



Poland 2016 Crime & Safety Report

Travel Health and Safety; Transportation Security; Stolen items; Theft; Burglary; Assault; Human Trafficking; Riots/Civil Unrest; Significant Events; Employee Health Safety; Economic Espionage; Drug Trafficking

Europe > Poland; Europe > Poland > Krakow; Europe > Poland > Poznan; Europe > Poland > Warsaw

2/23/2016

Overall Crime and Safety Situation

Post Crime Rating: Low

Crime Threats

Polish National Police statistics underscore that Poland continues to be one of the safest countries in Europe. In 2015, police reported 833,281 criminal offenses:

Homicide

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502

Rape

1,233

Assault

5,550

Burglary

94,680

Economic

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169,480

Property Damage

43,777

Robbery

150,800

Car Theft

12,634

Pickpocketing is common and is one of the most frequently reported crimes. At train stations, where many people are vulnerable by carrying cumbersome luggage and other articles,

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groups of thieves can jostle and distract their victim while a wallet or billfold is deftly stolen. Crowded public buses and trams also attract pickpockets. American citizens most often report stolen passports from luggage, backpacks, or purses to the U.S. Embassy. Theft continues to be the crime that impacts official American citizens the most.

Assaults occur on very rare occasion. The majority of assaults occur among patrons of late night establishments and often involve alcohol consumption. These crimes generally take place between 12:00 a.m.-6:00 a.m.

Generally, burglars tend to rob homes by entering through an unlocked front door or by some ruse. Police continue to report that most residential crimes occur because tenants and homeowners failed to use alarm systems or to lock doors, gates, and/or garages, allowing thieves to take advantage of the vulnerability. A common tactic favored by thieves is to pose as employees of municipal services (a utility company) and attempt to gain access to a residence under the guise of checking meters or repairing reported problems. In reported cases, residents failed to verify the employment status of the supposed employees.

Poland is the easternmost border of the Schengen Zone and is the entry point into "Schengen Europe" for some illicit activities. Organized crime has declined since its heyday in the late 1990s but is still active. Various elements operate across borders, particularly with regard to drug/cigarette trafficking, vehicle theft, and alien smuggling/human trafficking.

Soccer matches are often marred by confrontations between opposing fans. Such confrontations may become violent.

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Areas of Concern

There are no specific areas that are “off limits” to official American travelers.

There have been reports of nightclub security being overly aggressive and, in few instances, physically assaulting patrons. RSO recommends avoiding any confrontation at these locations.

Most pickpocketing incidents occur on public transportation (train and bus stations) or in areas where there are large crowds (Krakow’s Market Square, Warsaw’s Old Town).

Transportation-Safety Situation

Road Safety and Road Conditions

In 2015, authorities registered 32,701 traffic accidents to include 2,904 fatalities and 39,457 injuries. Road fatalities are high, placing Poland among one of the more dangerous places to drive in Europe. There has been a substantial increase in the number of cars on the road; driving, especially after dark, is hazardous. Roads are sometimes narrow, poorly illuminated,

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frequently under repair (especially in the summer), and are often also used by pedestrians and cyclists.

Unpredictable weather can also cause problems on the roads. U.S. citizens should monitor local weather conditions when traveling. Flooding has closed bridges and significantly disrupted road travel. Driving in the mountainous regions in the winter can be extremely dangerous, as the roads tend to be narrow and twisty with narrow shoulders. Drivers should consider snow tires and or tire chains if planning to drive through the mountains in the winter.

Alcohol consumption is also frequently a contributing factor in accidents. Polish law provides virtually zero tolerance for driving under the influence of alcohol, and penalties include a fine and probation or imprisonment for up to two years. Penalties for drivers involved in accidents are severe and can include imprisonment from six months to eight years or, in the case of drivers under the influence of alcohol/drugs, up to 12 years.

