



Ecuador 2016 Crime & Safety Report: Quito

Travel Health and Safety; Transportation Security; Stolen items; Theft; Rape/Sexual Violence; Assault; Information Security; Cyber; Murder; Burglary; Financial Security; Kidnapping; Landslides and mudslides; Riots/Civil Unrest; Narcoterrorism; Volcanoes; Floods; Earthquakes; Tsunamis; Fraud

Western Hemisphere > Ecuador; Western Hemisphere > Ecuador > Quito

4/8/2016

Overall Crime and Safety Situation

Post Crime Rating: Critical

Crime Threats

Crime is a severe problem in Ecuador. Crimes against U.S. citizens in 2015 ranged from petty theft to violent offenses (armed robbery, sexual assault). Pickpocketing, purse snatching, robbery, and theft of travel documents are the most common types of crimes committed against U.S. citizens. These incidents have increased significantly in recent years. Pickpockets and other petty thieves are particularly active in tourist areas, airports, restaurants, on public transportation, in crowded streets, bus terminals, public markets, and grocery stores. Backpackers and travelers carrying laptop computer bags are frequently targeted for robbery. Very low rates of apprehension and conviction of criminals, due to limited police and judicial resources, contribute to the high crime rate.

The contents of this (U) presentation in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the United States Department of State, or the United States Government, except as otherwise noted (e.g., travel advisories, public statements). The presentation was compiled from various open sources and (U) embassy reporting. Please note that all OSAC products are for internal U.S. private sector security purposes only. Publishing or otherwise distributing OSAC-derived information in a manner inconsistent with this policy may result in the discontinuation of OSAC support.



Violent crime has significantly increased over the last few years, with American citizens being victims of crimes to include, but not limited to, homicides, armed assaults, robberies, sexual assaults, and home invasions. Armed/violent robberies can occur anywhere. Many travelers have been robbed after using ATMs or when exiting banks. In some cases, robbers have used motorcycles to approach their victims and flee the scene. Tourists have also been robbed at gunpoint on beaches and along hiking trails. Many robberies take place on or around public transportation, particularly buses.

Known locally as “secuestro express,” robberies and assaults against taxi passengers present a significant safety concern, especially in Guayaquil and Manta, but they have occurred in Quito. Shortly after the passenger enters a taxi, the vehicle is typically intercepted by armed accomplices who threaten passengers with weapons, rob them of their belongings, and force victims to withdraw money from ATMs. Victims have also been beaten or raped.

Incidents of sexual assault and rape have increased in the past several years, including in well-traveled tourist areas. Criminals generally target women who are alone and use alcohol/incapacitating drugs to rob/sexually assault them. These drugs (rohypnol, scopolamine) disorient the victim and can cause prolonged unconsciousness and serious medical problems.

Since September 2009, at least four U.S. citizens have been murdered. In most cases, the victims and alleged perpetrators knew each other. The government has established an emergency hotline (1-800-DELITO (1800 335486)) to inform police about murders or contract killings.

The contents of this (U) presentation in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the United States Department of State, or the United States Government, except as otherwise noted (e.g., travel advisories, public statements). The presentation was compiled from various open sources and (U) embassy reporting. Please note that all OSAC products are for internal U.S. private sector security purposes only. Publishing or otherwise distributing OSAC-derived information in a manner inconsistent with this policy may result in the discontinuation of OSAC support.



Areas of Concern

The U.S. Embassy advises against travel to the northern border region, to include the provinces of Sucumbíos, Orellana, Carchi, and parts of Esmeraldas due to the spread of organized crime, drug- and small-arms trafficking, and incursions by terrorist organizations near Ecuador's porous border with Colombia. The military and government agencies are increasing efforts to promote development and provide security in this area.

Stay particularly alert for crime on the crowded streets of south Quito, at the Panecillo, the Historic District, and in the areas of El Tejar, Parroquia San Sebastian, Avenida Cristobal Colon, and Gonzalez Suarez. Quito's Mariscal Sucre district, a popular tourist area, is increasingly a site of crimes; reported incidents in recent years include petty theft, sexual assault, and shootings. In the Mariscal area surrounding Plaza Foch, travel in groups when possible, avoid hailing taxis off the street or using unofficial taxis, and exercise caution in the early morning. In late 2015, an official American on temporary duty to the Embassy was assaulted and robbed as he walked alone at 9:30PM in the Mariscal area a few blocks from his hotel.

