



Guatemala 2016 Crime & Safety Report

Travel Health and Safety; Transportation Security; Stolen items; Theft; Assault; Carjacking; Rape/Sexual Violence; Kidnapping; Murder; Cargo Security; Burglary; Drug Trafficking; Narcoterrorism; Extortion; Other Threat / Incident; Human Trafficking; Riots/Civil Unrest; Earthquakes; Volcanoes; Hurricanes; Floods; Landslides and mudslides; Maritime; Employee Health Safety; Intellectual Property Rights Infringement; Counterfeiting; Fraud; Financial Security; Hotels

Western Hemisphere > Guatemala; Western Hemisphere > Guatemala > Guatemala City

3/14/2016

Overall Crime and Safety Situation

Post Crime Rating: Critical

Crime Threats

Guatemala has one of the highest violent crime rates in Central America and is rated in the top 25 most dangerous places to live in the world. Violent crime is attributed to endemic poverty, an abundance of weapons, a legacy of societal violence, and overwhelmed and inactive law enforcement and judicial systems. The number of violent crimes reported by U.S. citizens and other foreigners has remained high, and incidents have included, but are not limited to: assault, theft, armed robbery, carjacking, rape, sexual assault, kidnapping, and murder, even in areas of Guatemala City once considered safe (Zones 10, 14, 15). Statistics provided by the Policia Nacional Civil (PNC) are the ones most commonly used by the

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government and international organizations for reporting purposes.

Crime statistics are often called into question. The RSO uses the PNC provided crime data. However, the PNC does not count homicides if the victim left the crime scene alive and subsequently died. INACIF (Instituto Nacional de Ciencias Forenses de Guatemala), the government agency responsible for tracking all deaths in country, shows homicide rates 8-16 percent higher than PNC homicide rates between 2009 and 2013. In 2014, that difference increased to 21 percent, with INACIF reporting 6,072 deaths compared to PNC's 4,998 and in 2015 a 19 percent difference with PNC reporting 4778 compared to INACIF's 5718. The government continues to report a drop in the homicide rate from its peak 2009. However, Guatemala's homicide rate is one of the highest in the Western Hemisphere. In 2015, Guatemala reported an average of 91 murders per week, a reduction of only five per week when compared to 2014's numbers. Guatemala's murder rate appears driven by four key factors:

narco-trafficking activity,

gang-related violence,

a heavily-armed population (upwards of 60 percent possess a firearm), and

a police/judicial system that remains unable/unwilling to hold many criminals accountable.

Well-armed criminals know there is little chance they will be caught or punished, and in many cases criminal gangs employ juveniles as young as 12 to commit targeted assassinations. While the vast majority of murder incidents do not involve foreigners, the sheer volume means that tourists could be in the crossfire, and local officials, who are often inexperienced and underpaid, are unable to cope.

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Theft and armed robbery are the most common problems encountered by American citizens. No area, including the upscale shopping, tourist, and residential zone 10, 14, 15, and 16 in Guatemala City, is immune to daytime assaults. Pickpockets and purse snatchers are active in all major cities and tourist sites, especially the central market and other parts of Zone 1 in Guatemala City. There have been numerous reported incidents of bank patrons being robbed outside banks after withdrawing large sums of money, suggesting possible complicity of bank personnel. Travelers who have changed large sums of money at border crossings have been singled out for highway robbery, being driven off the road, taken at gunpoint to a secluded place, and robbed. Vehicle thefts continue to be a serious problem. In 2014 and 2015, U.S. citizens increasingly reported to the Embassy, information about armed robberies in Antigua, mostly at night but with some occurring in plain daylight, targeting pedestrians on less frequented roads. Cargo and transportation theft is a major problem. Particularly attractive are trucks carrying shipments of electronics or gasoline. Theft of items from occupied vehicles is becoming more common. A common trend is the use of motorcycles for armed robbery. Typically, two men on a motorcycle accost the driver of a car or pedestrian and demand valuables and cell phones. In many of these cases, the victims were visibly using their cell phones or other handheld devices prior to the theft. If assailants encounter even the slightest resistance, they are quick to escalate the situation using extreme violence (stabbing, shootings). Using motorcycles allows the assailants to flee the scene quickly; they are rarely apprehended. There have been some allegations that police have been involved in these types of criminal activities. There have also been several recent incidents where individuals dressed in police uniforms have been implicated in robberies.

