



Mexico 2016 Crime & Safety Report: Ciudad Juarez

Travel Health and Safety; Transportation Security; Stolen items; Theft; Carjacking; Burglary; Murder; Extortion; Floods; Employee Health Safety; Drug Trafficking; Narcoterrorism; Kidnapping; Hotels; Financial Security

Western Hemisphere > Mexico; Western Hemisphere > Mexico > Ciudad Juarez

4/19/2016

Overall Crime and Safety Situation

The Department of State divides its roles and responsibilities in Mexico among 10 consular districts. The Consular District for the U.S. Consulate General in Ciudad Juarez is the entire state of Chihuahua. This report provides an overview of the security situation in the Ciudad Juarez Consular District, with a specific focus on Ciudad Juarez and the city of Chihuahua.

For information regarding the security environment in other areas of Mexico, please reference the OSAC Crime and Safety Reports from the following Consular Districts: Tijuana, Nogales, Hermosillo, Mexican Federal District, Nuevo Laredo, Matamoros, Monterrey, Guadalajara, and Merida.

Post Crime Rating: Critical

Crime Threats

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While there is no indication that U.S. citizens are specifically targeted, violence and crime rates remain high. U.S. citizens traveling to Ciudad Juarez and Chihuahua need to guard against robbery, carjacking, theft, and burglary.

Reported homicides have decreased in each of the past five years in Ciudad Juarez. Local authorities state that 312 people were murdered in 2015, down from the 434 murders in 2014, 530 in 2013, 730 in 2012, and 1,900 in 2011. Similarly, in Chihuahua city, there were 158 reported murders in 2015, down from 219 in 2014, and 429 in 2013. A significant portion of homicides in both cities are cartel- or gang-related, but there have also been cases in which innocent people were caught in the line of fire or mistakenly targeted.

Carjackings declined in 2015 but remain a problem with 598 reported cases in Chihuahua state; close to 50 percent of these cases occurred in Ciudad Juarez. Nonetheless, this is an improvement compared to the 635 carjackings reported in 2014 in the state of Chihuahua, 290 of which occurred in Juarez and the 642 carjackings reported in 2013 in Chihuahua city and an additional 602 in Juarez. Most carjackings occur in traffic; daylight has not served as a deterrent; and these incidents take place in residential and industrial areas alike.

Reports of extortion also declined in 2015, but the actual number is thought to be under-reported. The Chihuahua state government and Ciudad Juarez city government have taken steps against extortion with mixed results and mixed reviews of effectiveness. Extortion, or the threat of extortion, forced many small- to medium-sized businesses in Ciudad Juarez to close between 2008-2012. Large businesses (manufacturing plants) are not immune to the threat, but it is less common. A frequent method of extortion involves a telephone call in which

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the perpetrators threaten harm to the person/business if they do not pay for protection. These phone calls are often placed at random and can originate from out of the area.

Areas of Concern

U.S. citizens should defer non-essential travel to areas specified in the Mexico Travel Warning and restrict travel between cities to daylight hours and on major highways. The area surrounding the U.S. Consulate General in Ciudad Juarez is considered to be safer than most other parts of the city. Recent changes to the Embassy's Mexico Travel Policy now permits U.S. government personnel and their family members to travel to Chihuahua City, Nuevo Casas Grandes, surrounding areas, and specific border cities with prior RSO approval and via specific overland routes.

Crime and violence remain serious problems throughout the state of Chihuahua, particularly in the southern portion of the state and in the Sierra Mountains, including Copper Canyon.

Transportation-Safety Situation

Road Safety and Road Conditions

Roads in Chihuahua state vary from modern toll roads to dirt tracks. It is recommended that travelers use only major routes and drive only during daylight hours. The main highway from

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Ciudad Juarez to Chihuahua City (Highway 45) benefits from significant traffic and police presence.

Road conditions in Ciudad Juarez are generally poor in most areas outside of major thoroughfares. Many roads do not have clearly marked lanes. Potholes and trenches can damage your vehicle and cause drivers to swerve into your lane or brake unexpectedly.

Manhole covers may be absent when heavy rains force them from the sewers, and the resulting holes are difficult to spot. With heavy rain, the roads can quickly flood due to lack of adequate drainage.

In the event of a transportation accident, both cities of Ciudad Juarez and Chihuahua have sufficient first responder and medical infrastructure to handle the situation. If transportation incidents occur in isolated areas, the response capability can be severely limited. Even on a major highway, assistance can be more than an hour away.

Public Transportation Conditions

The use of public buses is not recommended.

Use only taxis that are radio-dispatched or from a cabstand (sitio). A hotel, restaurant, or bar

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can call a cab if needed. Do not hail a taxi off the street.

Terrorism Threat

Post Terrorism Rating: Low

Political, Economic, Religious, and Ethnic Violence

Political Violence Rating: High

Post-specific Concerns

Environmental Hazards

Flooding is a concern because rainfall tends to overwhelm the drainage capacity. High-clearance vehicles are helpful in these situations. Heavy precipitation can close roads and cause significant delays.

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Critical Infrastructure Concerns

The ability of local authorities to contain a major HAZMAT situation is limited. Emergency personnel are available, but they lack sufficient equipment to contain a major incident. Likewise, the response time of local first responders is slower than what would be expected in the U.S. If a major incident were to occur outside of a population center, the response could take hours.

Economic Espionage/Intellectual Property Thefts

Due to the large number of corporations and manufacturing facilities, espionage and intellectual property thefts can occur, though there is no reporting to indicate this is a serious problem.