Stay alert if hiking to the summit of Pichincha, as violent crime has been known to occur there.

In Guayaquil, visitors should exercise extreme caution in the downtown area and the southern part of the city. Tourist sites (the Christ statue (Sagrado Corazon de Jesus) on Cerro del Carmen, the Malecon 2000, and Las Peñas), though well-patrolled by police, are targeted by

The contents of this (U) presentation in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the United States Department of State, or the United States Government, except as otherwise noted (e.g., travel advisories, public statements). The presentation was compiled from various open sources and (U) embassy reporting. Please note that all OSAC products are for internal U.S. private sector security purposes only. Publishing or otherwise distributing OSAC-derived information in a manner inconsistent with this policy may result in the discontinuation of OSAC support.



criminals hoping to prey on unsuspecting tourists. There have also been reports of armed robberies at restaurants in the fashionable areas of Urdesa and Samborondon.

Transportation-Safety Situation

Road Safety and Road Conditions

Although some of Ecuador's roads and highways have greatly improved in recent years, road travel can still be dangerous, especially at night. Some roads are poorly maintained or affected by heavy rains/mudslides. Mountain roads may lack safety features (crash barriers, guard rails), and conditions are frequently made more treacherous by heavy fog. Highways are often unmarked and not illuminated and do not have signs indicating destinations. In addition, slow-moving buses and trucks frequently stop unexpectedly. In the countryside, livestock is often herded along roads or grazed on roadsides. Lacking sidewalks, many roads are also used by pedestrians. Road travel after dark is especially hazardous. Motorists should carry a cellular phone and first aid kit in case of an emergency.

Driving practices differ from U.S. standards, and drivers often disobey traffic laws and signals. Buses stop without warning to pick up/drop off passengers. Drivers often turn from any lane and rarely yield to pedestrians and cyclists. You might encounter intoxicated drivers, though the chances of a drunk-driving accident are higher on weekends and local holidays. On the coast, in particular, many vehicles are poorly maintained, and breakdowns are common.

The contents of this (U) presentation in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the United States Department of State, or the United States Government, except as otherwise noted (e.g., travel advisories, public statements). The presentation was compiled from various open sources and (U) embassy reporting. Please note that all OSAC products are for internal U.S. private sector security purposes only. Publishing or otherwise distributing OSAC-derived information in a manner inconsistent with this policy may result in the discontinuation of OSAC support.



If you are the driver involved in an automobile accident, even if you are not at fault, you may be taken into police custody, especially if injuries are involved or if you do not have insurance. If injuries or damages are serious, you may face criminal charges.

Do not leave anything of value in plain view in a car. To avoid carjacking or theft from a vehicle while stopped at intersections, drivers should keep doors locked and windows rolled up. Smash-and-grabs occur when thieves break into parked, slow-moving, or stopped vehicles, particularly with lone female drivers. The family member of an official American posted in Quito was the victim of a smash-and-grab robbery while waiting in her vehicle outside the Embassy.

Public Transportation Conditions

Intra- and inter-city bus passengers are often targets of crime, including robbery and sexual assault. On buses, luggage stowed below the bus, in overhead racks, or at the traveler's feet can be, and often is, stolen. Embassy Quito strongly recommends against using buses.

Numerous bus accidents occur every year, and many buses are overcrowded, poorly maintained, and lack seat belts or other safety features. In Guayaquil, security on public transportation is a major concern. Armed criminals have been known to board local city buses and rob passengers. There have been instances in which routes between cities are blocked by criminals, who board the bus to rob passengers.

The contents of this (U) presentation in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the United States Department of State, or the United States Government, except as otherwise noted (e.g., travel advisories, public statements). The presentation was compiled from various open sources and (U) embassy reporting. Please note that all OSAC products are for internal U.S. private sector security purposes only. Publishing or otherwise distributing OSAC-derived information in a manner inconsistent with this policy may result in the discontinuation of OSAC support.