Home invasions by armed groups occur in upscale neighborhoods. Thieves gain access by convincing a resident to open the door for a delivery or rushing in when family or staff open the door. Another commonly held belief is that household staff could be complicit in home invasions. While residential crime rates increased by 24 percent during 2012, the rate decreased by four percent during 2013, 16 percent in 2014, and 8 percent in 2015.

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Narco-trafficking and transnational organized crime groups and gangs pose a real, dangerous threat to local, regional, and international interests.

Extortion calls are common, and many times they originate from prisons. In recent years, the number of extortions has risen dramatically. In most cases, changing the phone number and/or not responding to the threats will resolve the matter. However, cases involving gang members must be taken seriously, as they will not hesitate to back up their threats with violence.

Furthermore, the number of missing persons cases reported to the government has increased in recent years. While migration could account for some of that increase, it is unlikely that family and friends would undergo the cumbersome process of filing a denuncia (complaint) if they knew or suspected the persons had disappeared voluntarily. The U.S. Embassy is aware of the disappearances of several U.S. citizens, the cases for all of whom remain unsolved.

According to government crime statistics, sexual assault numbers increased from 120 in 2009 to 614 in 2014 and 613 in 2015. In most known cases, women traveling/driving alone are more at risk, and the majority of assaults are interfamilial. The Embassy believes that the numbers of sexual assaults are far greater but due to cultural stigmas and sporadic police presence in rural areas causes significant underreporting.

With regards to crime in general, the Embassy has no reason to believe that U.S. citizens are being targeted specifically, other than the fact that criminals may believe that U.S. citizens and their relatives have more money than average Guatemalans. Longer-term residents and dual nationals are more likely to become victims of serious crimes, as they tend to be integrated into local society and may not reside in the safest areas. Tourists seem to be largely shielded

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from the worst of the violence, instead succumbing principally to pickpockets and purse snatchers. That said, U.S. tourists have been victims of rapes, sexual/physical assaults, and murder.

A particularly serious concern is incidents of vigilantism (stoning, lynching, immolation), especially in isolated, rural areas. The lack of police response to serious crimes can result in villages taking justice into their own hands, resulting in brutal attacks and deaths. Police in remote areas are often understaffed and ill-equipped and will not typically interfere in deterring vigilantism. Guatemala has many different and firmly-held local beliefs and customs. Particularly in small villages, residents are often wary and suspicious of outsiders.

Other Areas of Concern

Widespread narcotics and alien-smuggling activities make remote areas especially dangerous because criminals look for any opportunity to strike. Due to uncontrolled drug and alien smuggling, the border with Mexico (and in particular the northwestern corner of Petén) is a high-risk area. The border areas including the Sierra de Lacandon and Laguna del Tigre National Parks are among the most dangerous areas in Guatemala due to drug trafficking activity.

Violent attacks have occurred in the Mayan ruins in Petén, including in the Cerro Cahui Conservation Park, Yaxhá, the road to and inside Tikal Park, and in the Tikal ruins, particularly during sunrise tours. However, tourist police (DISETUR) patrols have significantly reduced the incidence of violent crime inside the park, and there have been no reports of armed assaults on tourists there in recent years. Travelers should remain in groups, stay on the principal trails leading to the Central Plaza and the Temple IV complex, and avoid remote

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areas of the park. Travelers should monitor the press and State Department Travel Warnings, as any tourist areas in Guatemala can experience a spike in crime.

Transportation-Safety Situation

Road Safety and Road Conditions

Overall Road Safety Assessment: Fair

Urban road conditions/maintenance: Fair

Rural road conditions/maintenance: Fair to Poor

Availability of roadside/ambulance assistance: Fair

U.S. citizens will encounter road conditions that differ significantly from those in the U.S. Many city streets are illuminated, but secondary and rural roads have little/none. Passing blindly on winding/steep mountain roads, poorly designed surfaces, and unmarked hazards (landslides, precarious temporary highway repairs) present risks to motorists. Winding/steep mountain roads, poorly designed surfaces, randomly placed speed bumps, and unmarked hazards present additional risks to motorists.

Driving demands one's full attention, requiring that drivers be defensive, as traffic rules are only casually observed. Speed limits, lane markings, and stop signs are frequently ignored.

