



OSAC Country Security Report

France

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

Embassy & Consulate Contact Information

U.S. Embassy Paris

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Hours: 0900-1800, Monday – Friday except for U.S. and French holidays

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U.S. Consulate Marseille

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OSAC Country Chapter

France has an OSAC Chapter, primarily based out of Paris, though it supports all U.S. private-sector organizations operating within country.

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

France Travel Advisory

The current U.S. Department of State [Travel Advisory](#) at the date of this report's publication assesses that travelers should exercise increased caution in France due to terrorism and civil unrest.

Crime

The U.S. Department of State has assessed Paris as being a **MEDIUM**-threat location, and has assessed Bordeaux, Lyon, Marseille, Rennes, and Strasbourg as being **LOW**-threat locations 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 France.

France is a popular destination for tourists, students, business travelers, and others. Violent crime in France is relatively uncommon. According to the Violent Crime Risk Index (ViCRI), a resource for urban-level violence risk data and ratings, Paris ranks as a class 4 city on an 11-point index scale measuring homicide, aggravated assault, robbery, and rape risks. Street crime, however, is a concern, most notably in areas frequented by tourists. Consular officials throughout France report that U.S. travelers are frequently victims of pickpockets, swarm and grabs, or scams. Crimes against visitors are generally crimes of opportunity, though these crimes are more likely to involve violence either late at night or if the victim resists the criminal. Robberies involving physical assault do occur in Paris and other major urban areas. Thieves target wallets, passports, luxury watches, smart phones, and small electronic devices. Smart phones and computers, especially Apple products, cost more in France than in the United States; local thieves and pickpockets target these specifically. Be wary of where you use and store your laptop or smartphone. Do not store your wallet or mobile phone in your back pockets. Keep bags in your line-of-sight and zipped closed. If you must carry valuables, keep them at the bottom of the bag out of easy reach.

Pickpockets can be any sex, race, or age, but it is common for pickpockets in Paris to be under the age of 16, as they are less likely to face arrest/prosecution. The problem is prevalent in crowded venues and public transportation, especially in areas frequented by tourists. There has also been an increase in teens or young adults (early 20s and often male) swarming persons to rob them on the metros, in train stations, or in crowded areas. A common method is for one thief to distract a tourist with questions or a disturbance while an accomplice picks the victim’s pockets, backpack, or purse. Remain aware and attentive to surroundings, particularly in congested areas at train stations, airports, and subways. Pickpockets can be well-dressed and can blend into any environment. In public places, do not leave anything in your coat when placing it on a chair; pickpockets may sit behind you to rob you.

ATMs are relatively safe. However, visitors should use ATMs that are well lit and at reputable banks. Thieves have previously installed magnetic strip readers to capture account information, and small CCTV cameras to capture PINs at some ATMs. If the ATM takes your card and does not give it back, go into the bank to report it immediately. Be careful of people around or behind you, as there have been reports of thieves coming up to the victim and stealing the card or money while they are waiting at the ATM for the transaction to finish.

U.S. citizens have also experienced residential break-ins, bicycle thefts, vehicular break-ins while in public/private city garages, and other forms of property crime with minimal violence. Throughout the end of July and August, when most French residents take summer vacations, and in December, there is a general increase in the number of residential break-ins. Most involve residents not using proper security measures. Criminals are also increasingly targeting short-term rentals. Frequently, burglars will make phone calls or ring doorbells before break-ins to see if the resident is home. Often, thieves will gain access to an apartment building in order to knock on apartment doors to see if anyone answers, offering an excuse (e.g., taking a survey or representing a utility company) when someone does answer the door. There have also been instances where thieves break into apartments, sometimes through open windows, even when the occupants are present and asleep.

There have been reported cases of smash-and-grab robberies from vehicles in economically depressed areas and on heavily traveled roads. Thieves on motorbike will approach a vehicle stopped in traffic, smash a window, reach in to grab valuables, and flee. Rental vehicles are also targeted by criminals for break-ins and theft. Keep vehicle doors locked and valuables out of sight. When in a car, lock the doors and trunk, close the windows of your vehicle and do not leave your valuables in sight.