Because of “secuestro expreso,” U.S. officials are strongly advised against hailing street taxis but are permitted to use taxis from a “cooperativa” (radio taxi association) or major hotels. The person who orders a taxi by phone should get the number of the taxi from the dispatcher and verify that the number matches the one on the taxi entering the vehicle. Registered taxis are usually yellow, display matching unit numbers on their windshields and doors, feature a taxi cooperative name on the door, and are identified with an orange license plate. Many taxis remove seat belts from the back seat. A number of taxi drivers do not use meters, especially at night, and sometimes charge more than the usual fare. Rates should be negotiated prior to departure.

Aviation/Airport Conditions

At the airports in both Quito and Guayaquil, arriving passengers have been targeted by armed robbers who follow them to rob them. Cases have been reported involving multiple vehicles that cut off and intercept the victim as well as a single motorcycle rider who robs the victim while they are getting out of their car. The perpetrators appear to focus on travelers who are returning from overseas trips, presumably laden with gifts and large amounts of cash.

Other Travel Conditions

Protestors often block city streets and rural highways, and public transportation tends to be disrupted during protests.

The contents of this (U) presentation in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the United States Department of State, or the United States Government, except as otherwise noted (e.g., travel advisories, public statements). The presentation was compiled from various open sources and (U) embassy reporting. Please note that all OSAC products are for internal U.S. private sector security purposes only. Publishing or otherwise distributing OSAC-derived information in a manner inconsistent with this policy may result in the discontinuation of OSAC support.



Terrorism Threat

Post Terrorism Rating: Medium

Political, Economic, Religious, and Ethnic Violence

Ecuador does not have a tradition of substantial guerrilla activity, nor of frequent violence as a result of demonstrations or political instability. However, political violence in Colombia has a spillover effect in northern Ecuador. Security on the northern border, where the majority of Ecuador's oil deposits are, is particularly tenuous. The area is used as a transshipment point for precursor chemicals used in illegal drug production and arms/supplies for Colombian insurgent groups and narco-traffickers. Businesses in the area continue to report being extorted for protection money. Kidnappings, more often economic than political, have occurred and foreigners have been targeted.

Popular protests in 1997, 2000, and 2005 contributed to the removal of three elected presidents before the end of their terms.

Post Political Violence Rating: High

Civil Unrest

The contents of this (U) presentation in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the United States Department of State, or the United States Government, except as otherwise noted (e.g., travel advisories, public statements). The presentation was compiled from various open sources and (U) embassy reporting. Please note that all OSAC products are for internal U.S. private sector security purposes only. Publishing or otherwise distributing OSAC-derived information in a manner inconsistent with this policy may result in the discontinuation of OSAC support.



Student, labor union, and indigenous protests against government policies are a regular feature of political life. While disruptive, especially to transportation, violence is usually limited and localized. Protestors occasionally burn tires, throw Molotov cocktails, engage in destruction of property, and detonate small improvised explosive devices, but fatalities have been rare.

Pamphlet bombs are sometimes used to disseminate political literature. Six pamphlet bombs exploded in November-December 2011, all without serious injury to person or property (although one had the potential to be lethal), and none aimed at businesses or business interests. Two more incidents of pamphlet bombs occurred in Guayaquil in July 2015.

Some communities have used protests and strikes to obtain promises of increased government spending on social benefits and infrastructure. Some indigenous communities opposed to development have protested to block access by petroleum/mining companies. In September 2009, one person was killed near Macas during protests by indigenous communities demonstrating against the government's proposed mining and water laws. The government has increasingly filed legal charges or opened investigations against protestors who block roads or impede public services. The government charged demonstrators with "terrorism and sabotage," or similar charges that effectively criminalized protest, for obstructing roads and public services.

It is against the law for foreigners to engage in political activity that starts or promotes civil wars or international conflicts.

