



Japan 2016 Crime & Safety Report: Tokyo

Travel Health and Safety; Transportation Security; Stolen items; Theft; Financial Security; Fraud; Murder; Rape/Sexual Violence; Assault; Drug Trafficking; Riots/Civil Unrest; Earthquakes; Tsunamis; Hate Crimes

East Asia & Pacific > Japan; East Asia & Pacific > Japan > Tokyo

2/22/2016

Overall Crime and Safety Situation

Post Crime Rating: Low

Crime Threats

The national crime rate is below the U.S. national average. Crimes against U.S. citizens usually involve personal disputes, theft, or vandalism. Non-violent crimes, especially financial crimes that include the use of stolen credit cards and credit card numbers, do occur on a regular basis. Pickpocketing and other petty crimes occasionally take place in crowded shopping areas, bars/nightclubs, train stations, and airports. Every year, a number of U.S. citizens report their passports lost or stolen at Narita airport (NRT).

Violent crime is rare but does exist. An individual was murdered in a nightclub in Roppongi in September 2012. The person was attacked by about 10 individuals with metal pipes and

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beaten to death.

High-risk areas for crime include Roppongi, Shinjuku, and especially in the areas of Kabuki-cho, Shibuya, and Ikebukuro. Incidents involving U.S. citizens since the spring of 2008 in these areas include physical/sexual assaults; drug overdoses; thefts of purses, wallets, cash, and credit cards; and drugs slipped into drinks. Roppongi is an entertainment district in Tokyo that caters to foreign clientele and is considered a high-risk area for crime, particularly misappropriation of credit card information in bars to make fraudulent credit card charges.

There have been several incidents of drugs being slipped into a patron's drinks at bar/nightclubs in the Roppongi and Shinjuku areas with the intent to commit drug-assisted robbery or drug-assisted sexual assault. In 2015, the U.S. Embassy saw an increase in the number of drink-spiking incidents in Roppongi affecting U.S. citizens. Drink-spiking has led to robbery and has resulted in physical and sexual assaults. In most drink-spiking reports, the victim unknowingly consumes a beverage that has been mixed with a drug that renders the victim unconscious or dazed for up to 12 hours, during which time the victim's credit card is used for large purchases or the card is stolen. Some victims regain consciousness in the bar or club; other victims may awaken on the street.

Roppongi and other entertainment and nightlife districts have also been the scene of violence between criminal syndicates.

Cybersecurity Issues

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Cybercrime is an emerging concern. Advance fee fraud scams have been perpetrated via email, and in 2015 OSAC reported on a virus that can be introduced through hotel wireless Internet (wifi).

Other Areas of Concern

All U.S. personnel should avoid personal travel to the Fukushima Nuclear Reactor.

Transportation-Safety Situation

Road Safety and Road Conditions

Road conditions and road safety standards meet or exceed U.S standards except in the most remote areas or islands. Roads are well maintained, and extensive lighting exists. Vehicle accidents are common, and accidents involving pedestrians are also common. Traffic enforcement includes extensive use of cameras.

Public Transportation Conditions

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The overall transportation system is an efficient, safe system. The railway system is a combination of local trains and high-speed trains.

Aviation/Airport Conditions

All major U.S. airlines service the international airports.

Other Travel Conditions

There are a number of tour organizations that arrange travel throughout the country, with varying degrees of service. None are deemed off-limits.

Terrorism Threat

Post Terrorism Rating: Low

Local, Regional, and International Terrorism Threats/Concerns

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There are no known indigenous terrorist organizations, and Japan is not a known base of support or sympathy for terrorists. In 2015, Japan continued to see a rise of ISIL-related sympathizers among Japanese nationals. Media has reported on Japanese nationals who traveled or attempted to travel to Syria to join ISIL. While Japan has experienced no terrorist incidents in the last decade, all visitors should be familiar with the contents of the U.S. Department of State's Worldwide Caution, available at: travel.state.gov. This statement expresses the Department's concern about continued threat of attacks, demonstrations, and other violent actions against American citizens and American interests abroad.

Anti-American/Anti-Western Sentiment

Most Japanese regard Americans and Westerners in a positive manner and are friendly to foreigners. The U.S. Embassy is routinely the site of peaceful demonstrations, often those protesting the U.S. military presence on Japanese soil.

Political, Economic, Religious, and Ethnic Violence

Post Political Violence Rating: Medium

Civil Unrest

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Violent demonstrations and acts of civil disobedience are generally limited. Most protests are peaceful. Numerous demonstrations took place in 2015, with the number of participants varying in size from a few to several thousand. Demonstrators are required to apply for a permit from the government prior to any activity. The police closely monitor demonstrations, and information is usually passed to the Regional Security Officer (RSO).

Post-specific Concerns

Environmental Hazards

Japan is in an active seismic region, known as the “Ring of Fire,” and often experiences minor tremors and earthquakes. Japan has suffered from large earthquakes in major metropolitan areas, and the 9.0 earthquake north of Tokyo in 2011 resulted in a tsunami that caused widespread damage to coastal cities and the Fukushima nuclear reactor. Coastal cities remain susceptible to tsunamis, which stem from earthquake epicenters in the ocean and can arrive on shore within minutes. These tidal waves cause destruction of property and can lead to loss of life. Japan has made great advances in building, railway, and road construction that minimizes collateral damage in the metropolitan areas. All U.S. personnel should have an emergency plan for earthquakes and tsunamis. These plans should include contingencies for communications and evacuations.

