



Travel Warning: Haiti

Travel Health and Safety; Crime

Western Hemisphere > Haiti; Western Hemisphere > Haiti > Port-au-Prince

3/12/2014

The Department of State has issued this Travel Warning to inform U.S. citizens traveling to or living in Haiti about the security situation in Haiti. This replaces the Travel Warning dated August 13, 2013 and provides updated information regarding levels of crime in Haiti. While violent crime has declined, travelers to Haiti should still exercise caution.

The Department of State urges U.S. citizens to exercise caution when visiting Haiti given Haiti's weak emergency response infrastructure. Hundreds of thousands of U.S. citizens safely visit Haiti each year, but the poor state of Haiti's emergency response network should be carefully considered when planning travel. Travelers to Haiti are encouraged to use organizations that have solid infrastructure, evacuation, and medical support options in place. (Please see the Country Specific Information page for Haiti.)

Haiti's emergency management infrastructure remains in poor condition and inadequate.

Medical facilities, including ambulance services, are particularly weak. Some U.S. citizens injured in accidents and others with serious health concerns have been unable to find necessary medical care in Haiti and have had to arrange and pay for medical evacuation to the United States. We strongly encourage visitors to Haiti to obtain evacuation insurance.

U.S. citizens have been victims of violent crime, including homicide and kidnapping, predominantly in the Port-au-Prince area, although the incidence of both homicide and

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kidnapping is down sharply in during the last year. No U.S. citizens were kidnapped since the issuance of the previous Travel Warning and homicides are down from 2012 to 2013. As with other countries that have high levels of poverty, U.S. citizens are urged to remain aware of the possibility of robbery. In December 2013, the Embassy learned of six cases of U.S. citizens arriving in Port-au-Prince on flights from the United States who were robbed shortly after departing the airport, a spike associated with the busy travel period during the holidays. It is recommended that U.S. citizens have their host/organization meet them at the airport upon arrival and/or have pre-arranged airport transfers and hotels. U.S. citizens are also urged to exercise caution when visiting banks in Port-au-Prince. Robbery crews have been known to surveil banks and rob customers shortly after departure. While the Government of Haiti has made progress to arrest and disrupt perpetrators, kidnapping for ransom can affect anyone in Haiti, most particularly those maintaining long-term residence in the country.

Regions of Haiti outside the capital have fewer reported incidents of crime. However, the Haitian authorities' ability to respond to emergencies is limited and in some areas nonexistent. Embassy employees are required to adhere to certain required security and safety measures when traveling outside of Port-au-Prince, and they have restrictions on travel in certain areas or times. Additionally, U.S. Embassy personnel are under an Embassy-imposed curfew of 1:00 a.m. to 5:00 a.m. and must remain at home or another safe facility during curfew hours. This may constrain the Embassy's ability to provide emergency services to U.S. citizens outside of Port-au-Prince. For additional details on restrictions on staff travel within Haiti, please see our Country Specific Information for Haiti.

The United Nations' Stabilization Force for Haiti (MINUSTAH) remains in Haiti to support the activities of the Haitian National Police. The Haitian National Police (HNP), with assistance from MINUSTAH, are responsible for maintaining order and rendering assistance. However, given the possibility and unpredictability of spontaneous protests, their ability to assist U.S. citizens during disturbances is very limited. U.S. government-facilitated evacuations, such as the evacuation that took place from Haiti in 2010, occur only when no safe commercial

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alternatives exist. Please see our website for additional information on how the Department of State assists U.S. citizens during a crisis.

U.S. citizens who choose to travel to Haiti are urged to review our Country Specific Information page. U.S. private sector organizations with operations in Haiti can obtain additional information on the security situation in the country through the U.S. Department of State's Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC). OSAC's mission is to promote security cooperation between U.S. private sector interests worldwide and the U.S. Department of State. OSAC also maintains an active Country Council in Haiti to promote the exchange of security-related information. The Council is comprised of security professionals and is co-chaired by the Regional Security Officer at the U.S. Embassy Port-au-Prince and a private sector representative. U.S. private sector entities can obtain additional information on OSAC by visiting the OSAC website.

U.S. citizens are strongly urged to enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) in order to receive the most up-to-date security information. While the Embassy's ability to provide emergency consular services is extremely limited, travel enrollment will enable receipt of security messages via email. Current information on safety and security can also be obtained by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll free in the United States; callers outside the United States and Canada can receive the information by calling a regular toll-line at 1-202-501-4444. These numbers are available from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday, except U.S. federal holidays. The Embassy of the United States of America is located in Port-au-Prince at Boulevard du 15 Octobre, Tabarre 41, Tabarre, Haiti, telephone: (509) 2229-8000, facsimile: (509) 2229-8027, email: acspap@state.gov American Citizens Services (ACS) Unit office hours are 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. The Consular Section is closed on U.S. and local holidays. After hours, on weekends and on holidays, please call (509) 2229-8000 and an automated attendant will connect you with the Embassy duty officer. U.S. citizens can also stay informed about conditions in Haiti by following the Embassy and ACS on Twitter and Facebook.

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