The contents of this (U) presentation in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the United States Department of State, or the United States Government, except as otherwise noted (e.g., travel advisories, public statements). The presentation was compiled from various open sources and (U) embassy reporting. Please note that all OSAC products are for internal U.S. private sector security purposes only. Publishing or otherwise distributing OSAC-derived information in a manner inconsistent with this policy may result in the discontinuation of OSAC support.



Post-specific Concerns

Environmental Hazards

Ecuador has many active and potentially active volcanoes, including around Quito and other popular tourist destinations. Three active volcanoes within 100km of Quito threaten the city primarily with ash fall.

In August 2015, the Cotapaxi volcano became quite active, and eruptions distributed light volcanic ash over Quito.

Baños, a popular tourist destination, is at the base of the Tungurahua volcano, which has erupted explosively several times in the last decade, including several times in 2010, 2011, and 2012 that produced significant ash fall. Travelers to Baños, especially on the western side, should be aware that mud/lava flows could pose a significant, immediate threat. If you are in Baños when a volcanic eruption occurs, stay alert to the sirens and instructions from local authorities and follow the arrows on the street to reach the evacuation shelters in the Santa Ana neighborhood on the main road on the east side of town toward Puyo.

Other potential environmental threats include: flooding, earthquakes, and tsunamis. Earthquakes sometimes trigger deadly tsunamis, which could strike coastal areas of Ecuador or the Galápagos Islands. Authorities put out warnings of potential tsunamis, but the response on the local level is uneven, and on one occasion in the Galapagos Islands, there was no coordinated evacuation when a tsunami struck.

The contents of this (U) presentation in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the United States Department of State, or the United States Government, except as otherwise noted (e.g., travel advisories, public statements). The presentation was compiled from various open sources and (U) embassy reporting. Please note that all OSAC products are for internal U.S. private sector security purposes only. Publishing or otherwise distributing OSAC-derived information in a manner inconsistent with this policy may result in the discontinuation of OSAC support.



In light of these environmental conditions, travelers/residents should maintain an emergency supply of food and water and establish an emergency plan with their family members or fellow travelers.

Critical Infrastructure Concerns

In the event of a natural disaster, transportation, water, communications, and power systems may fail due to damaged infrastructure or heavy ash fall. Roads may close, and flights might be cancelled.

Drug-related Crimes

The threat of violence associated with narco-trafficking is well documented. The amount of drugs flowing through Ecuador, estimated to be in excess of 100 metric tons of cocaine per year, has contributed to the rise of all types of crime. Homicide rates have increased over the last 12 years, which has a direct correlation to the increased flow of drugs over this same period. Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTO), especially those with a propensity for violence (Mexican Sinaloa, Gulf cartels), operate in Ecuador. An example of this violence is the March 2011 death of an Ecuadorian National Police and DEA Vetted Unit member, who was killed by Colombian drug traffickers after being compromised on surveillance in support of an anti-drug operation. This DTO was working directly with a Mexican Sinaloa cell operating in Guayaquil. A second Vetted Officer was shot in the head but survived.

The contents of this (U) presentation in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the United States Department of State, or the United States Government, except as otherwise noted (e.g., travel advisories, public statements). The presentation was compiled from various open sources and (U) embassy reporting. Please note that all OSAC products are for internal U.S. private sector security purposes only. Publishing or otherwise distributing OSAC-derived information in a manner inconsistent with this policy may result in the discontinuation of OSAC support.



Kidnapping Threat

At least 13 U.S. citizens are known to have been victims of kidnapping since 1998.

In October 2009, a U.S. citizen was kidnapped in Tulcan and held for ransom. After 21 days, the victim was rescued after an intensive investigation involving Ecuadorian, Colombian, and U.S. law enforcement.

In 2012, two Americans were held, one by an indigenous group and later released and one for ransom by a paramilitary group near the Colombian border in Sucumbíos, who later escaped.

Two Canadian tourists were also held and assaulted in the Cuyabeno National Park near Lago Agrio and later released.