Critical Infrastructure Concerns

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The Fukushima Nuclear Reactor is an ongoing nuclear incident. The government maintains a 20-kilometer exclusion zone around the plant.

Privacy Concerns

There are very strict privacy laws that govern the release of personal information.

Personnel Background Concerns

Hate-related crimes rarely occur, though some U.S. citizens have reported being the target of comments or actions because of their nationality or race.

Drug-related Crimes

Drug-related crime takes place in Japan. Illegal drugs (methamphetamine, marijuana, cocaine, synthetic drugs) exist; however, drug-related violence remains rare.

Police Response

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Japan has strict laws regarding the use and possession of dangerous weapons. Firearms are illegal without a proper license. Carrying a pocket knife (including Swiss Army-style knife), craft, or hunting knife or box cutter in public is illegal. Violators can be subject to arrest and incarceration.

How to Handle Incidents of Police Detention or Harassment

U.S. Embassy Tokyo's American Citizen Services (tel: 03-3224-5000) provides assistance to American citizens. The U.S. Embassy Tokyo is located at 1-10-5 Akasaka, Minato-Ku Tokyo.

Crime Victim Assistance

The police emergency number is 110. Response is dependable. Police are well trained and can be counted on to provide travelers with assistance. Regional police handle local crime under their jurisdiction and provide officers for traffic control and immediate response to criminal incidents.

Some U.S. citizens report that police procedures appear to be less sensitive and responsive to a victim's concerns, particularly in cases of domestic violence or sexual assault or when the victim and the perpetrator are foreigners, compared to the procedures in the U.S. Few victim assistance resources or battered women's shelters exist in major urban areas, and they are generally unavailable in rural areas. Investigations of sexual assault crimes are often

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conducted without female police officers present, and police typically ask about the victim's sexual history and previous relationships.

The quality of interpreting from Japanese to English can vary, and for some U.S. citizen victims this has caused a problem.

Police/Security Agencies

The National Police Agency, Prefectural Police Department, City Police, and Police Kobans (substations) comprise Japan's police system.

The National Police Agency is responsible for the administration of police services.

Prefectural Police Departments maintain a regional responsibility.

The City Police provide police services at a more local level.

The Koban are the most typical point of interaction for people with the Japanese police. Kobans are located throughout cities. They are staffed by one or more police officer and are open 24/7.

Medical Emergencies

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The countrywide emergency number for fire and ambulance service is 119. This number may not work from cell phones, and English-speaking dispatchers may not be available.

Medical caregivers require full payment at the time of treatment or proof of the ability to pay before treating a foreigner who is not a member of the Japanese national health insurance plan.

Contact Information for Recommended Hospitals/Clinics

Consult the Embassy's American Citizen Services (<http://japan.usembassy.gov/e/tacs-main.html>) for information on English-speaking medical facilities.

Recommended Insurance Posture

Travelers should verify the validity of their medical insurance prior to personal travel.

CDC Country-specific Vaccination and Health Guidance

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For CDC country-specific vaccination and health guidance please visit the CDC at: <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/japan.htm>.

OSAC Country Council Information

The OSAC Country Council is active in Tokyo, meeting on a monthly basis at the U.S. Embassy or a pre-arranged location. Additional or interested members are always welcomed and may obtain further information by accessing <https://www.osac.gov/Pages/Home.aspx> or by emailing: OSACEAP@state.gov. The Embassy's Regional Security Office can be reached at 03-3224-5000 within Japan or at 81-3-3224-5000 outside Japan. Additionally, the RSO can also be reached at: DSRSOTKY@state.gov. To reach OSAC's East Asia & Pacific team, please email OSACEAP@state.gov

U.S. Embassy Location and Contact Information

Embassy Address and Hours of Operation

U.S. Embassy is located at 1-10-5 Akasaka, Minato-Ku Tokyo Japan.

General Business Hours: 8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. Mon-Fri. The Embassy and all our Consulates are closed on American and Japanese holidays.

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Embassy Contact Numbers

Embassy switchboard: (03) 3224-5000.

Regional Security Office: (03)3224-5000.

Website: <http://japan.usembassy.gov>

Nearby Posts

Consulate Osaka/Kobe: <http://osaka.usconsulate.gov/>

Consulate Naha/Okinawa: <http://naha.usconsulate.gov/>

Consulate Sapporo: <http://sapporo.usconsulate.gov/>

Consulate Fukuoka: <http://fukuoka.usconsulate.gov/>

Consulate Nagoya: <http://nagoya.usconsulate.gov/>

Embassy Guidance

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Travelers are advised to consult the Consular Affairs website to obtain the latest Japan-specific threat information.

Tips on How to Avoid Becoming a Victim

Scams

Several U.S. citizens have reported being charged exorbitant bar tabs in some bars and clubs in Roppongi and other entertainment and nightlife districts. U.S. citizens are reminded to beware of touts lining the streets in Roppongi attempting to bring customers into bars. There have been numerous incidents of exorbitant credit card bills, threats, and extortion associated with bars utilizing touts. Japanese police have been reluctant to enforce laws prohibiting these touts or act on claims against them.

Situational Awareness Best Practices

All visitors should use common sense and take basic security precautions. Travelers should always strive to maintain a low profile and should always be aware of their surroundings.

All personnel should use caution in all entertainment and nightlife districts throughout Japan.

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