Crime occurs throughout France, but it tends to be more prevalent in train/metro stations, airports, port common areas, and shopping centers/outdoor markets; be vigilant in these areas and avoid them after dark. Drug dealers and other criminal elements frequent these areas, increasing the risk of assault. The historical areas or “old towns” of all the major cities, along with major tourist locations, are crime targets. Take particular care at night in adult entertainment districts, such as the South Pigalle area (So-Pi) of Paris. Besides petty crime, many nightclubs engage in aggressive marketing and charge exorbitant rates for drinks. Hidden charges of €500-600 for drinks are not uncommon; there have been reports of threats to coerce customers into paying these charges by physically preventing customers from leaving until the tab is settled. Be aware of “date-rape” drugs, which are present in France. Be cautious in bars and clubs, and do not leave your drink unattended or accept a drink from strangers.

In Paris, pickpockets are active on the rail link (RER B) from Charles de Gaulle Airport (CDG) to the city center. Pickpockets often target passengers on Metro line 1, which traverses the city center from east to west and services many major tourist sites. Thieves time their pickpocket attempts to coincide with the closing of the automatic doors on the Metro, leaving the victim on the departing train while the thief makes his/her escape through the Metro station.

The Paris Police Prefecture maintains a website for foreign visitors that provides practical advice and useful contact information for all visitors.

The French Riviera (southeastern coastline) in the summer experiences an influx in organized crime. The more expensive clubs and restaurants usually have well-trained security staff. Criminal elements start tracking people at the airports in Nice, La Môle (airport next to St. Tropez), or Toulon. It is possible that the person is followed from the airport on the way to the villa or hotel, then onward to restaurants, clubs, or walks in town. Criminals will work together

to “visit” the villas once the occupants leave, especially if doors and windows are open/unlocked and items are left out in the open. Remain vigilant of drinks being spiked in clubs. Pickpockets are professionals in the wealthy neighborhoods, tight spaces (e.g., squares, cafes, clubs), and main tourist areas all over France.

Throughout Corsica, pay attention to crime like you would in beach areas or other main tourist environments elsewhere, as crimes of opportunity remain common.

Kidnapping Threat

The U.S. Department of State has not included a Kidnapping “K” Indicator on the Travel Advisory for France.

Terrorism

The U.S. Department of State has assessed Paris, Bordeaux, Lyon, Marseille, Rennes, and Strasbourg as being **MEDIUM**-threat locations for terrorism directed at or affecting official U.S. government interests.

The U.S. Department of State has included a Terrorism “T” Indicator on the Travel Advisory for France, indicating that terrorist attacks have occurred and/or specific threats against civilians, groups, or other targets may exist.

The terrorist threat in France today is lower than at its peak in 2015, though terrorist groups and lone-actor attackers still pose a general risk. Terrorist groups continue plotting possible attacks in France. Terrorists may attack with little or no warning, targeting tourist locations, transportation hubs, markets/shopping malls, local government facilities, hotels, clubs, restaurants, places of worship, parks, major sporting and cultural events, educational institutions, airports, and other public areas.

French law enforcement remains concerned with the threat of domestic terrorism inspired by or affiliated with ISIS. The French government elevated its *Vigipirate* security alert system in March 2024 to the highest level, “Emergency Attack” (*Urgence Attentat*), following a terrorist attack in Moscow. As of January 15, the French government has maintained this security level. As a result, residents and visitors throughout France may see heightened security in public areas, including airports, public transport, places of worship, tourist sites, schools, major sports venues, and large commercial centers.

- On February 22, 2025, a 37-year Algerian man in Mulhouse (Alsace region) stabbed and killed a 69-year-old Portuguese man and seriously injured several police officers in an attack that President Macron and senior French officials labelled “an act of Islamist terrorism.”

International borders are relatively open within the Schengen Zone, and there are a substantial number of supporters/sympathizers of terrorist organizations residing in or transiting through

the country. A counterterrorism law enacted in 2017 allows the government to prevent the circulation of individuals and to create zones of protection and security. The French government has temporarily re-established border controls at its borders with its Schengen neighbors and movement may be restricted in some areas. Border controls with the United Kingdom, including the Channel Tunnel crossing, have also been re-established following Brexit.