Police Response

Police coverage is sparse outside major urban areas. Ecuador has a less than one percent conviction rate for major crimes. Investigation and prosecution is the responsibility of the government; they do not proceed with the speed and thoroughness seen in the U.S. Although the U.S. Embassy and U.S. Consulate General monitor and encourage these investigations, our ability to intervene is extremely limited. The threshold for petty crime is US\$600, meaning that little is done for victims whose loss is less than that. Response times vary, but it is common for police to take 45-60 minutes to respond to emergencies. After criminal complaints, or denuncia, are filed, little is done to recover belongings or to investigate.

The contents of this (U) presentation in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the United States Department of State, or the United States Government, except as otherwise noted (e.g., travel advisories, public statements). The presentation was compiled from various open sources and (U) embassy reporting. Please note that all OSAC products are for internal U.S. private sector security purposes only. Publishing or otherwise distributing OSAC-derived information in a manner inconsistent with this policy may result in the discontinuation of OSAC support.



While you are traveling in Ecuador, you are subject to Ecuadorian laws even though you are a U.S. citizen. Foreign laws and legal systems can be vastly different from our own. If you break local laws, your U.S. passport will not help you avoid arrest or prosecution. It is very important to know what is legal and what is not.

How to Handle Incidents of Police Detention or Harassment

If you are arrested, under the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations and customary international law, you have the option to request that the police, prison officials, or other authorities alert the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate. Outside of Quito and Guayaquil, awareness of international protocols is uneven. If you are arrested, request that the authorities do this on your behalf. The U.S. government has no authority to intervene in legal matters.

If you feel that you are a victim of police corruption, bribery, or harassment, contact American Citizen Services at the United States Embassy for assistance.

Crime Victim Assistance

If you or someone you know becomes the victim of a crime, you should immediately contact the local police to file a crime report (denuncia) and inform the U.S. Embassy or Consulate General. 911 is used countrywide as the main emergency phone number. Authorities advise that at least one English speaker is available at all times. You may also call the U.S. Embassy

The contents of this (U) presentation in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the United States Department of State, or the United States Government, except as otherwise noted (e.g., travel advisories, public statements). The presentation was compiled from various open sources and (U) embassy reporting. Please note that all OSAC products are for internal U.S. private sector security purposes only. Publishing or otherwise distributing OSAC-derived information in a manner inconsistent with this policy may result in the discontinuation of OSAC support.



Quito and ask for American Citizen Services: (02) 398-5000. The Tourist Security Service has opened a number of service centers throughout Quito, which provide general information and a location to file police reports.

In the event a U.S. citizen is victim of a crime, the U.S. Embassy or Consulate General can:

Help you find appropriate medical care,

Put you in contact with police authorities and contact family members/friends on your behalf,

Replace your stolen passport, and

Help you understand the local criminal justice process and direct you to attorneys or law enforcement officials.

Medical Emergencies

Medical care is very limited, particularly outside Quito. Basic medical services are available in Quito and in many small towns/villages. However, treatment for serious medical issues is often unavailable or available only in Quito. Travelers taking prescription medications should bring an adequate supply with them. Physicians and hospital personnel frequently do not speak English, and medical reports are written in Spanish. Patients must have good Spanish language skills to utilize local medical resources.

Ambulance services are poor and do not meet U.S. standards. Ambulances are privately-run, expensive, and seldom respond within an appropriate amount of time. Emergency ambulance

The contents of this (U) presentation in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the United States Department of State, or the United States Government, except as otherwise noted (e.g., travel advisories, public statements). The presentation was compiled from various open sources and (U) embassy reporting. Please note that all OSAC products are for internal U.S. private sector security purposes only. Publishing or otherwise distributing OSAC-derived information in a manner inconsistent with this policy may result in the discontinuation of OSAC support.



services and certain types of medical equipment, medications, and treatments are not widely available. In an emergency, patients must drive or ask somebody to take them to the nearest hospital that will accept a patient. This is usually a public hospital unless the patient or someone acting on their behalf indicates that they can pay for a private hospital.

Travelers should prepare to pay medical practitioners and hospitals at the time of service or even before treatment is given. Payment for medical services is typically done on a cash basis, although the few private hospitals will accept major credit cards for payment. U.S. health insurance plans are not accepted in Ecuador.

Dial 911 for all emergencies. You may also follow up with U.S. Embassy's American Citizen Services number (02) 398-5000.