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Many drivers do not use their turn signals. Instead, a common custom is for a driver/passenger to stick a hand out the window and wave it to indicate that they will be taking an unspecified action. Drivers often drive at the absolute maximum speed their vehicle can handle. These drivers share the road with slow vehicles, some barely able to manage 20 miles per hour, creating a hazardous mix of velocities. Further, cars and trucks are often stalled/parked in the middle of the road. Tree branches are often placed in the road 100 meters or so before the stalled vehicle to warn approaching traffic of a hazard. Drivers are supposed to use the right side of the road, and speed limits are posted depending on the condition of the road. Turning right on red is not permitted unless otherwise posted, and drivers must yield when entering a traffic circle. Seat belts must be worn, but there are no laws regarding the use of child safety seats. It is against the law for drivers to operate cellular phones while driving, although this is not widely enforced. People found driving under the influence of alcohol or other drugs are arrested and may serve jail time.

While driving in/near large cities, be vigilant of pedestrians who dart across roads, even in heavy traffic, due to the lack of cross walks. Furthermore, Guatemala City has seen an explosive growth of vehicles in the city and commuting to the city during the work week. As a result, traffic congestion is widespread. Traffic congestion has two significant security-related consequences:

First, criminals on motorcycles use traffic as a means to rob motorists. These robberies occur in all sections of the city to include major thoroughfares patrolled by police.

Second, incidents of road rage caused by heavy traffic, gridlock, and poor driving habits are common. Cases of road rage have resulted in violent assaults and shootings. Minor traffic incidents can escalate quickly to violence when one or both parties are carrying firearms.

All drivers involved in accidents resulting in injury may be detained and held in protective custody pending an investigation. In several instances, police officers have been posted outside hospital rooms of drivers who were injured, and they were not allowed to depart the country without judicial intervention. Such cases require the assistance of private local

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attorneys. Lethal head-on collisions are common.

Driving outside of urban areas at night is dangerous and not recommended. Do not travel after dark outside of Guatemala City. Intercity travel after dark is extremely dangerous and should be avoided altogether. It is highly recommended to caravan with at least two cars when traveling outside of Guatemala City. The Inter-American Highway (CA-1) and the road from Guatemala City to the Caribbean coast (CA-9) are especially dangerous due to heavy traffic (large trucks, trailers) and poorly maintained vehicles that oftentimes lack properly functioning lights. The main road to Lake Atitlán via the Inter-American Highway (CA-1) and Sololá is safer than the alternative secondary roads near the lake. Specifically, the main road is preferable to the alternative road through Las Trampas and Godinez to Panajachel (RN-11) where robbery, rape, and assault are known to have occurred. Armed attacks have occurred on roads between Guatemala City and Petén, as well as between Tikal and the Belize border. Travelers should plan their routes and do their research prior leaving their destination. Although many commercial GPSs and GPS applications work in Guatemala, they do not accurately reflect road conditions. Road and routes identified on a GPS may be nothing more than a poorly built dirt road accessible only by 4x4 vehicles.

Emboldened armed robbers have attacked vehicles on main roads in broad daylight. Travel on rural roads increases the risk of being stopped by a criminal roadblock or ambush.

In May 2009, a new law mandated that the motorcycle license plate number must be printed on a sticker on the back of the motorcycle driver's helmet. This law was used effectively in Colombia in the late 1990s. However, criminals in Guatemala have adapted tactics to include two men on two or more motorcycles. In 2013, the government modified the law requiring motorcycle riders to wear orange vests and display the license plate numbers on those vests. The modified law also requires motorcycle riders to drive on the right side of the road only.

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However, enforcement has lagged.

Drivers should lock their doors; leave their windows rolled up, and leave at least half a car length of space in front of them to maneuver. If a driver has to pull over on the highway, s/he should do it in a well-illuminated area with high visibility or a public place (preferably within view of a police officer). It is also highly recommended that if individuals are driving, s/he should use a car with slightly tinted windows and not talk on their cell phones.

Public Transportation Conditions

Safety on public transportation is poor.

Common public transportation is by local brightly-painted recycled U.S. school buses, which serve almost every town. Criminal activity and frequent fatal accidents make these low-priced buses particularly dangerous. Buses are generally poorly operated/maintained. Modern inter-city buses offer some security from highway violence, but armed attacks are increasing, indicating that all buses are vulnerable. Several travelers have been attacked on first-class buses on highway CA-2 near the border areas with both Mexico and El Salvador; on highways CA-1 and CA-9 near the border with El Salvador; and in the highlands between Quetzaltenango and Sololá. Travelers need to exercise caution with personal items while riding buses, as tourists' possessions are a favorite target of thieves.

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Taxi Seguro (Tel: 2312-4243) may not always be available, especially late at night. Taxi Amarillo Express (Tel: 1766) is a radio-dispatch taxi service. Hailing taxis on the street in Guatemala City is discouraged.

