



Italy 2012 Crime and Safety Report: Naples

Stolen items; Theft; Fraud; Financial Security; Anarchist; Left-wing; Surveillance; Transportation Security; Burglary

Europe > Italy > Naples; Europe > Italy > Rome

4/4/2012

Overall Crime and Safety Situation

Crime Threats

The incidence of violent crime in Naples falls within the medium-low spectrum in comparison to many major U.S. cities. Crime in the southern consular district, and especially Naples, continues to be a persistent problem. Most crimes tend to be non-violent and directed toward obtaining property such as purse snatching, pick-pocketing, and residential, and vehicle break-ins. The Centro Storico (city center) has the highest incidence of these types of crimes. American visitors are generally safe in Italy and are not singled out or targeted based on nationality, but foreigners do tend to be targeted for petty theft because they look like tourists.

The center of Naples, which includes areas such as Piazza Garibaldi (the central train station), the areas around Centro Storico, Quartieri Spagnoli, and other tourist sites, are noted for petty crimes, although serious crimes can and do occur. Watch thefts, purse snatchings, and pick-pocketing incidents are the most frequent forms of crime reported in the area, and these incidents are especially common in the summer. Another "high risk" location in the center of Naples is in the Secondigliano/Capodichino area. Car thieves prefer the areas outside of the city center and focus on the outskirts that tend to have less police presence. House burglaries occur often and are most often reported in areas such as Posillipo, Vomero, and the Pozzuoli area. In the past two years, there has been a considerable increase in crimes committed by the growing population of illegal immigrants.

Most street crime involves watch and purse snatching and pick-pocketing. Naples has bands of street criminals that focus on high-end watches such as Rolex. During peak tourist season, upward of 9,000 tourists from the cruise line industry saturate the Centro Storico and Quartieri Spagnoli areas, as both places are accessible by foot from the port. Professional street criminals use this turnkey tourist industry as a lucrative area for their profession. Purses are either outright grabbed or straps are slashed by a person on foot or, more commonly, by a person on a motor scooter. In some cases, the intended victim is hit with an unsavory liquid,



and during the confusion that follows, the purse, luggage, or other valuables are taken. After the purse is snatched, the criminal either runs up a side street or to a motor scooter that is waiting with a driver.

Well-organized pickpocket rings are a continual problem in Italy. Generally, pickpockets work in small groups of two or three individuals. One or two individuals distract the victim while another thief comes from behind and snatches the wallet or cuts a woman's purse and steals the contents. The most common type of pick-pocketing involves a woman's purse being cut, generally where the zipper meets the fabric, or the slashing of the interior pocket of a man's jacket or even the front pant's pocket. Other popular methods involve the pickpocket simply colliding with the victim and snatching the wallet or having an accomplice drop items at the feet of the victim to create a distraction. When the helpful victim bends down to assist in picking up the items, a second thief comes from behind and commits the theft. Besides the downtown areas near the port, most pick-pocketing reports involving Americans occur in or around the many tourist sights in Naples.

There are numerous reports of people being victimized by pick-pocketing and purse slashing on public buses in Naples. These buses tend to be very crowded, with the result being that many victims do not even realize that they have been robbed. Most report that they get on the bus with their personal contents in order, and when they exit, they realize that their wallets are missing or the contents of their purses are gone. Most crime on public buses is covert. Women have reported that a knife or razor was used to slit their handbags and remove the contents, while men have lost items from inner jacket pockets.

ANM (city bus company) Naples city center route is the most notorious route. These buses are always crowded with tourists, so one must be especially vigilant.

Vehicle break-ins and thefts of vehicles are a continuous problem. Most burglaries directed toward vehicles are committed to obtain valuable contents such as stereos or items left in the car or in the trunk. The vehicle itself is also a valuable target for thieves as the parts or the entire vehicle can be re-sold outside of Italy. Often thieves work in tandem, throwing an object at the car and when the driver stops to inspect the vehicle, the accomplice will get inside the car and drive away.

Residential burglaries are most likely to occur where there are security vulnerabilities or the residents are not implementing residential security practices. There have been reports of break-ins at apartment complexes where all the apartments are robbed except those with hardened doors or other security features in place. There are other reports of crime against residences where access is gained because the key/lock has not been turned the required



four times to ensure maximum protection or where the grills to the patio doors were not locked. There are very few reports of break-ins at residences where good security measures are in place.