Contact Information for Recommended Hospitals/Clinics

The Embassy recommends that medical emergencies in Quito be treated at Hospital Metropolitano (tel: +593-2-399-8000 x. 2193) and Hospital De los Valles in Cumbaya (tel: +593-2-600-0911). In Guayaquil, the Consulate recommends using the Clinica Kennedy and the Clinica Alcivar. Travelers are reminded that the facilities at these hospitals are modern and often technologically advanced but may not meet all U.S. standards.

Guayaquil

The contents of this (U) presentation in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the United States Department of State, or the United States Government, except as otherwise noted (e.g., travel advisories, public statements). The presentation was compiled from various open sources and (U) embassy reporting. Please note that all OSAC products are for internal U.S. private sector security purposes only. Publishing or otherwise distributing OSAC-derived information in a manner inconsistent with this policy may result in the discontinuation of OSAC support.



Clinica Kennedy, Av. San Jorge entre la Novena y la Decima (close to Polycentro Mall), tel: +593-4-228-6963 / 2289-666 and Fax: +593-4-228-4051

Clinica Kennedy (Alborada area), tel: +593-4-224-7900

Clinica Kennedy (Samborondon area), tel: +593-4-209-0039

Clinica Alcivar(Trauma specialty)

Doctora Ma del Carmen Escolano, cell phone +593-9-948-0305

Doctor Marlon Alarcon, cell phone +593-9-961-5960

Clinica Guayquil – 24 hr Emergency, trauma & diagnostics, tel: +593-4-2563555 / 2302825

Dr. Enrique Bolona, cell 0999515127

Available Air Ambulance Services

AIR MED: tel: +593-2-246-8216 or +593-2-246-9902

Recommended Insurance Posture

The contents of this (U) presentation in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the United States Department of State, or the United States Government, except as otherwise noted (e.g., travel advisories, public statements). The presentation was compiled from various open sources and (U) embassy reporting. Please note that all OSAC products are for internal U.S. private sector security purposes only. Publishing or otherwise distributing OSAC-derived information in a manner inconsistent with this policy may result in the discontinuation of OSAC support.



The Department of State strongly urges Americans to consult with their medical insurance company prior to traveling abroad to confirm whether their policy applies overseas and whether it will cover emergency expenses (medical evacuation). The Embassy recommends travelers have sufficient insurance for their trip. Many travel insurance companies have policies that include medical services and evacuation.

CDC Country-specific Vaccination and Health Guidance

Individuals should ensure that all their routine vaccinations are up to date. Information on vaccinations and other health precautions, such as safe food and water precautions and insect bite protection, may be obtained from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's hotline for international travelers at 1-877-FYI-TRIP (1-877-394-8747) or via the CDC's web site at

http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/ecuador?s_cid=ncezid-dgmq-travel-single-001.

OSAC Country Council Information

Quito has an active Country Council. All U.S. private sector organizations operating in the area are welcome to attend. Parties interested in joining the Quito Country Council should contact RSO Edward Blodgett at +593-2-398-5475 or Juan E. Faini, Coordinador de OSAC Capitulo Ecuador, Celular: +593-99-972-0369, jfaini@ecamcham.com. To reach OSAC's Western Hemisphere team, please email OSACWHA@state.gov.

The contents of this (U) presentation in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the United States Department of State, or the United States Government, except as otherwise noted (e.g., travel advisories, public statements). The presentation was compiled from various open sources and (U) embassy reporting. Please note that all OSAC products are for internal U.S. private sector security purposes only. Publishing or otherwise distributing OSAC-derived information in a manner inconsistent with this policy may result in the discontinuation of OSAC support.



U.S. Embassy Location and Contact Information

Embassy Contact Numbers

Switchboard: +593-2-398-5000

Marine Security Guard Post One: +593-2-398-5200 Regional Security Officer:
+593-2-398-5475

Consular Affairs and American Citizen Services: +593-2-398-5310 Embassy Duty Officer:
+593-997-883-222

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

Consular coverage for multi-post countries

The Embassy is also responsible for coverage of the Galapagos Islands.