Terrorist attacks by Islamist terrorists have been lethal in France, and ISIS-inspired or self-radicalized foreign fighters and homegrown extremists can be difficult to detect and counter. French authorities have noticed that during the long pandemic-related confinement, younger people, who were typically unknown to authorities, became more susceptible to online radicalization. Methods of attack are less sophisticated, including knives, firearms, and vehicles. French domestic and foreign policies as well as previous terrorist attacks' anniversaries and prosecutions have been used by Islamists online to inspire attacks in France or against French interests abroad.

For example, in August 2023, France's education minister announced a ban on abayas (long dresses worn by some Muslim women) in public schools, citing that French law bans conspicuous religious symbols in schools. While this news has mostly resulted in domestic debate about the application of France's secularism policy and perceived discrimination against the country's Muslim minority, it is an example of the types of news that could potentially galvanize Islamist extremists online and in real life.

Events occurring elsewhere in the world have also been used by Islamist extremists to try to galvanize individuals across Europe, including in France. For instance, in response to the 2023 Israel-Gaza conflict, al-Qa'ida called for Muslims around the world to target Jewish people as well as U.S. military bases, airports, and embassies in Muslim countries and recommended targeting any other nations extending support to Israel, which includes France. The threat of Islamist extremists' retaliatory violence against the West extends to Europe. Although terrorists have not specifically targeted U.S. nationals in France in the past few years, several have been victims of previous attacks. Terrorist organizations continue to aspire to attack U.S. interests worldwide.

Political Violence and Civil Unrest

The U.S. Department of State has assessed Paris, Bordeaux, Lyon, Marseille, Rennes, and Strasbourg as being **MEDIUM**-threat locations for political violence directed at or affecting official U.S. government interests.

The U.S. Department of State has included a Civil Unrest "U" Indicator on the Travel Advisory for France, indicating that demonstrations, protests, and/or strikes occur frequently, and/or that local law enforcement may have limited ability to respond adequately. 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

France is a stable, multiparty, constitutional democracy. France held snap parliamentary elections in 2024, and its next legislative elections are scheduled for 2029, when France will elect all 577 members of its National Assembly.

Protests & Demonstrations

Protests, demonstrations, and strikes occur on a regular basis across France.

In June 2023, France witnessed its most intense urban violence in nearly two decades during seven consecutive nights of rioting following a police killing of a 17-year-old French minor of North African descent, who refused to stop at a traffic check in the western Paris suburb of Nanterre. Riots affected hundreds of towns and cities across the country, as well as in the French overseas departments and territories. French authorities deployed 45,000 security forces across the country, leading to 3,915 arrests, including 1,244 minors. Public and private buildings, law enforcement premises, town halls, schools, tobacco shops, bank branches, shopping centers, fast-food outlets, and post offices were damaged or destroyed. Streets as well as cars were set on fire. As a result of the violence, over 700 police officers and gendarmes as well as almost 50 firefighters were injured. Elected officials were also attacked.

Protestors have also demanded higher pay and action against climate change. In some instances, black-clad violent protesters known as “Black Blocs” have infiltrated the demonstrations, seeking clashes with the police, damaging property, shooting fireworks, and setting fires. They have also hurled rocks, smoke grenades, bottles, and other debris at police. Black Bloc elements first came on the scene during the 2018 Gilets Jaunes (Yellow Vests) demonstrations, distinguishing themselves by wearing all black garb and black ski masks that cover their faces. Police in riot gear have responded with tear gas, water cannons, rubber bullets, and other targeted police actions to deter further violence.

Individuals and groups looking to capitalize on any disorder can drive additional chaotic events, which cannot be predicted accurately. Property damage, including looting and arson, in populated tourist areas have occurred with reckless disregard for public safety. Also, French security force actions, including staging locations, route closures, and other enforcement activity, can occur anywhere and at any time.

Social media "calls to action" have also resulted in violence or "disruptions" in various protests throughout the country for a variety of political, economic, security, health, or other social issues.

Avoid crowds and demonstrations as well as areas of significant police activity, exercise caution if in the vicinity of large gatherings or protests and depart immediately if demonstrators are clashing with police or destroying property. Maintain awareness of your surroundings, monitor local news, and be cognizant of any impacts to routes, public transportation, and your neighborhood.

