



Montenegro 2020 OSAC Crime & Safety Report



This is an annual report produced in conjunction with the Regional Security Office at the U.S. Embassy in Podgorica. OSAC encourages travelers to [use this report](#) to gain baseline knowledge of security conditions in Montenegro. For more in-depth information, review OSAC's [Montenegro 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 Montenegro 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 Podgorica as being a **LOW**-threat location for crime directed at or affecting official U.S. government interests. Podgorica is relatively safe for a European city. Crimes affecting the U.S. and international communities consist of theft and opportunistic burglary. There is a significant increase in thefts and street crimes during the summer due to the large number of tourists visiting the coastal region between May and September. Violent crime (e.g. assaults, robberies, home invasions) are rare, but it is possible for U.S. visitors or residents to become victims. Any U.S. traveler witnessing a fight or other altercation should refrain from intervening, depart the area immediately, and notify the authorities. Review OSAC's reports, [All That You Should Leave Behind](#).

There is a significant organized crime element, with numerous criminal gangs involved in loan sharking, drug smuggling, money laundering, and human trafficking. Violence among members of these groups or their affiliates is common, with car burnings and the use of improvised explosives devices (IEDs) to eliminate or intimidate rival groups or regular citizens. This issue does not specifically target the expatriate community, although members could become victims due to circumstance or proximity.

Theft at ATMs increases during the May to September tourist season. Protect your PIN when using ATMs and monitor card activity. Review OSAC's reports, [The Overseas Traveler's Guide to ATM Skimmers & Fraud](#) and [Taking Credit](#).

Cybersecurity Issues

Reports of cybercrime and other nefarious cyber-activity are increasing. Malicious actors engage primarily in unsophisticated website defacement and attempts to obtain personal data. There has also been an uptick in reports of denial of service (DDOS) attacks on government institutions and media organizations. The banking sector is a target of more sophisticated attacks, although this sector has demonstrated some institutional capacity to detect and defend itself. Review OSAC's reports, [Cybersecurity Basics](#), [Best Practices for Maximizing Security on Public Wi-Fi](#), and [Traveling with Mobile Devices: Trends & Best Practices](#).

Transportation-Safety Situation

Road Safety and Road Conditions

Driver training is mandatory for Montenegrin citizens, but signal use is occasional. Expect erratic driving with sudden lane changes. Practice particular vigilance when crossing streets or operating motor vehicles.

Driving on winding mountain roads can be hazardous. Cars often pass on blind curves, putting themselves and other travelers in additional danger. Mountain roads outside of Podgorica are vulnerable to frequent rock and mudslides. Coastal and mountain road driving is precarious, especially during periods of rain and/or snow. Dangerous areas for road travel include a road through the Moraca Canyon, north of Podgorica. This twisting, two-lane road is especially overcrowded in the summer and is the site of frequent rockslides. In the winter, the Moraca Canyon and northern parts of Montenegro are covered with snow, which may slow traffic and make the road hazardous.

Nighttime driving is hazardous, as roads in rural areas lack proper lighting. Plan to arrive at destinations before nightfall.

The use of seat belts is mandatory for all passengers. Cell phone use while driving is prohibited. Vehicle lights must be switched on at all times while driving. Right turns on red lights are illegal. At unmarked intersections, the right of way is always given to the vehicle entering from the right. Each vehicle must have a reflective fluorescent vest to be used in the event of an emergency road stop, as well as a European car accident report form. Children under six years old must use a safety seat attached to a vehicle safety belt. Vehicles must have winter tires and carry snow chains between November 15 and March 30. Drivers must stop for pedestrians crossing in designated crosswalks.

The blood alcohol limit in Montenegro is .03 percent, less than half the legal limit in the United States. 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

Public transportation (e.g. buses, taxis, trains) are available and relatively cheap. Trains, buses, and ferries often use aging and poorly-maintained equipment. Bus drivers must obtain a certification to operate a large vehicle, but there is no continuing education or recertification process. Buses frequently lack adequate maintenance. Taxis are generally well-regulated, but instances of overcharging do occur during the tourist season, particularly in popular coastal areas. Metered taxi service is safe. Taxis generally do not pick up passengers on the street; you must order them by phone or SMS. Trains are inexpensive but prone to delays and unannounced schedule changes. Review OSAC's report, [Security In Transit: Airplanes, Public Transport, and Overnights](#).

Aviation/Airport Conditions

Services are reliable but limited. As there is no direct commercial air service to the United States by carriers registered in Montenegro, the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has not assessed the Government of Montenegro's Civil Aviation Authority for compliance with International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) aviation safety standards.