The Guatemalan tourist assistance agency, PROATUR, (Tel: 1500) may be able to provide additional information.

Aviation/Airport Conditions

A number of travelers have experienced armed robberies after having arrived on international flights, most frequently in the evening. In the most common scenario, travelers who land after dark are held up by armed men as their vehicle departs the airport, but similar incidents have occurred throughout the day. Private vehicles, taxis, and shuttle buses have all been targeted. Typically, assailants steal money, passports, and luggage and, in some cases, the vehicle. And in some cases, travelers who flagged a taxi outside of the airport have been robbed of their possessions by the drivers. It is recommended that travel arrangements to/from the airport be made ahead of time. A pre-screened, vetted taxi service is available at the airport. You can hire them at the kiosk under the "SAFE" sign. In other cases, assailants have worn full/partial police uniforms and have used vehicles that resemble police vehicles, indicating that some elements of the police might be involved. Armed robberies have occurred within minutes of a tourist's vehicle having been stopped by the police.

Visitors to the Mayan ruins at Tikal are urged to fly to Flores and then travel by shuttle or tour van.

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Other Travel Conditions

There are no roadside assistance clubs; however, a roadside assistance force (PROVIAL) (tel: 1520) patrols most of the major highways. Their vehicles are equipped with basic tools and first aid supplies, and their services are free. Police patrol the major roadways and may assist travelers, but the patrols are sporadic and may be suspended due to budget constraints. For roadside assistance, travelers may call the police (Tel: 110 or 120) or the fire department (Tel: 122 or 123).

Cellular telephone service covers most areas frequented by tourists.

Some reports of highway robberies include accusations that police, or assailants dressed as police, have been involved. A few have included sexual assaults of victims.

Terrorism Threat

Post Terrorism Rating: Low

Political, Economic, Religious, and Ethnic Violence

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Post Political Violence Rating: Medium

Civil Unrest

Large demonstrations occur, often with little/no notice, and can cause serious traffic disruptions. Although most demonstrations are peaceful, they can turn violent. The use of roadblocks and/or blocking of public facilities, including the international airport, may delay or prevent tourists from reaching their destination.

Travelers should avoid areas where demonstrations are taking place. It is wise to avoid any public gathering of agitated citizens; persons attempting to intervene have been attacked by mobs. Keep informed of possible demonstrations by following the local news and consulting hotel personnel and tour guides. Confer with trusted local staff or associates, or check the mass media, before venturing out on trips within the country.

Post-specific Concerns

Environmental Hazards

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Guatemala is a geologically-active country. Visitors should be aware of the possibility of earthquakes and the need for contingency plans. General information about natural disaster preparedness is available locally from the National Disaster Reduction Coordination Office (CONRED) and from the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Additional References:

FEMA Earthquake page: <http://www.fema.gov/earthquake>

Drop Cover Hold On: <http://www.dropcoverholdon.org/>

Terremotos: A California-specific site containing useful guidance in Spanish for earthquake preparedness: <http://www.terremotos.org/>

Red Cross – Earthquake Preparedness: <http://www.redcross.org/prepare/disaster/earthquake>

Red Cross – Earthquake Preparedness (Spanish):
<http://www.redcross.org/cruz-roja/prepare/terremotos>

Guatemala has four very active volcanoes: Pacaya, Santiaguito, Fuego, and Tecuamburro, whose activity has forced evacuations of nearby villages throughout the years.

In early February 2015, increased activity at Fuego caused avalanches and shock waves that rattled nearby structures.

On February 7, 2015, a Strombolian eruption occurred, causing plumes with water vapor and ash to rise 1.3km in the sky. Ash fell in Guatemala City (about 35km from Fuego), and flights to the international airport had to be diverted to El Salvador.

In August 2013, Pacaya registered increased activity, and it was necessary to evacuate 32 people from a nearby village. After field assessments, no personal or material damages were

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reported.

During 2013, Fuego, Pacaya, and Santiguito volcanos periodically displayed increased volcanic activity that included lava flow and ash dispersions.

The May 2010 eruption of Pacaya briefly closed Guatemala City's international airport.

Tourists planning to climb Pacaya and Agua volcanoes during the rainy season should plan their climb for the morning when thunderstorms are less likely to occur. Climbers should monitor the weather and return to the base of the volcano as quickly and safely as possible if thunderstorms gather. INGUAT has organized an active community-based tourism program in San Vicente Pacaya to minimize the risk of armed robbery on Pacaya. Climbing volcanoes in groups and with a guide is still highly advisable to reduce the risk of assault.