Nearby Posts

The contents of this (U) presentation in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the United States Department of State, or the United States Government, except as otherwise noted (e.g., travel advisories, public statements). The presentation was compiled from various open sources and (U) embassy reporting. Please note that all OSAC products are for internal U.S. private sector security purposes only. Publishing or otherwise distributing OSAC-derived information in a manner inconsistent with this policy may result in the discontinuation of OSAC support.



Consulate Guayaquil: <http://guayaquil.usconsulate.gov>

Embassy Guidance

For the latest security and threat information, U.S. citizens traveling or living abroad should regularly monitor the Department of State's travel website (<http://travel.state.gov>) and U.S. Embassy Quito's website. These sites contain country-specific consular information, current Travel Warnings and Travel Alerts, as well as the Department's Worldwide Caution.

Tips on How to Avoid Becoming a Victim

Scams

Thieves often distract the victim, sometimes by purposefully spilling liquid on the victim and pretending to help the victim clean it up, while accomplices snatch the victim's bag or pick the victim's pocket.

Situational Awareness Best Practices

The contents of this (U) presentation in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the United States Department of State, or the United States Government, except as otherwise noted (e.g., travel advisories, public statements). The presentation was compiled from various open sources and (U) embassy reporting. Please note that all OSAC products are for internal U.S. private sector security purposes only. Publishing or otherwise distributing OSAC-derived information in a manner inconsistent with this policy may result in the discontinuation of OSAC support.



Never carry more than you are willing to lose, and never carry anything you consider priceless/irreplaceable. Do not keep money all in one pocket. Only change money at banks/hotels, as street exchanges can lead to fraud/robbery. Maintain a copy of passport/credit card information and the telephone numbers to report a lost or stolen card.

Travelers should avoid withdrawing large amounts of cash from banks and ATMs and should use ATMs in protected indoor areas like well-guarded shopping malls. Pay for items in cash whenever possible and, when possible, only use credit cards at larger establishments (hotels). To avoid skimming, visitors should take the credit/debit card to the register him/herself and never let the card out of his/her sight. Avoid paying for delivery with your credit/debit card. Also, be sure to monitor bank accounts and credit card statements frequently.

Always be aware of surroundings. Increase your awareness of your belongings when in congested areas (airports, bus stations). Teams of criminals frequent these areas; one will attempt to distract a victim while an accomplice commits the theft. Maintain a low profile and do not advertise the fact that you are American. Travelers should leave valuables in a safe place. Make use of hotel safes when available and avoid wearing obviously expensive jewelry or designer clothing. Dress casually and keep valuables out of sight. The Embassy recommends traveling in groups.

To lower risk of falling victim to sexual assault, travel in groups, do not leave food/drink unattended in public places, and never accept a drink from a stranger. If one falls victim to express kidnapping and/or robbery, cooperation with the assailant usually results in the best outcome for the victim. Following a criminal incident, U.S. citizens are encouraged to immediately file a police report with the local authorities and to inform the American Citizens Services Unit at the U.S. Embassy in Quito or the U.S. Consulate General in Guayaquil. In the

The contents of this (U) presentation in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the United States Department of State, or the United States Government, except as otherwise noted (e.g., travel advisories, public statements). The presentation was compiled from various open sources and (U) embassy reporting. Please note that all OSAC products are for internal U.S. private sector security purposes only. Publishing or otherwise distributing OSAC-derived information in a manner inconsistent with this policy may result in the discontinuation of OSAC support.



event of a robbery, the Embassy urges all travelers to comply with the demands of the aggressors while attempting to observe identifying characteristics of the perpetrators. No item is worth risking serious injury or death. Be unpredictable in your movements so that you will not be an easy target.

The contents of this (U) presentation in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the United States Department of State, or the United States Government, except as otherwise noted (e.g., travel advisories, public statements). The presentation was compiled from various open sources and (U) embassy reporting. Please note that all OSAC products are for internal U.S. private sector security purposes only. Publishing or otherwise distributing OSAC-derived information in a manner inconsistent with this policy may result in the discontinuation of OSAC support.