Terrorism Threat

The U.S. Department of State has assessed Podgorica as being a **MEDIUM**-threat location for terrorism directed at or affecting official U.S. government interests. There are no specific terrorism threats to U.S. nationals or organizations. Uncertainty surrounding the return of foreign terrorist fighters amplifies terrorism concerns throughout Europe. Non-specific and aspirational threats from international terrorist organizations also exist in the region.

Political, Economic, Religious, and Ethnic Violence

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

Civil Unrest

Demonstrations are frequent, but usually small and non-violent. Clashes between police and demonstrators occur sporadically; the last such incident occurred in 2015. Causes for demonstrations are typically economic (e.g. pension/wage grievances) or political in nature. Review OSAC's report, [Surviving a Protest](#).

Religious/Ethnic Violence

Montenegro is home to several different ethnic groups (e.g. Montenegrins, Serbs, Albanians), but ethnic violence is rare. Incidents based on religious faith are also rare, and not supported by the majority of the population. Montenegrins are generally open and hospitable to visitors; however, in isolated incidents, visitors might encounter anti-foreign sentiment.

Post-specific Concerns

Environmental Hazards

The Department of State's Overseas Buildings Operations Bureau rates Montenegro as a Level 2a (moderate) seismically active area.

Floods occur during the winter when heavy rains and melting snow cause local rivers to swell beyond the flood plain.

Economic Concerns

Athletes considering playing for professional teams in Montenegro, particularly outside the capital, should be aware of reports of disputes regarding contracts not being honored, and treatment and living conditions not matching expectations. Athletes should carefully review proposed contracts and research the team, living arrangements, and city where they will be playing prior to accepting offers or commencing travel.

Critical Infrastructure Concerns

The disruption of critical infrastructure response services (e.g. ambulance, fire, police) after a catastrophic event is extremely likely; travelers should have contingency plans in place.

Personal Identity Concerns

Same-sex sexual activity is legal in Montenegro. The law bans discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in employment, and in the provision of goods and services, education as well as health services. LGBTI+ travelers may experience harassment for public displays of affection, and are subject to widespread societal discrimination, ostracism, and harassment. Review the State Department's webpage on security for [LGBTI+ travelers](#).

Many public facilities are not fully accessible to individuals with disabilities. Accessibility for those with disabilities, including on public transportation, is lacking throughout the country. Outside of urban areas, accessibility is particularly limited. Montenegro passed a law regulating the accessibility to public facilities in 2008, but only newer buildings meet those standards. Review the State Department's webpage on security for [travelers with disabilities](#).

Other Concerns

Montenegrin nightclubs are popular with foreign tourists. These establishments can be crowded and may not comply with Western standards for occupancy control or fire safety.

Police Response

The police emergency line in Montenegro is **112**. Montenegro has a national police force with sub-commands established for specific regions and functions. The police are professional but have limited investigative resources and response capabilities. Consider having a speaker available with working knowledge of Montenegrin when contacting any emergency services, since English speakers are relatively rare. For local first responders, refer to the Embassy's [Emergency Assistance page](#).

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

Medical Emergencies

The medical emergency line in Montenegro is **124**. Finding quality medical care can be a challenge in Montenegro, and transport and evacuation require coordination. Adequate health facilities are available in Podgorica and other major cities, although hospitals and clinics are generally not equipped or maintained to U.S. standards. Health care in rural areas may be below U.S. standards. Medical staff may speak little or no English. Psychological and psychiatric services are limited, even in the larger cities, with hospital-based care only available through government institutions. Travelers may need to go to privately-owned pharmacies in order to obtain medicines and basic medical supplies.

Emergency services are generally responsive in only the most severe cases. Montenegro has only a small number of ambulances. Otherwise, people must have their own transportation to hospitals and clinics. Find contact information for available medical services and available air ambulance services on the [U.S. Embassy website](#).

Hospitals and private clinics usually require payment in cash for all services. The U.S. Department of State strongly recommends purchasing international health insurance before traveling internationally. In Montenegro, many U.S.-based insurance providers are not accepted. Cash payment is required when insurance is not accepted. Review the State Departments webpage on [insurance overseas](#).

Legal options in case of malpractice are very limited in Montenegro.

Detailed daily information on air quality is not available for Montenegro. Podgorica is estimated to have air pollution levels similar to those in major U.S. cities.

The CDC offers additional information on vaccines and health guidance for [Montenegro](#).

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

There is no active Country Council in Podgorica. Contact OSAC's [Europe team](#) for more information.

U.S. Embassy Contact Information

Dzona Dzeksona 2, 81000 Podgorica

Regular hours: 0700 – 1800; closed on U.S. and Montenegrin holidays.

Telephone: +382 20 410 500. Marine Post One (Emergencies): +382 20 410 547.

Website: <https://me.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 \(STEP\)](#)