



Austria 2016 Crime & Safety Report

Travel Health and Safety; Transportation Security; Stolen items; Theft; Burglary; Assault; Winter weather; Religious Terrorism; Riots/Civil Unrest; Hate Crimes; Drug Trafficking; Financial Security

Europe > Austria; Europe > Austria > Vienna

2/22/2016

Overall Crime and Safety Situation

Post Crime Rating: Medium

Crime Threats

Crime rates were steady over 2015. The most common crime experienced by Americans has been purse/wallet snatching in crowded areas or other crimes of opportunity in which the victim was distracted and not in physical control of valuables in trains, restaurants, and shopping areas. These crimes are overwhelmingly non-violent; weapons are seldom used.

Residential burglaries continue to be a significant concern and have increased slightly over the year, especially in the more affluent neighborhoods.

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Vehicle thefts reports have not increased.

In 2015, Americans reported a few instances of assault by drunk or emotionally disturbed persons in/near bars and transit hubs, but they were not specifically targeted for being American.

While violent crime is infrequent, when it occurs is covered heavily by the media. A number of jewelers were targeted by take-over-style robberies in December 2015, during the holiday shopping season, and armed bank robberies have been reported year-round.

Most organized crime relates to burglary and property crimes rings rather than violent crime.

Austria experienced an influx of refugees and asylum seekers in 2015 and continues to handle greater than usual numbers of displaced persons than in previous years. This influx has led to an increase in anecdotal reports of some criminal activity where these groups congregate, with some violent and non-violent incidents reported in the press.

Austrian society uses cash much more than the U.S., so credit card fraud is less prevalent than in the U.S.

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Cybersecurity Issues

Cybercrime has generally followed worldwide trends.

Transportation-Safety Situation

Road Safety and Road Conditions

Austria has a vast network of highways and roads, all in good condition, and traffic flows in an organized manner. In large cities, city roads are shared by a complex tram and bus system, creating unique driving hazards. There is a large network of mountain roads requiring good, attentive driving skills. In winter, some minor mountain passes are blocked by snow, sometimes for prolonged periods. Winter tires or some all-season tires are required on cars during the fall and winter months. Carrying snow chains in winter is also highly recommended and may be compulsory in some areas.

Speed limits are:

Country roads – 100km/h;

Autobahn – 130km/h;

Towns – 50km/h.

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Construction zone speed limits may differ from the general limits. Electronic radar detectors are located on all autobahns, motorways, and in cities to assist the police with speed enforcement. Austria employs cameras in controlled speed zones, and drivers may be ticketed automatically for speed violations. All vehicles on the Austrian Autobahn must have a toll vignette for passenger vehicles or a toll transponder for heavier commercial vehicles. Vignettes can be purchased at most gas stations and local Tabak-Traffik tobacco shops.

The legal limit for blood alcohol is 0.05 BAC. Fines for violating this limit range from 218€ to 3,634€ and result in the suspension of the driver's license.

During heavy congestion on highways when traffic significantly slows, Austrian law mandates that motorists leave a corridor for emergency vehicles to pass. It forms to the inside of the right-hand lane of traffic.

Locking your car and parking in guarded or well-illuminated areas are generally sufficient to deter criminal activities. Do not leave anything visible in the interior that would attract a thief's attention.

Public Transportation Conditions

Public transit systems are excellent. Most operate on the honor system, with random checks by plain clothes ticket enforcement officers. Fines for riding without a validated ticket can be up to 100€ and must be paid on the spot. Pedestrians and drivers should be especially

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cautious around trams, as they are nearly silent and strike several pedestrians and vehicles each year.

Aviation/Airport Conditions

Airports are modern and follow the same security guidelines and protocols as found in the U.S.

Terrorism Threat

Post Terrorism Rating: Medium

Local, Regional, and International Terrorism Threats/Concerns

There have been no recent terrorist attacks in Austria; however, the potential for terrorist-related incidents to occur must be taken seriously. In late 2014, police conducted a number of arrests of suspected jihadists and financiers of foreign fighters traveling to Syria. As the violence in Syria continues, Austria has seen a number of residents go to Syria to fight and then return. The threat of extremist violence from these individuals is of growing concern to authorities, and changes to the law were made in 2014 to give police greater investigative authority over suspected jihadists. More recently, authorities have made several arrests in

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connection with attacks elsewhere in Europe and have acknowledged increased surveillance of potential radical groups.

Religiously-motivated extremism presents a potential threat to European security. Terrorist attacks on soft targets over the past few years around the world underscore the concern of an ever-increasing transnational terrorist threat. Americans should continue to be alert to their surroundings, especially in circumstances where an individual is time/place predictable. If suspicious activity is detected, one should inform the police immediately. Austria is a transport and finance hub, and various international terrorist groups and individuals are believed to operate in the country as part of their support base.

Anti-American/Anti-Western Sentiment

Anti-American sentiment is not common, though there were a number of protests in 2013 and 2014 over alleged NSA activities.

Political, Economic, Religious, and Ethnic Violence

Austria is a stable democracy.

