available. Outside urban areas, accessibility worsens significantly. Review the State Department's webpage on security for [travelers with disabilities](#).

Drug-related Crime

Croatia remains a transit point for illegal drugs trafficked along traditional Balkan smuggling routes. Heroin and high-quality marijuana move westward, while precursor chemicals and synthetic drugs originating in Europe move eastward. Few illegal drugs originate in Croatia. Cocaine from South America moves to Croatia, then to Western Europe. The availability of illicit drugs in Croatia has increased in recent years, partly resulting from liberalized customs controls and the increased movement of goods and people through the country due to EU integration. Croatia continues to strengthen border controls in an effort to join the Schengen area.

Some substances used as recreational drugs, although legal in the United States, may be illegal in Croatia. The Government of Croatia maintains a [list of illegal narcotic drugs](#), psychotropic substances and plants that can be used for preparation of narcotic drugs.

Kidnapping Threat

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

Other Issues

While there are still some mines and unexploded ordnance (UXO) left over from the wars of the 1990s, extensive U.S. and internationally funded de-mining programs as well as robust Croatian demining efforts have ensured that 99.4% of Croatian territory is clear of mines and UXO. However, there are still 355.6 square kilometers of mine suspect areas, which are located mostly in former conflict zones. Mine suspect areas usually have very clear markings. Drivers traveling through possible mine areas should stay on paved roads to reduce the risk of encountering leftover mines or unexploded ordnance. For more information, see the [website of the Croatian Center for Demining](#), which includes an [interactive map](#) of mine-suspected areas.

Police Response

The general emergency line in Croatia is **112**. The countrywide police emergency service number is **192**. The police have adequate resources and usually respond to calls for service. English-speaking operators are on duty at the Zagreb emergency center, but that may not be the case in all regions.

Croatia has a national police service service that falls under the Interior Ministry, with Uniformed Police, Riot Police, Criminal Investigation, Special Police, General, Crime, Terrorism, and War Crimes units.

Download the State Department's Crime Victims Assistance [brochure](#).

Medical Emergencies

The general emergency line in Croatia is **112**. The countrywide medical emergency service number is **194**. Adequate medical care is readily available in Zagreb and other major cities, but the condition of hospital facilities and facilities in rural areas may be below U.S. standards. There are shortages of medical staff (nurses, doctors) throughout the country that produce long waiting lists for exams, imaging, surgeries, etc. at public healthcare centers. Occasionally shortages of special medications may occur. Medical staff may speak little or no English.

Public medical clinics may lack advanced resources and specialized medical supplies. Generally, only minimal staff is available overnight in non-emergency wards in public hospitals. Psychological and psychiatric services are limited, even in the larger cities, with hospital-based care only available through government institutions.

Ambulance services are not widely available, and training and availability of emergency responders may be below U.S. standards. Ambulances do not carry state-of-the-art medical equipment.

There are pharmacies in almost all Zagreb neighborhoods, which carry reliable medication.

Find contact information for available medical services and available air ambulance services on the [U.S. Embassy website](#).

The U.S. Department of State strongly recommends purchasing international health insurance (including medical evacuation) before traveling internationally. Review the State Department's webpage on [insurance overseas](#).

Authorities test water quality daily throughout the country according to internationally accepted standards. Water in Croatia is of high quality, with potable tap water available in most places. Some rural areas rely on private wells that may not be subject to quality testing standards. Some older buildings in major cities may have lead-laced piping leading to increased levels of lead in the drinking water.

Although Croatia has several elective/cosmetic surgery facilities that are on par with those found in the United States, the quality of care varies widely. If you plan to undergo surgery in Croatia, make sure that emergency medical facilities are available and that professionals have proper qualifications and accreditation.

Those in Croatia for more than three months, especially hiking, camping, or participating in other outdoor activities in forested areas, should get a vaccination for tick-borne encephalitis (TBE). TBE vaccine is not available in the United States, but is available from local doctors in much of the region. Use insect repellent and inspect your body for ticks after spending time outdoors.

Influenza is prevalent during the winter season. The CDC offers additional information on vaccines and health guidance for [Croatia](#).

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

OSAC Country Council Information

An OSAC Country Council program is active and looking to increase interest and participation. Contact OSAC's [Europe team](#) for more information or to join.

U.S. Embassy Contact Information

Thomasa Jeffersona 2, 10010 Zagreb
Regular hours: 0800 – 1700
Telephone: +385-1-661-2200.
Website: <https://hr.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 \(STEP\)](#)