Weapons are used in committing crimes in Naples and the surrounding areas. There are cases of armed robberies of banks, jewelry stores, gas stations, and strong arm robberies of people. In addition, because of the prevalence of organized crime, the probability of a weapon being used in southern Italy is higher than in other parts of Italy. If confronted by a person armed with a weapon, it is recommended to give whatever is demanded. In such confrontations, the likelihood that perpetrators might use violence if their demands are not met quickly is high. In the unlikely event of being a victim of armed robbery, visitors are advised to be cooperative while trying to keep a distance from the perpetrator and should leave the area as soon as possible.

Road Safety

Driving in Naples is not only stressful but also dangerous. Traffic laws are rarely followed or enforced. We have seen a slight upswing in enforcement by local traffic officials who have been cracking down on people committing traffic violations. It is recommended for a person to take a taxi or public transportation if that person does not have experience driving in Naples. However, if a person does decide to drive and finds himself in a traffic accident, please follow the below instructions:

Car Accident w/ INJURIES

Call 118. Inform the health emergency dispatcher of your location and details regarding the injuries.

Call 113 or 112. Inform the police or Carabinieri dispatcher of your location and details regarding the accident.

Wait for the emergency services to arrive. When they arrive, they will provide emergency services, reestablish traffic flow, and complete an accident report form.

Make a note of what the name and destination is of any injured persons to be transported by ambulance away from the accident scene. The pending police report will be helpful in this regard as well.

DO NOT get involved in confrontation if the other driver involved in the accident shows signs of excessive violence/aggressiveness.

Car Accident WITHOUT INJURIES and NO AGREEMENT on the facts relating to the accident



Call the police 113, carabinieri 112, or Vigili Urbani 081-7513177 (Naples).

If the vehicles are blocking traffic Italian law requires the involved vehicles be moved, if possible. Before moving your vehicle, document the position of the vehicle by any means possible. Mark the four corners of the involved vehicles on the ground via any means possible. Extensive photographs can help but should not be considered the sole source of evidence. Search for skid marks, broken glass, debris, or any other evidence that may help in determining the actual facts relating to the accident. Take photographs of all damage to both vehicles and pay particular attention to any pre-existing damage.

Car Accident WITHOUT INJURIES and NO AGREEMENT on the facts relating to the accident (continued)

IMPORTANT: Try to establish a third-party witness to the accident scene. Even if it is another motorist who cannot wait for the police to arrive, make every attempt to get a name and phone number of an actual witness who can be contacted by the police.

Regarding witnesses: Witness fabrication is a common practice. Pay close attention to who was present at the accident scene and who is recorded on the police report as an actual witness. There have been reported cases of family members acting as witnesses to accident scenes while not actually being present.

Wait for the police or Vigili Urbani to arrive. Upon arrival, the authorities will properly document the accident scene, take statements from all parties and witnesses, and fill out the accident report.

Car Accident WITHOUT INJURIES and AGREEMENT on the facts relating to the accident

If the vehicles are blocking traffic Italian law requires the involved vehicles be moved, if possible. Before moving your vehicle, document the position of the vehicle by any means possible. Mark the four corners of the involved vehicles on the ground via any means possible. Extensive photographs can help but should not be considered the sole source of evidence. Search for skid marks, broken glass, debris, or any other evidence that may help in determining the actual facts relating to the accident. Take photographs of all damage to both vehicles and pay particular attention to any pre-existing damage.

Complete a copy of the Constatazione Amichevole di Incidente Automobilistico (Agreed Statement of Facts on Motor Vehicle Accident). Two copies are for you and two copies are for



the other party.

Contact your insurance company and obtain guidance on how to send them the Constatazione Amichevole id Incidente Automobilistico and what further steps need to be taken regarding damages and related expenses.

Political Violence

Regional Terrorism and Organized Crime

Italy is faced with several indigenous terrorist groups and radical elements, primarily consisting of leftist, anarchist, and anti-globalization movements. Italian government institutions and foreign diplomatic facilities have found bombs outside public buildings, received bomb threats, and were subjects of letter bombs. Buildings or offices are sometimes the targets of firebombs or Molotov cocktails, although generally at night; such incidents are instigated by organized crime or anarchist movements.