You must have both an International Driving Permit (IDP) obtained prior to arrival and a U.S. driver's license in order to drive in Poland. U.S. citizens cannot obtain IDPs in Poland. Only two U.S. automobile associations — the American Automobile Association (AAA) and the National Automobile Club (NCA) — are authorized to distribute IDPs. If you plan to stay for more than six months, you must obtain a Polish driver's license.

Seat belts are compulsory for all seats, and children under 12 must ride in the back. Children younger than 12 and who are less than 4'11," must ride in a child car seat. You must always use headlights. The use of cellular phones while driving is prohibited except for hands-free models. Making a right turn on a red light is not allowed. Turning right on red with a green arrow is the equivalent of turning right on red in the U.S. The green arrow does NOT give you

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the right-of-way. Police will ticket for traffic violations, and fines can be substantial. If you are a non-resident, you are expected to pay fines immediately to the police officer issuing the ticket. You must be prepared to pay in local currency, though in some cases credit cards are accepted.

For traffic offenses or accidents, police may make an immediate determination of guilt and levy a fine. If the individual has a registered address in Poland, s/he will be given a fine payable within seven days. For visitors, the police may require immediate payment. If you are unable to pay or if you refuse to pay, the police may hold your passport and request an "accelerated procedure" with the court. The passport will not be returned until the matter is settled.

Polish roadside services, while not always at the level of services in the U.S., are rapidly improving. The Polish Automobile Association (Polski Zwizek Motorowy Auto-Tour, analogous to AAA) has multilingual operators and provides assistance countrywide 24/7. You can reach them by calling (22) 532-8427 or (22) 532-8433.

Public Transportation Conditions

Public transportation is safe, efficient, and reliable.

Within cities, taxis are available at major hotels and designated stands or may be ordered in advance by telephone. Some drivers speak English and accept credit cards. When hailing taxis on the street, you should avoid those that do not have a company name and/or

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telephone number displayed since these may not have meters, and many of them charge significantly more. Use "radio taxis" or those whose company phone number and name are printed on the light bar. Check to see that the taxi has a functioning meter and that the driver uses the meter when starting your trip. Do not accept assistance from self-professed "taxi drivers" who approach you in the arrivals terminal or outside the doors at Warsaw Airport; use only those that display telephone numbers and a company name and are at designated taxi stands.

Poland has a highly-developed rail system, and the number of rail accidents is quite low.

Aviation/Airport Conditions

Air travel incidents are relatively rare, and Poland has a well-developed and highly professional civil aviation structure.

Terrorism Threat

Post Terrorism Rating: Medium

Local, Regional, and International Terrorism Threats/Concerns

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Poland has no indigenous terrorism, and no known terrorist organizations have been identified operating in Poland. Poland was part of the Coalition in Iraq, and troops participate in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission in Afghanistan. This has led to speculation that Poland could become a target for terrorist operations. Any American presence presents a possible political or terrorist objective for international terrorist organizations. The latest U.S. Department of State Worldwide Caution should be reviewed as a guide on international and transnational terrorism operations against U.S. targets.

Political, Economic, Religious, and Ethnic Violence

Post Political Violence Rating: Medium

Civil Unrest

Demonstrations are a regular occurrence but are generally orderly and peaceful. During the winter, these activities taper off, but spring and summer witness a large number. Demonstrators are typically vocal but law abiding, and events involving two or more people must be registered in advance. In 2015, there were multiple, large demonstrations both in support of and in opposition to the newly elected government. You should be vigilant in protecting your security, bearing in mind that even demonstrations intended to be peaceful may turn violent. Avoid demonstrations whenever possible. The Embassy urges you to avoid areas where you see heavy police presence or crowds assembling, to exercise caution if within the vicinity of any large public gatherings, and to stay away from demonstrations.

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Large demonstrations are also typical annually on November 11, the anniversary of Polish independence.

Demonstrations regularly occur in Warsaw. The average size of a demonstration in Warsaw in 2014 was several hundred people. The U.S. Embassy is located near the prime minister's chancellery, Parliament, various government ministries, and other Embassies. While demonstrations rarely target U.S. policies, the U.S. Embassy lies along a major north-south traffic artery often used by demonstrators, so the Embassy can be affected by disruptions from these demonstrations.