Anti-U.S./Anti-Western Sentiment

Though not generally directed at U.S. citizens, multiple developments have fueled anti-Western sentiment and protests in France: French military involvement in some countries, a state ban against women wearing the veil in public buildings and state schools, as well as the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine. In recent years, some domestic developments have served as propaganda for Islamists seeking to inspire terrorist acts in France. Al-Qai'da and ISIS view France as the bridgehead in the war between the West and Islam and have called for lone actors to act against French and other Western interests on their behalf.

Law Enforcement

Under Interior Ministry direction, a civilian national police force and gendarmerie units maintain internal security. In conjunction with specific gendarmerie units used for military operations, the army is responsible for external security under the Defense Ministry. Municipal Police, National Police, and the military Gendarmerie services are professional, competent, and proactive in fighting crime and violence, and maintaining security. Civilian authorities maintain effective control over the security forces.

Following the terrorist attacks in 2015, the government enacted a state of emergency, renewing it five times before allowing it to expire in 2017. The state of emergency allowed the government to prevent the movement of certain individuals, and to create zones of protection and security. There were reinforced security measures throughout the communes in the Île de France region. The state of emergency allowed for house arrest of any person whose activities authorities deemed dangerous, the closure of theaters and meeting places, the surrender of weapons, and the possibility of administrative house searches. On the eve of expiration of the state of emergency, France instituted a counterterrorism law codifying certain aspects of the emergency law that gave the police additional tools and authorities to fight violent extremism.

Operation Sentinel remains in effect, with approximately 10,000 soldiers and police deployed throughout France. Of the total, 6,500 personnel are within Paris to augment police, increasing the visible security presence at airports, train/metro stations, schools, major tourist attractions, religious facilities/ places of worship (especially during special religious holidays), and government installations. It is common to see army patrols in Paris.

Police Response

For non-emergency assistance, go to the nearest police station (commissariat) to file an official report. Non-French speakers may experience a delay while an English speaker is located. In general, the police are professional, well equipped, and reliable. They maintain a robust presence, especially at high-profile government installations and tourist attractions. French police (as well as military personnel) routinely patrol public spaces.

The police emergency line in France is **17**. Dial the Europe-wide emergency response number **112** to reach an operator for all types of emergency services.

Travelers with Special Considerations

For [specific traveler concerns](#) in France, 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 France.

The constitution and law prohibit arbitrary arrest and detention. It also ensures that individuals have the right to challenge the lawfulness of their arrest or detention in court. In 2022, the government generally observed these requirements, but lengthy pretrial detention remained a problem.

If you are arrested or detained, ask police or prison officials to notify the U.S. Embassy immediately. French authorities will not routinely notify the Embassy unless you request them to do so.

France's “Transparency, Anti-corruption, and Economic Modernization Law,” also known as the “Loi Sapin II,” came into effect in June 2017. It brought France's legislation in line with European and international standards. Key aspects of the law include creating a new anti-corruption agency; establishing “deferred prosecution” for defendants in corruption cases and prosecuting companies (French or foreign) suspected of bribing foreign public officials within France and abroad; requiring lobbyists to register with national institutions; and expanding legal protections for whistleblowers.

Cybersecurity

Do not trust Wi-Fi hot spots, especially in common areas in train stations, airports. Criminals can configure “man-in-the-middle” access points that appear free so that they can intercept communications from anyone who connects. This allows hackers to access sensitive information appearing on the user's screen. It also provides a mechanism by which a hacker can gain control of the connecting device.

Owners of public Internet cafes may install key-logging software that enables theft of sensitive information.

Transnational organized crime operatives reside in France. Syndicates are technically competent and conduct many of their schemes via cyber platforms.

Import/Export Restrictions

There are strict regulations concerning temporary importation or exportation from France of items such as firearms, antiquities, medications, business equipment, merchandise samples, and other items.

If traveling with prescription medication, check with the Government of France to ensure the medication is legal in France. Always, carry your prescription medication in original packaging with your doctor's prescription. It is generally safest to carry prescription medicine in carry-on luggage rather than checked luggage.

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](#).