Drug-related Crimes

The majority of homicides in Ciudad Juarez and Chihuahua city are considered to be drug-related. As a major drug-trafficking corridor, Chihuahua has been contested by two major Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTOs) for years. With greater availability of drugs in Ciudad Juarez, drug use has increased locally.

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Kidnapping Threat

There were two reported kidnappings with a U.S. nexus in the state of Chihuahua in 2015, down from 10 in 2014. Official state statistics report no cases of kidnappings for ransom in Ciudad Juarez in 2014 or 2015, although kidnappings for other motives related to drug trafficking (revenge, intimidation) may be recorded separately. Kidnapping is an under-reported crime for fear of retribution.

Police Response

Levels of professionalism vary greatly among police agencies in Mexico. In major metropolitan areas, foreigners can expect support from police.

U.S. citizens are advised to cooperate with police if stopped or questioned.

How to Handle Incidents of Police Detention or Harassment

U.S. citizens who are detained or harassed by police should call American Citizen Services Unit during business hours at (52)656-227-3411. Outside of business hours, U.S. citizens should call the Consulate at (52)656-227-3200.

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Crime Victim Assistance

If you require immediate assistance from police, dial 066. U.S. citizen victims of crime may call the American Citizen Services Unit during business hours at (52)656-227-3411. Outside of business hours, U.S. citizens should call the Consulate at (52)656-227-3200.

Police/Security Agencies

Federal Police: Primary function is highway patrol and airport policing. They operated with a reduced patrol capability in Ciudad Juarez due to a redistribution of Federal Police forces. Special investigative units exist to investigate federal crimes.

Policia Unica: A state police unit formed in 2012 with state patrol and investigative responsibilities.

Chihuahua State Police: Responsible for the investigation of all state crimes and has specialized groups for anti-kidnapping.

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Municipal Police: Mainly patrol and crime prevention without investigative authority. They are the primary responders when summoned through 066 calls in a metropolitan area.

Transito: Traffic enforcement and route control.

Medical Emergencies

For emergency medical assistance, dial 066. Ambulance service is provided by the Red Cross.

Contact Information for Recommended Hospitals/Clinics

There are four modern facilities with care at/near quality levels found in U.S. hospitals used by the Consulate:

Star Medica

Paseo de la Victoria 4370

Partido Iglesias

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Ciudad Juarez

(52)656-227-5700

Hospital Angeles

Campos Eliseos 9371

Fracc. Campos Eliseos

Ciudad Juarez

(52)656-227-1400

Hospital Cima

Hacienda del Valle 7120

Fraccionamiento Plazas las Haciendas

31238 Chihuahua City

(52)614-439-2700

Hospital General Dr. Salvador Zibirán

Ejército Mexicano

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El Bajo

(52)614-415-9075

Ambulance Insurance Recommendation

It is recommended that those residing or working in Juarez on a permanent basis obtain coverage with a private ambulance company for faster service.

CDC Country-specific Vaccination and Health Guidance

Please see the latest information on the CDC's website at:
<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/mexico.htm>.

OSAC Country Council Information

Ciudad Juarez has an active OSAC Country Council. Please contact the RSO at (52)656-227-3455 for information. To reach OSAC's Western Hemisphere team, please email OSACWHA@state.gov.

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U.S. Consulate Location and Contact Information

Consulate Address and Hours of Operation

U.S. Consulate General Ciudad Juarez

Paseo De La Victoria 3650

Ciudad Juarez, Chih.

Hours of Operation: 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Mon-Fri.

Consulate Contact Numbers

RSO- (52)656-227-3455

Consulate Operator- (52)656-227-3000

24-Hour Emergency- (52)656-227-3200

Website: <http://ciudadjuarez.usconsulate.gov/>

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Nearby Posts

Embassy Mexico City: <http://mexico.usembassy.gov/>

Consulate Guadalajara: <http://guadalajara.usconsulate.gov/>

Consulate Hermosillo: <http://hermosillo.usconsulate.gov/>

Consulate Matamoros: <http://matamoros.usconsulate.gov/>

Consulate Merida: <http://merida.usconsulate.gov/>

Consulate Monterrey: <http://monterrey.usconsulate.gov/>

Consulate Nogales: <http://nogales.usconsulate.gov/>

Consulate Nuevo Laredo: <http://nuevolaredo.usconsulate.gov/>

Consulate Tijuana: <http://nuevolaredo.usconsulate.gov/>

Tips on How to Avoid Becoming a Victim

Scams

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Extortion phone calls are very common. Use caller ID on all of your phones and do not answer calls from unknown or suspicious numbers.

Situational Awareness Best Practices

Maintain a low profile and be aware of your surroundings. Trust your instincts. If you can avoid a potentially dangerous situation, do so immediately. If you find yourself in an unavoidable dangerous situation, seek cover. Once the event has ended, seek assistance from police or the U.S. Consulate. Displays of cash, jewelry, or other perceived signs of wealth can attract armed robbers and pickpockets. Items of even minor value left in a car can trigger a break-in even if left for only a few minutes.

Hotel guests should keep valuables in secure locations. Do not leave valuable items unattended in hotel rooms.

U.S. citizens should be very cautious when using ATMs. If an ATM must be used, it should be accessed only during the business day at large, protected facilities (preferably inside commercial establishments, rather than at glass-enclosed, highly visible ATMs on streets). U.S. and Mexican citizens are sometimes accosted on the street and forced to withdraw money from their accounts using their ATM cards.

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Carjackings can occur anywhere, but living in a gated community and working in a location with access control measures decrease the likelihood of you becoming a carjacking victim.

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