Demonstrations in Krakow are much less frequent and typically much smaller when they do occur. The U.S. Consulate General in Krakow is near the German and French Consulates. Occasionally, small demonstrations against the German Consulate have taken place but normally have little impact on Consulate operations.

Post-specific Concerns

Environmental Hazards

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Poland has one of the highest rates of air pollution in Europe and generates almost 90 percent of its electricity with coal; almost 70 percent of single family homes are heated with a coal-fired boiler or stove.

Critical Infrastructure Concerns

In 2013, Poland adopted the National Critical Infrastructure Protection Program, which was designed to improve security and resilience of Poland's financial, energy, and communications infrastructure. No specific infrastructure concerns have been identified by Polish authorities.

Economic Espionage/Intellectual Property Thefts

U.S. government interaction with private sector representatives and Polish counterparts indicate economic espionage problems do exist. Companies either do not know they have been targeted or have tried to address the problem internally without involving the authorities.

Drug-related Crimes

There is a negligible threat of drug violence or narco-terrorism. Most violence involving drug trafficking takes place among those involved in this illegal activity, and innocent bystanders

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are rarely, if ever, victimized.

Poland is primarily used as a drug trans-shipment country for the rest of Europe. Amphetamines, marijuana, and synthetic drugs are reportedly the primary drugs of choice by users. Authorities in Poland and neighboring countries are reporting increased illicit production of synthetic drugs, including methamphetamine. However, it is unclear whether methamphetamine is produced for local consumption or for distribution to other countries.

Kidnapping Threat

There is no record of expatriates or U.S. Embassy personnel being targeted for kidnappings. There are cases of wealthy Poles or their families being kidnapped for ransom, but those instances are rare.

Police Response

How to Handle Incidents of Police Detention or Harassment

Police officers are universally professional and cooperative.

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Crime Victim Assistance

Victims of crime should file a report at the nearest police station. Few police officers will speak fluent English but will usually offer to obtain an interpreter. This may take a few minutes to a few hours. It helps to have a bilingual friend along for translation.

Throughout Poland, use the following emergency numbers:

Police: 997

Fire: 998

Ambulance: 999

General Emergency: 112

In an emergency with a Polish-speaking person available, call the police, fire department, or ambulance service, depending on your emergency and what assistance is needed. If no Polish-speaking person is available, call the American Embassy/Consulate for assistance.

Medical Emergencies

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The standard of care in major cities lags behind healthcare in the West; in small villages, it is often non-existent. Many healthcare workers do not speak English. Prescription medication is reliable but sometimes unavailable.

There are two types of ambulances: transport and resuscitative. When calling for an ambulance, be sure to clearly articulate the emergency so the correct type of ambulance is dispatched.

Contact Information for Recommended Hospitals/Clinics

The following is a list of the major hospitals in Warsaw, Krakow, and Poznan. This is not a complete list of all health care providers.

Adult Care

Warsaw

"Woloska" Hospital (Centralny Szpital Kliniczny MSWiA)

Ul. Woloska 137 Warsaw

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Ambulance - 022-508-1500

Emergency Room - 022-508-1510

Switchboard - 022-508-2000

Medicover Hospital

Rzeczypospolitej Av. 5

Cell: 500-900-900

ER: 500-900-999

www.medicover.pl

"Banacha" Hospital (Centralny Szpital Kliniczny Akademii Medycznej Nr. 1)

Ul. Stefana Banacha 1A Warsaw

Emergency Room - 022-599-1155

Switchboard - 022-599-1000

Poison Control - Warsaw Acute Poison Control Center (Stoleczny Osrodek Ostrych Zatruc)
Praski Hospital

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Al. Solidarnosci 67 Warsaw

24 Hour Contact - 022-619-6654, -0897

Admissions Room - 022-619-1979 or 022-818-5061 ext. 1239

Krakow

Trauma Center/ CUMRIK (Centrum Urazowe Medycyny Ratunkowej i Katastrof) adults only