Both the Caribbean and Pacific coasts are vulnerable to hurricanes and tropical storms from mid-May-November. Mudslides and flooding during the rainy season often kill dozens of people and close roads. Please consult CONRED for updates on natural disasters or tropical storms and hurricanes.

Beware of strong currents, riptides, and undertow along the Pacific coast beaches. They pose a serious threat to even the strongest swimmers. In 2012, two U.S. citizens drowned in the undertow, and one U.S. citizen drowned each year in the same area in 2013 and in 2014 and 2015. At least one of these U.S. citizens was an experienced surfer with strong swimming skills. Signs warning of treacherous surf are rare and confined mostly to private beaches. Lifeguards are rarely present. For specific information regarding current conditions, visit Guatemala's national weather and geographical authority at: <http://www.insivumeh.gob.gt/>.

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Critical Infrastructure Concerns

The capacity of the government to respond to chemical/industrial accidents is extremely limited, and small incidents typically go unreported. The government is also very limited in its technical ability to monitor watershed runoff or air pollution from industrial processes, the most controversial being mining.

Economic Espionage/Intellectual Property Thefts

The U.S.-Central America-Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement provides for improved standards for the protection and enforcement of a broad range of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) that are consistent with U.S. standards of protection and enforcement as well as emerging international standards. Enforcement of IPR laws, however, has been inconsistent. A number of raids, cases, and prosecutions have been pursued; however, resource constraints and lack of coordinated government action impede efficient enforcement efforts. Piracy of works protected by copyright and infringement of other forms of intellectual property, such as trademarks including those of some major U.S. food and pharmaceutical brands, remains problematic. However, economic espionage does not appear to be a major problem.

Drug-related Crimes

Narcotics-related crimes certainly factor into the precarious security environment, but polls have shown that average Guatemalans are more concerned about general criminal violence, which is also what most directly affects U.S. citizens. Certain neighborhoods of Guatemala

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City are essentially controlled by criminal gangs who have walled off their territories with concrete barriers and whose permission is required to enter. In spite of regional initiatives to combat drug trafficking and gangs, they continue to be a concern in Guatemala City and rural areas, though they have a far greater impact on Guatemalans than on foreigners. Narco-traffickers and gang members are very well armed. Emboldened armed robbers have attacked vehicles on main roads in broad daylight. Travel on rural roads increases the risk of a criminal roadblock or ambush.

Safe storage of seized drug precursor chemicals is a challenge. The capacity to transport, treat, store, or dispose of these chemicals safely does not exist within the government, though the government has tried to develop expertise, albeit with slow progress.

Kidnapping Threat

Kidnapping gangs, often connected to narcotraffickers, are a concern in both Guatemala City and rural Guatemala. Gang members are often well-armed with sophisticated weaponry, and they sometimes use massive amounts of force to extort, kidnap, and kill. There have been "express" kidnappings in recent years, primarily in Guatemala City, in which kidnappers demand a relatively small ransom that they believe can be gathered quickly. Some kidnapping gangs are known to kill their victims regardless of a paid ransom.

In January 2012, a group of National Geographic explorers, including U.S. citizens, were detained in Quiché department by local residents when they jumped into a pond considered sacred in the Mayan tradition. The incident serves as a warning to be mindful of local traditional practices when visiting indigenous Mayan communities.

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Police Response

The Policia Nacional Civil (PNC) lacks personnel and training to accomplish their mission. In addition, the PNC suffers from a lack of logistical supplies (vehicles, fuel, ammunition, etc.) with little improvement from year-to-year. More often than not, a police investigation fails to result in an arrest, much less a conviction. Apart from impunity, a principal reason that the government is unable to respond to the needs of crime victims or to prevent them from becoming victims in the first place is that the PNC is significantly under-trained and under-funded. The average PNC officer often times has much less than a high school diploma, is often equipped with as little as six months of police training before being sent out on the streets, and receives only US\$535 per month as salary. Moreover, the PNC's annual budget is nowhere near adequate to support its personnel, vehicles, training, and other infrastructure needs.

How to Handle Incidents of Police Detention or Harassment

U.S. citizens detained by the police can contact the Embassy for assistance (Tel: (502) 2326-4000); after working hours the Embassy's Duty Officer is available via the 24-hour emergency number (Tel: (502) 2331 2354).

Crime Victim Assistance

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Crime victims are often asked to pay for gas so that the police, if they have a vehicle available to them, may visit the crime scene.

