



# OSAC Country Security Report

## Latvia

Published: June 17, 2025

*This report is intended to supplement the U.S. Department of State Latvia Travel Advisory and [Latvia Country Information Page](#).*

### Embassy Contact Information

#### U.S. Embassy Riga

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Hours: 0830 – 1700, Monday – Friday

### OSAC Country Chapter(s)

Latvia established an OSAC Country Chapter in 2019 and hosts quarterly meetings.

Contact [OSAC's Europe Team](#) with any questions.

### Latvia Travel Advisory

The current U.S. Department of State [Travel Advisory](#) at the date of this report's publication assesses that travelers should exercise normal precautions in Latvia.

### Crime

The U.S. Department of State has assessed Riga as being a **MEDIUM**-threat location for crime directed at or affecting official U.S. government interests.

The U.S. Department of State has not included a Crime "C" Indicator on the Travel Advisory for Latvia.

Latvia is a relatively safe country where the overall crime and safety situation has remained static for several years. Crime statistics trend higher during the summer due to increases in tourism and associated crimes of opportunity. Non-confrontational property crimes of opportunity (e.g., pickpocketing, swindling, bag snatching) may occur at any time.

Residential and commercial burglaries – traditionally non-confrontational crimes of opportunity – also occur in Riga, especially during evening hours. Burglars will not hesitate to enter unlocked/unalarmed dwellings where they believe occupants are either inattentive or asleep.

Latvia's relatively safe environment may mislead travelers to believe they are immune from crimes of opportunity. Use caution when using ATMs on the street, especially in Old Town.

Latvia is not immune from credit card fraud, but concerted law enforcement efforts have helped reduce the number of incidents. By law, merchants must conduct all credit card transactions in front of customers. Therefore, the customer should decline any attempt by a merchant to walk away to process a credit card. All merchants in Latvia will take cash payments.

Riga's Old Town, Central Train Station (Dzelzceļa stacija), Central Bus Station (Autoosta), and Central Market (Centrāltirgus) are areas popular with pickpockets. The underground tunnels linking Old Town to the bus station and nearby shopping malls are also particularly attractive to opportunistic criminals. Most incidents affecting U.S. nationals involve property crime and occur in public parks or Old Town Riga. These hubs of activity often contain large numbers of intoxicated visitors and locals, as well as others intent on taking advantage of visitors, especially at night. Take extra care to safeguard wallets and purses in Old Town and the underground tunnels. Avoid dimly lighted parks and streets at night. If possible, travel in a group.

Be aware of individuals asking visitors to buy them drinks - particularly young, attractive women. Scams sometimes occur in less reputable establishments, in which the visitor is presented with an exorbitant bill based on a separate menu and is detained until the bill is paid, sometimes through physical intimidation. Local authorities have cracked down on notorious establishments. As a result, incidents of scams and fraud at these places have decreased over the years. Prostitution occurs on a small, localized scale.

Riga Police have reported an increase in reports of "Drink Spiking" at club and bars, followed by robberies of the victims. Drugs such as Rohypnol, Ketamine, or GHB (gamma-hydroxybutyric acid) are scentless, colorless, and tasteless and can be easily slipped into unsuspecting victims' drinks. These drugs can make people feel disorientated, confused, temporarily paralyzed, or lose consciousness. Please use the "buddy system" when going out, do not allow someone you do not know to order a drink for you, watch your drink at all times, and keep your drink covered with your hand or something else when you're not looking. If you see someone who appears to be in distress, is wandering alone late at night, or is dressed unsuitably for the weather, report it to anyone who can assist. Most of the victims reported waking up in their hotel rooms realizing their belongings were gone, ATM card used to withdraw cash, and thousands of dollars charged to their credit cards. Report such crimes to Latvian police immediately.

Eastern European organized crime syndicates are active in cybercrime, narcotics, prostitution, and other illicit enterprises. Harassment of foreigners and same-sex partners has also occurred in Latvia.

## Kidnapping Threat

The U.S. Department of State has not included a Kidnapping "K" Indicator on the Travel Advisory for Latvia.

## Terrorism

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

The U.S. Department of State has not included a Terrorism “T” Indicator on the Travel Advisory for Latvia.

There are no known indigenous terrorist organizations present in Latvia. Latvia faces the same threat of international terrorism as other European countries due to its participation in the Schengen area.

## Political Violence and Civil Unrest

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

The U.S. Department of State has not included a Civil Unrest “U” Indicator on the Travel Advisory for Latvia. Civil unrest can develop quickly without prior notice, often interrupting logistics and services. Avoid demonstration activity, as even those planned to remain peaceful have the potential to turn violent.

## Elections/Political Stability

Latvia is a stable and functioning democracy. Latvia is anticipated to hold its next parliamentary elections in October 2026. There are no security concerns regarding elections or political stability. The geopolitical situation in Eastern Europe has raised concerns that events, unrest, and tensions could affect the Baltic countries, at least indirectly. There is no indication of these broader regional issues extending to Latvia, but travelers would do well to stay abreast of current events for the region in the news and post-specific information.