Post Political Violence Rating: Low

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Civil Unrest

Groups are generally free to protest, and peaceful protests concerning a variety of political causes are common in Vienna. Civil disorder associated with public protests or demonstrations is rare but does occur. Protest organizers must apply for a permit to protest with the Vienna City government 24 hours in advance. The permit delineates the parameters of the protest and advises the police. Police control for planned demonstrations is consistently very good; however, Americans should be aware of the possibility of any demonstration becoming violent and consider avoiding planned demonstrations if possible, especially when rival groups will be present as tempers may flare.

Post-specific Concerns

Environmental Hazards

Outdoor activities are very popular, particularly winter sports. Groomed ski areas are monitored for avalanche danger, and potential avalanches are brought down under controlled conditions. If participating in winter sports outside of controlled areas, individuals should receive avalanche avoidance training, heed avalanche danger cautions, monitor weather conditions, and carry rescue/survival gear. Austria experiences a number of deadly avalanches each year, including one which killed several American skiers in early 2015.

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Privacy Concerns

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

Personnel-Background Concerns

A small number of skinheads were problematic in past years but have not been active in recent times.

Drug-related Crimes

Drug related criminal activity against Americans is rare. However, the use of knock-out drugs slipped into a victim's drink has occasionally been reported both as a means of incapacitating a victim for theft of property as well as for sexual crime.

Police Response

The quality of police services is comparable in training, efficiency, and expertise to that of most U.S. cities. Police authorities are highly professional, and people are expected to

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cooperate fully with police requests.

Crime Victim Assistance

In large cities and resorts, an English-speaking officer is usually available to assist crime victims. Victims of any type of crime should notify the police immediately. Follow-up assistance is available through American Citizen Services at the U.S. Consulate, which can be reached at: +43 1 31339 7535.

Austrian emergency telephone numbers (all have English speaking duty personnel):

National Police Emergency: 133

National Fire Emergency: 122

National Medical Emergency: 144

Medical Emergencies

Ambulance/Medical emergency response number: 144

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Contact Information for Recommended Hospitals/Clinics

General Hospital

Allegemeines Krankenhaus (AKH)

Switchboard: +43 1 40 4000

Wilhelminenspital

Switchboard: +43 1 49 1500

Donauspital SMZ Ost

Switchboard: +43 1 288 02

Trauma Hospital

Unfallkrankenhaus Lorenz Bohler

Switchboard: +43 1 33 1100

Available Air Ambulance Services

Austrian Air Ambulance (+43 1 40 144) and Tyrolean Air (+43 512 224 22 100) have several aircraft that are air ambulance capable. Both airlines, based in Austria, have short (hours) response times for limited (less than 10) casualties.

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International SOS (+49 6102 3588 100) can draw on a larger pool of continental air ambulance companies with arrival times of 12-24 hours.

Recommended Insurance Posture

Visitors are advised to ensure they have adequate medical insurance which is valid for coverage in Austria.

Country-specific Vaccination and Health Guidance

For additional information on vaccines and health guidance, please visit the CDC at: <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/austria>.

OSAC Country Council Information

The OSAC Country Council in Austria was re-established in early 2016. Additionally, security information for U.S. businesses operating in Austria may be obtained from the RSO or from:

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U.S. Foreign Commercial Service in Vienna: +43 1 31339 2297

American Chamber of Commerce in Vienna: +43 1 319 5751

To reach OSAC's Europe team, please email OSACEUR@state.gov.

U.S. Embassy Location and Contact Information

Embassy Address and Hours of Operation

The U.S. Embassy is located at Boltzmannngasse 16, A1090 Vienna.

Hours of operation: 0800-1700, Monday to Friday, except holidays.

The U.S. Consulate, to include American Citizen Services for travelers in need of assistance, is located at The Marriot Hotel, Parkring 12A, A1010 Vienna, northeast side entrance, 2nd floor.

Hours of operation: 0800-1700, Monday to Friday, except holidays.

Embassy Contact Numbers

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Embassy switchboard (24 hour): (+43 1) 31339 0

After-hours emergency Tel: (+43 1) 31339 0

Regional Security Office: (+43 1) 31339 2221

American Citizens Services Tel: (+43 1) 313 39 7535

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

Tips on How to Avoid Becoming a Victim

Situational Awareness Best Practices

Americans should continue to be alert to their surroundings, especially in highly populated areas or in circumstances where an individual is time/place predictable. If suspicious activity is detected, one should inform the police immediately. When traveling, never leave personal items unattended and be suspicious of individuals who offer to assist you with your luggage.

Carry credit cards or plan to withdraw money from an ATM rather than carrying large amounts of cash. However, visitors should cover the PIN pad while making ATM withdrawals and avoid ATMs with suspicious looking devices attached to them that could be card skimmers. Do not flaunt cash or jewelry. Leave unnecessary credit cards and other items at home or locked in a safe. Carry identification at all times, and secure ID and valuables in an inner pocket,

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preferably one with a zipper. Carry purses and handbags with the flap or zipper side next to the body.

In hotels, utilize safe deposit boxes for your valuables, and utilize the locks that are on the room doors. Precautions such as always double locking your house doors and windows and asking neighbors to check-in while away help to deter residential burglaries.

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