Support for victims of sexual assault is lacking outside of major cities, and there are not enough trained personnel who can help victims in the capital or in outlying areas. Arrest and prosecution of assailants in sexual assault cases is uncommon at best and can be more difficult without private legal assistance.

Victims of crime should contact the following phone numbers for assistance:

Police (911 equivalent): 110 or 120

Fire Department: 122 or 123

Tourist emergency assistance: 502 2421-2810

Tourist Assistance (PROATUR): 1500

PROATUR is a joint national police/INGUAT initiative and is present in all major tourist destinations.

Police/Security Agencies

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Security escorts for tourist groups and security information are available from the Tourist Assistance Office (PROATUR) of INGUAT (the Guatemalan Tourism Institute) at 7a Avenida 1-17, Zona 4, Centro Cívico, Guatemala City. INGUAT's PROATUR division has 24-hour/seven days per week and direct telephone numbers for tourist assistance and emergencies (Tel: (502) 2421-2810, Fax: (502) 2421-2891, 1500 in Guatemala, or email: operacionesproatur@inguat.gob.gt). PROATUR also maintains regional offices in all major tourist destinations, and the regional delegates provide rapid and appropriate assistance to crime and accident victims. Travelers may also wish to visit INGUAT's website at: <http://www.inguat.gob.gt/> (Spanish only). Tourist groups are advised to request security escorts from INGUAT. There have been no incidents of armed robbery of groups escorted through the Tourist Protection Program. The request should be submitted by mail, fax, or e-mail (info@inguat.gob.gt) and should arrive at INGUAT at least three business days in advance of the proposed travel. Requests should be directed to the attention of the Coordinator of the National Tourist Assistance Program and should provide the itinerary, names of travelers, and model/color of vehicle. Travelers should be aware that INGUAT might not be able to accommodate all requests.

Medical Emergencies

A wide range of medical care is available in Guatemala City, but medical care outside the city is limited. Public hospitals frequently experience serious shortages of basic medicines and equipment. Care in private hospitals is generally adequate for most common illnesses and injuries, and many of the medical specialists working in them are U.S.-trained and -certified.

Doctors and hospitals often expect immediate cash payment for health services, although most private hospitals accept major U.S. credit cards. They do not typically enter into payment plan agreements. Travelers should be aware that they may have to pay in advance and seek

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reimbursement.

Ambulances include:

Alerta Medica

Direct: 502-2332-9422

Work: 502-2327-7171

After Hours: 502-2327-7100

<http://www.alertamedica.com.gt/>

Description: EMT and paramedic on board at all times. All ambulances are fully equipped to respond to cardiac, respiratory, and trauma events. Typical response time is 5-15 minutes, and all vehicles can access any private/public hospital.

Asistencia Medica, S.A.

Direct: 502-5203-0525

Work: 502-2332-1506

Work: 502-2332-6485

asmesa@c.net.gt

Description: EMT on board at all times. Paramedic on board if requested. All ambulances equipped to respond to cardiac, respiratory, and trauma emergencies. Typical response time has been reported to be a minimum of 15 minutes. All vehicles have access to all public and private hospitals.

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Rescate 911

Direct: 502-2361-4041

Work: 502-2362-5157

Work: 502-2362-5167

<http://www.rescate911.com.gt/>

info@rescate911.com.gt

Description: EMT and paramedic on board at all times. All medical providers are trained in Guatemala. Ambulances can provide intensive care quality transportation with equipment including continuous cardiac monitor, oxygen, infusion pump, incubator, and other medical supplies. Typical response time is 7-10 minutes, and all vehicles can access all private and public hospitals.

Contact Information for Recommended Hospitals/Clinics

Neither the Embassy nor the Department of State can assume any responsibility for the accuracy of any of the data provided, the integrity, or the professional ability of any of the hospitals listed (source: U.S. Embassy Guatemala Consular Website).