## Protests & Demonstrations

Demonstrations are common in Latvia and are generally peaceful and well-organized. Demonstrations are often registered with the local police ahead of time and spontaneous demonstrations rarely occur.

While Latvia has experienced peaceful demonstrations related to political issues, there have been few incidents when these devolved into crimes against property, such as breaking shop windows or damaging parked cars. U.S. citizens are cautioned to avoid any large public demonstrations since even peaceful demonstrations can turn confrontational.

## Anti-U.S./Anti-Western Sentiment

There have not been any significant anti-U.S. or anti-Western protests reported in recent years.

## Law Enforcement

Latvia's Interior Ministry police forces include the Latvian State Police, Latvian State Security Service (VDD), municipal police agencies, and municipal port police agencies. The Latvian State Police are generally responsible for community policing, traffic, criminal investigations, and public order. The Latvian State Security Service (VDD) focus on counterterrorism, protection, and intelligence. Municipal police agencies, including the City of Riga, operate within their jurisdictions similar to the State Police. The port police for the city of Riga cover all of the seaports of Riga located along the Daugava River, an area called the Freeport of Riga. Seaports in other cities have their own port security services or contracted private security companies.

## Police Response

The police forces are proficient and capable, though response times can be lengthy depending on the nature of the call, time of day, call volume, and resource constraints. Senior officers benefit from training abroad in areas of community policing and racial sensitivity. Municipal police officers maintain a high profile and are abundant throughout the public parks and in Old Town Riga. To respond to the needs of visitors, police concentrate vehicular and foot patrols in highly populated and popular tourist areas.

Camera technology reduces police response times and identifies potential criminal incidents. Riga's Tourist Police unit, composed of specially trained officers skilled in a variety of languages, has reduced the number of criminal incidents reported against foreign visitors in Old Town Riga.

In the unlikely event that police detain or harass a foreign visitor, the individual should comply with police instructions. However, request an interpreter and contact the individual's respective embassy immediately.

The emergency line in Latvia is **112**. English-speaking operators are available. Reach the Tourist Police unit's special 24-hour tourist hotline at +371-6718-1818. The operator can advise a victim where to file a police report.

## Travelers with Special Considerations

For [specific traveler concerns](#) in Latvia, review the local laws and circumstances on the Department of State's Country Information Page.

- [Women Travelers](#)
- [LGB Travelers](#)
- [Travelers with Disabilities](#)
- [Student Travelers](#)
- [Faith-Based Travelers](#)

## Rule of Law, Arbitrary Detention, Official Harassment, Corruption, & Transparency

The U.S. Department of State has not included a Risk of Wrongful Detention “D” Indicator on the Travel Advisory for Latvia. If you are arrested or detained, ask police to notify the U.S. Embassy immediately.

The constitution and law prohibit arbitrary arrest and detention and provide for the right of any person to challenge the lawfulness of his or her arrest or detention in court. The government generally observes these requirements.

The law provided criminal penalties for corruption by officials, and the government generally implemented the law effectively. Officials sometimes engaged in corrupt practices, and polling data consistently showed the majority of the public believed corruption was widespread, officials were rarely held accountable, investigation and prosecution of corruption cases were slow, and penalties were mild.

Corruption was a problem. Investigation of corruption cases improved, but prosecutions were slow, and penalties were mild and usually limited to fines. NGOs stated concerns regarding the quality of investigations and the efficiency of the Corruption Prevention and Combating Bureau’s (KNAB) leadership. A lack of appropriate judicial training, quality of law education, lack of interagency communication, poor work organization, and lengthy written procedures were the main problems in the judicial sector. Public procurements entailed the largest corruption risks.

## Cybersecurity

Internet crime is a growing concern in Latvia. Common fraudulent schemes involve both internet auction sites and internet job-search sites.

Disable WiFi, Bluetooth and GPS when not using them, and use caution with unsecured WiFi connections; they allow potential hackers to locate your phone with a simple scan. Avoid WiFi, if you can, and use your phone's secure mobile connection. Otherwise, install a virtual private network (VPN), which directs your traffic through encrypted connections. Even if you are using a VPN, never access your bank account or vital records on an unsecured connection.

Those traveling to Latvia's eastern border should recognize the increased potential for cyber security threats and respond appropriately to avoid becoming a victim. Assume that Russian sources monitor all communications (e.g., emails, calls, texts), and avoid any communication you don't want to end up in Russian hands.

## Import/Export Restrictions

Latvian customs authorities may enforce strict regulations concerning temporary importation into or export from Latvia of items such as firearms, religious materials, antiquities, medications, business equipment, and drugs. Satellite phones are permitted for use.

A country-specific listing of items/goods prohibited from being exported to the country or that are otherwise restricted is available from the U.S. International Trade Agency [website](#).

*Additional resources and reports can be found in the [OSAC Traveler Toolkit](#).*