International Terrorism or Transnational Terrorism

The transnational terrorist problem is similar to that faced by most major European capitals. Additionally, Italy has long figured (at times prominently) in the rhetoric of groups such as al-Qa'ida.

Civil Unrest

Certain anti-globalization factions have been known to organize protests that have turned violent. Concern remains that these same groups could use demonstrations to target U.S. government facilities and businesses in Italy. In October 2011, in downtown Naples, a large peaceful demonstration was infiltrated by several hundred Black Bloc members who wreaked havoc and destruction to businesses and battled violently with police forces. Black Bloc refers to a loosely woven group of trans-national anarchists and persons who sometimes join peaceful demonstrations. They do not seem to have any goals other than to cause violent mayhem. They often dress in black and wear black hoods to avoid identification.

Public demonstrations happen frequently. All demonstrations must have a valid permit and be approved by the local police. Typically, there are three common locations for these demonstrations: (1) Italian companies (labor disputes), (2) U.S. Consulate (anti-U.S. foreign policy, and (3) Piazza del Plebliscito (all others). Usually, these demonstrations are well controlled under the tight supervision of the police. These events should be avoided because



hostile elements within the crowds can escalate the situation. Additionally, these large crowds are attractive targets for pickpockets and terrorists.

Police Response

Police response and services throughout Italy are good. The Polizia di Stato (state police) and the Carabinieri (military police) are well trained and equipped. These two police groups offer the full range of police services. In the event of a theft or any other mishap, please refer to the following list of helpful telephone numbers:

Military police, (Carabinieri) throughout Italy: 112

Police, Naples (Polizia di Stato): 113

Fire department, Naples (Vigili del Fuoco): 115

Ambulance, Naples, (First Aid only): 118

Medical Emergencies

Hospital Contact Information (Naples)

AZIENDA OSPEDALIERA DI RILIEVO NAZIONALE A. CARDARELLI

9, v. Cardarelli - 80131 Napoli (NA)

Telephone: 081- 7471111

POLICLINICO SECONDA UNIVERSITA' DI NAPOLI

Largo Madonna Delle Grazie 1 - 80138 Napoli (NA)

Toll Free Number: 800 56 72 66

Ospedale Santobono (children's hospital)

Napoli(NA) 80123

Via Mario Fiore n°6

Telephone: 081 220 5355

Tips on How to Avoid Becoming a Victim

American citizens are not known to experience large amounts of crime while visiting Italy and are less likely to be a victim of violent crime in Italy than in most large American cities. Most of the crimes committed against American tourists and visitors fall into the category of petty theft, such as pick-pocketing and purse snatching.



Be cognizant of your surroundings. Know where you need to go and walk with a purpose. Do not give the impression that you are lost or wandering. There is evidence that criminals will observe these vulnerabilities and target these types of individuals.

If at all possible, try to find an empty seat while traveling, especially on public buses. People with bags should keep them in sight at all times. This makes it more difficult for the thieves to dip into the bag and extract valuables. Visitors are also advised to keep wallets in their front pocket.

Many people are targeted for expensive jewelry. Dress conservatively and leave high priced items in a secure location.

Visitors should avoid carrying house keys that are marked with addresses and keys should be separated from any papers that reveal an address. Using common security practices is an effective deterrent to residential crime.

Be attentive to your surroundings and keep control of your personal items. While waiting in line, keep your luggage close. All authorized taxis are white and have meters. Only use licensed taxis. Do not use a private unlicensed car service.

Drivers should always lock their vehicles and if possible should use vehicle anti-theft devices. Cars should be parked in a garage or in a well-lit area.

Parents should tell children before the trip that their cooperation will be helpful in train stations and at airports to help ensure everyone's safety and ease of travel. Families become a prime target if the children are uncooperative and attention is focused on controlling them.

Areas to Avoid

A high degree of crime occurs in and around the tourist areas of Naples. Tourists often possess large quantities of cash and are usually distracted by the sites. Well-organized pick-pocketing rings and other criminal elements operate intensely in tourist areas. While it is not recommended that tourist attractions be avoided, extra care and attention should be taken when visiting these areas. A simple security measure to take that can help deter potential criminals is to avoid wearing any items of value while touring Naples.