Private Hospitals in Guatemala City Area

Hospital de las Americas

10a. Calle 2-31, Zona 14

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Phone: 2384-3535 Fax: 2384-3535 Ext. 1028

info@hospitalesdeguatemala.com

Hospital Herrera Llerandi

6a. Avenida 8-71, Zona 10

Phone: 2384-5959 Emergency: 2334-5955

<http://www.amedesgua.com/> (Spanish)

http://www.amedesgua.com/index_eng.asp (English)

Healthinfo@herrerallerandi.com

Cedros del Libano

8a. Avenida 2-48, Zona 1

Phone: 2230-6274/6/8, 2220-1356/2230-6274

Fax: 2253-6879

www.hospitalesdeguatemala.com

info@hospitalesdeguatemala.com

Centro Medico

6a. Avenida 3-47, Zona 10

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Phone: 2279-4949 Fax: 2331-7533

www.centromedico.com.gt

info@centromedico.com.gt

Public Hospitals in Guatemala City Area

Hospital Universitario Esperanza

6a. Avenida 7-49, Zona 10

Phone: 2362-8626 Fax: 2362-8657

<http://hospitalesperanza.com/>

cesazo@hospitalesperanza.com

Private foundation, affiliated with Francisco Marroquin University School of Medicine

Hospital General San Juan de Dios

1a. Avenida 10-50, Zona 1

Phone: 2321-9191 / 2253-0423

<http://www.hospitalsanjuandediosguatemala.com/>

Affiliated with University San Carlos School of Medicine IGSS

Instituto Guatemalteco de Seguridad Social

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9a. Calle 7-55, Zona 9

Phone: 2332-1009, 2332-4031, 2332-1278, 2332-3252, 2332-1312, 2332-0063.

<http://www.igssgt.org/>

Use of IGSS services requires registration

Nuestra Senora del Pilar

3a. Calle 10-71, Zona 15

Colonia Tecún Umán

Phone: 2420-0000

www.sanatorioelpilar.com

Private, run by Asociacion Española de Beneficiencia by nuns of the Anunciata.

Roosevelt Hospital

Calzada Roosevelt, Zona 11

Phone: 2321-7400

<http://www.hospitalroosevelt.gob.gt>

Hosproos@terra.com.gt

Affiliated with University San Carlos School of Medicine

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Hospital General de Accidentes - IGSS

13 Avenida 1-51 Col. Monte Real, Zona 4, Mixco

Phone: 2437-9625-29

www.hgadirec@itelgua.com

Membership required to use services

Available Air Ambulance Services

American Aerovac Air Ambulance

Direct: 001-800-423-5993

Other: 001-954-252-2744

rskuf@bellsouth.net

<http://americanaerovac.com/info.htm>

P.O. Box 291033 Davie, FL 333329-1033

Air Ambulance Network

Direct: 001-800-880-9451

Other: 001-727-934-3999

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<http://www.airambulancenetwork.com/>

3607 Alt 19 N., Suite A, Palm Harbor, FL 34683

Aerotaxis Air Ambulance Service

Direct: 502-5709-7922, 502-2331-3073 or 502-2360-4074

aerotaxis@hotmail.com

Avenida Hincapie y 18 Calle, Zona 13, Interior Aeropuerto, Hangar J-12

Aero Ruta Maya, S.A. Air Ambulance Service

Work: 502-2418-2727

Work: 502-2418-2700

Work: 502-2418-2710

armsa1@intelnett.com

Avenida Hincapie y 18 Calle Final, Hangar L-16, Interior Aeropuerto La Aurora, Zona 13.

Recommended Insurance Posture

There are some aerial medevac services; however, these services are extremely expensive and frequently require payment before the service is rendered. Serious medical problems

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requiring hospitalization/medical evacuation to the U.S. can be costly. It is very important to find out BEFORE you travel whether your medical insurance will cover you overseas.

CDC Country-specific Vaccination and Health Guidance

Information on vaccinations and other health precautions may be obtained from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) hotline for international travelers at 1-877-FYI-TRIP (1-877-394-8747) or via <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/guatemala>.

For information about outbreaks of infectious diseases abroad, consult the infectious diseases section of the World Health Organization (WHO) website at <http://www.who.int>. The WHO website also contains additional health information for travelers, including detailed country-specific health information.

OSAC Country Council Information

There is an active OSAC Country Council that meets monthly at the American Chamber of Commerce's office in Guatemala City. Typically, the Country Council will meet for an annual Regional Security Conference in Antigua, Guatemala, every spring. Please e-mail the Council at OSAC_Guatemala@state.gov or call at 502-2326-4281. To reach OSAC's Western Hemisphere team, please email OSACWHA@state.gov.