Kopernika street 50, 31-501 Krakow

ER: Tel: 12-3516 601

24 hour information center: +48 12 424 7000

www.su.krakow.pl

5th Military Clinical Hospital (5-ty Wojskowy Szpital Kliniczny)

Wrocawska street 1-3, 30-901 Kraków

ER: 12-6308-138 or 6308-140

www.5wszk.com.pl

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University Hospital (Szpital Uniwersytecki)

Mikoaja Kopernika street 36, Kraków

24 call center: +48 12 424 70 00

www.su.krakow.pl

Poznan

Hospital of the Ministry of Interior (Szpital MSWiA)

ul. Dojazd 34

60-631 Poznan

Emergency Ward - (61) 8464 641; (61) 8464 650; (61) 8464 500; (61) 852 2525

Medical University of Poznan Hospital no. 2 (Szpital Kliniczny Uniwersytetu Medycznego nr. 2)

Przybyszewskiego 49

60-355 Poznan

Tel: (61) 869 1100

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Contacts: Prof. Michal Drews (surgery) Tel: work: 869 1275 home: 867 1414 mobile: 0601 703092

Prof. Krzysztof Linke (gastrology, internal medicine) Tel: work: 8691 343 home: 822 7977 mobile: 0601726526

Pediatric Care

Warsaw

Samodzielny Publiczny Dzieciocy Szpital Kliniczny (SPDSK) Szpital Pediatryczny

ul. wirki i Wigury 63A

02-091 Warszawa

Tel ER: 22 317 92 13

Information::22 317 91 64

Institute - Children's Health Center Memorial Hospital (Instytut Q Pomnik Centrum Zdrowia Dziecka)

Al. Dzieci Polskich 20, Warszawa-Miedzylesie

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Admission Room - 022-815-2519, 022-855-7444

Krakow

University Pediatric Hospital (Uniwersytecki Szpital Dzieciocy Polsko-Amerykanski Instytut
Pediatrii, Collegium Medicum UJ)

ul. WIELICKA 265, 30-663 Krakow

Switchboard - (12) 658-2011

Poznan

Medical University of Poznan Hospital no.5 (Szpital Kliniczny Uniwersytetu Medycznego nr 5

ul./street: Szpitalna 27/33

60-572 Poznan

Tel: (61) 849 1200

Contact: Prof. Andrzej Jankowski (pediatrician) Tel: work: (61) 847 5228 home: (61) 847 5381
Mobile: 0601 563434

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Available Air Ambulance Services

American Air Ambulance provides worldwide air ambulance services for people needing medical attention. Tel: 800-863-0312 or 941-536-2002, Website www.americanairambulance.com.

International SOS provides air ambulance service in Poland. Tel: +49 6102 3588 100, Website: www.internationalSOS.com.

Global Air Rescue provides worldwide service. Tel: 866-299-6870, or 561-459-3150 (in the US), Website: <http://www.globalairrescue.com>.

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/poland?s_cid=ncezid-dgmq-travel-single-001.

OSAC Country Council Information

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There is an established OSAC Country Council in Poland that meets on a quarterly basis. For more information, please contact RSO Warsaw, RSOWARSAW@state.gov, or RSO Krakow, RSO_Krakow@state.gov. To reach OSAC's Europe team, please email OSACEUR@state.gov.

U.S. Embassy Location and Contact Information

Embassy Address and Hours of Operation

U.S. Embassy Warsaw

Aleje Ujazdowskie 29/31

00-540 Warsaw Poland

Embassy hours of operation are 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Mon-Fri.

Embassy Contact Numbers

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Regional Security Officer: +48-22-504-2131

Embassy Operator: +48-22-504-2000

Consular Affairs: +48-22-504-2784

Marine Post One: +48-22-504-2639

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

Nearby Posts

U.S. Consulate Krakow: <http://krakow.usconsulate.gov/>

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