At the Piazza Garibaldi train station, diversion techniques are the preferred methods used by criminals. One common example involves criminals who ask for directions and while the victim is offering assistance, another criminal covertly takes a piece of luggage. Other techniques



may involve a thief intentionally spilling mustard, yogurt, or soda on the victim and then apologizing profusely and helping the victim clean up while an accomplice is relieving the victim of his valuables. Thieves are unscrupulous enough to offer assistance to a person struggling with bags or strollers, kindly pick up one of the bags, and disappear into the crowd. Use extra caution while in and around train stations. The large crowds and chaotic atmosphere provide an ideal environment for criminals.

Piazza del Gesu', a large piazza in south Naples, has been reported as an area where physical altercations are most prevalent during late evening/early morning hours. The piazza has many bars, which all close at the same time, and the remaining crowds spill into the piazza. The combination of excessive amounts of alcohol, bravado, and cultural differences make minor fights fairly frequent in this area.

The areas around the ruins in Pompei, Ercolano in the Vesuvio area outside of Naples, have also been reported to have late-night crimes in which the victim is befriended by strangers (typically in a bar or in a public park setting) offering drug-laced drinks designed to render the victim unconscious. The victim is then robbed, sometimes physically assaulted and often hospitalized as a result of injuries sustained. Many victims of this crime wake up the following morning, often in a nearby park, with little or no recollection of the events.

Visitors are also advised to exercise a heightened sense of security awareness while visiting public parks, especially after dark. While they are attractive locations for jogging and other exercise, in twilight or evening hours it is a good idea to travel with another person or with a group.

Best Security Practices

While in Naples, you will need to pay special attention to your actions and your surroundings to avoid becoming a victim of pick-pocketing. Subways, buses, and trams are lucrative hunting grounds for pickpockets, as the numbers of (often unwary) tourists, coupled with the close proximity and jostling of passengers, makes their actions easier. Do not carry large sums of cash. If you normally carry a wallet in a back pocket, put it in a front pocket and put your hand in your pocket to hold onto it. If you carry a purse or bag, just tucking it under one arm (particularly in a stationary position, such as on a subway, bus, or tram) is insufficient. Carry it in front of you and block access to the sides with your arms. When walking with a purse or bag, ensuring it is closed and tucking it under your arm is probably sufficient. Make a copy of your passport data page and carry the paper copy instead of your passport. Leave your unneeded wallet with your driver's license and department store credit cards in the hotel safe. ATM fraud is increasing throughout Europe, and Naples is no exception; therefore, it is



recommended to use ATMs inside banks and not on the sidewalks. Taxis are a safe and reliable means of transportation in the city, but make sure it has a meter and that the driver activates it upon departure. Violent street crime is very rare, but do not venture down isolated or dark alleyways. Avoid street vendors selling knock-off designer products or you may face a fine of up to several thousand Euros by the local police, not to mention the personal embarrassment and political fallout that may result from your illegal actions. Do not leave your purse or bag over the back of your chair at a restaurant, watch that no one kicks your bag or purse out from under your table at a restaurant, and be particularly vigilant of where you place your belongings when at a sidewalk café.

Further Information

U.S. Embassy Rome
Via Veneto 119/A
00187 Naples, Italy

Regional Security Office: (39) 06-4674-2175
Embassy Operator: (39) 06-4674-1
Marine Post One: (39) 06-4674-2112

U.S. Consulate General Naples
Piazza della Repubblica
80122 Naples, Italy

Regional Security Office: (39) 081-5838266
Consulate Operator: (39) 081-5838-111
Marine Post One: None

U.S. Consulate General Milan
Via Principe Amedeo, 2/10
20121 Milan, Italy

Regional Security Office: (39) 02-2903-5293
Consulate Operator: (39) 02-2903-51
Marine Post One: (39) 02-2903-5255

Consulate General Florence
Lungarno Vespucci, 38



50123 Florence, Italy.

Regional Security Office: None
Consulate Operator: (39) 055-2669-51
Marine Post One: None

U.S. citizens traveling to Italy should register with the U.S. Embassy and can obtain updated travel information by visiting <http://italy.usembassy.gov/english/> .

OSAC Country Council

Italy has an active OSAC Country Council. For further information on the OSAC Country Council in Italy, visit <http://italy.osac.gov/> or contact the Regional Security Office of the U.S. Embassy in Naples. For more information on OSAC Country Councils, visit <https://www.osac.gov/> .