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U.S. Embassy Location and Contact Information

Embassy Address and Hours of Operation

Avenida Reforma 7-01, Zona 10, Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala

Business hours: 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Mon-Thu; 8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Fridays

Embassy Contact Numbers

Tel: (502)2326-4000

Emergency after-hours tel: (502)2331-2354

Fax: (502)2331-3804

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

Embassy Guidance

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U.S. citizens living in or visiting Guatemala are encouraged to register with the State Department at www.state.travel.gov. Enrolling in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program, STEP (<https://travelregistration.state.gov/>) will keep you up to date with important safety and security announcements and will help your friends and family get in touch with you in an emergency. Also, bookmark the Bureau of Consular Affairs website, which contains the current Travel Warnings, Travel Alerts, and Worldwide Cautions. Follow us on Twitter and the Bureau of Consular Affairs page on Facebook. Call 1-888-407-4747 toll-free within the U.S. and Canada, or a regular toll line, 1-202-501-4444, from other countries.

Tips on How to Avoid Becoming a Victim

Scams

In mid-2012, the U.S. Embassy received several dozen reports of cases in which people in the U.S. received calls allegedly from young relatives traveling in Guatemala and in urgent need of financial assistance. The scam victims collectively sent thousands of dollars before this trend diminished in August.

In another popular scam, robbers place a nail in a parked vehicle's tire. Robbers who pose as "good Samaritans" then follow the vehicle until the tire becomes flat and the victims pull over. While "help" is being rendered, the contents of the car are stolen, often without the victim's knowledge. However, in some cases, the robbers have threatened tourists with weapons. Parking areas in/around the Guatemala City International Airport are particularly prone to this crime.

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In another scam, victims are approached in a hotel, restaurant, or other public place by an individual who claims that there is some sort of problem with the would-be victim's automobile in the parking lot. On the way to investigate the "problem," usually in a remote or concealed area near the parking lot, the robber pulls a gun on the victim and demands cash, credit cards, and other valuables.

Situational Awareness Best Practices

Ensure that someone not traveling with you is aware of your itinerary. Coordinate arrival times with those picking up passengers, minimize time spent standing outside in the airport passenger pick-up area, and do not walk out of the airport with valuables in plain sight. Carry laptops inconspicuously in a backpack or other carry-on luggage. Avoid using electronic devices in traffic or leaving purses on seats in plain sight.

Travelers should be aware of their surroundings and watch for suspicious activity. In a common scenario, an accomplice distracts the victim while an assailant slashes or simply steals a bag or backpack. The Embassy advises tourists and residents to be very vigilant of their surroundings and report any crime incidents promptly to the police.

Tourists should carry money in a front pocket or put it in a zippered/buttoned back pocket. They should not display money, jewelry, a cell phone, or other perceived valuables and never leave a backpack or fanny pack unattended. Do not display items of value and refrain from using a cell phone on the street. Limit the number of credit cards and other high-value items you bring with you. Carry a photocopy of your passport when out. Persons carrying laptop

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computers and expensive cell phones are often targets for armed robberies. Visitors should avoid using a laptop in a public place. Areas that offer wi-fi computer services have been targeted. Several individuals have been killed and their laptops taken upon departure from these establishments after they were seen using their computers in public. Avoid carrying laptop cases or anything that resembles one, even if they do not contain laptops.

Avoid carrying large sums of money. There have been a number of incidents in which foreigners have been robbed immediately after making a large withdrawal from local banks. Complicity by bank employees is strongly suspected. There have also been incidents where persons are targeted for robbery after using ATMs. There have been reports of ATMs compromised with software that captures card numbers and PIN codes, as well as credit cards numbers being stolen. Ensure that you monitor your accounts for any suspicious activity.

Women should be especially careful when traveling alone and avoid staying out late by themselves.

Do not resist if you are robbed. Victims have been killed when they resisted or refused to give up their money or other valuables. Assailants are often armed with guns and do not hesitate to use them if you resist.

Use a reputable tour organization. Stay in groups and stay on the main roads. It is preferable to stay in the main tourist destinations.

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Avoid hotels that do not have adequate security. Visitors should never give out their hotel key or tell strangers what hotel they are staying in. They should lock their valuables in the hotel safety deposit box; watch for suspicious activity as they enter the hotel and their room. Travelers should make sure to lock the door and do not open it for unknown people.

Travelers should be aware that basic safety precautions commonly required in the U.S. for swimming, boating, and other outdoor activities may not be observed. Multiple boaters in the Rio Dulce area of the Department of Izabal have been victimized in violent armed attacks.

The Embassy recommends that U.S. citizens keep their distance from local children and refrain from actions that could fuel suspicions of child abductions. U.S. citizens are advised to be aware of and avoid activities that might unintentionally violate a cultural or religious belief. Avoid close contact with local children, including taking photographs, especially in rural areas. Such contact can be viewed with deep suspicion and may provoke panic and violence.

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