



## Canada 2016 Crime & Safety Report: Toronto

Travel Health and Safety; Transportation Security; Stolen items; Theft; Rape/Sexual Violence; Assault; Drug Trafficking; Murder; Cyber; Winter weather; Anti-American sentiment; Kidnapping; Fraud

Western Hemisphere > Canada; Western Hemisphere > Canada > Toronto

4/19/2016

### Overall Crime and Safety Situation

Post Crime Rating: Low

### Crime Threats

The overall crime rate for Toronto may be considered low, but crimes of opportunity and all other categories of crime do occur. According to the government, police-reported crime has reached its lowest level since the early 1970s. But, assaults against police officers, thefts from vehicles, and sexual assaults have increased. The Toronto Police Services (TPS) and Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) have noted an increase in the use of guns in the commission of crimes. There is no evidence that Americans are being targeted directly for criminal activity.

The downtown area is an enjoyable area of boutiques and restaurants during the day and early evening, but drug dealing and prostitution activity has been reported with occasional

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incidents of violence outside the bars as they close. In addition, aggressive pan-handling has been identified in the vicinity of the Consulate and the downtown area.

Vehicle thefts are common, even from locked garages. Vehicle break-ins are common, with GPS units, electronics, bags, identification, and loose change alluring.

In 2015, TPS responded to several murders.

## Cybersecurity Issues

Cybersecurity or Internet-related crime issues are similar to those identified in the U.S. Travelers should practice smart Internet usage and guard all financial transactions.

## Transportation-Safety Situation

### Road Safety and Road Conditions

Driving conditions are very similar to the U.S., but severe winter weather conditions may make traveling by road dangerous. Due to harsh winters with snow and ice, in addition to road

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treatments, public roads are often in a state of constant repair/maintenance. Roadside emergency kits are highly suggested, especially in inclement weather.

Road safety and road conditions are posted in kilometers per hour, and some signs (particularly in Quebec) may be in French. Drivers should be cautious of deer, elk, and moose while driving at night in rural areas.

The OPP and the TPS routinely set up vehicle checkpoints on main roads/highways to interdict impaired drivers.

Drivers must use hands-free cell phones while driving. The OPP and TPS routinely station plain-clothes officers to observe and ticket vehicle operators using electronic devices without hands-free attachments.

Do not leave valuables in the car. If you must leave items in the car, keep them locked in the trunk. Never pick up hitchhikers.

### Public Transportation Conditions

Public transportation in the greater Toronto area is considered safe. It is similar to most public transportation systems found in the U.S. Travelers may find that public transportation systems are often cleaner and easier to use. Toronto is very proud of its multi-faceted public

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transportation system (bus, subway, streetcar). While it is considered safe, thefts and assaults can and do take place. Travelers should protect purses and bags while in crowds.

### Aviation/Airport Conditions

Aviation/airport conditions are very similar to the U.S., but severe winter weather conditions may make traveling by air frustrating. Harsh winter weather often causes flight delays, cancellations, and often re-routed flights. Travelers should remain updated on current weather conditions and the status of their individual flights. Travelers should be prepared for itinerary changes and delays.

### Terrorism Threat

Post Terrorism Rating: Low

### Local, Regional, and International Terrorism Threats/Concerns

While there are no known specific terrorist threats directed against U.S. government personnel or civilians in Toronto, there have been threats/acts of domestic terrorism in Canada:

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October 20, 2014: near Montreal - Martin Couture-Rouleau, a Muslim convert, drove into two uniformed Canadian forces members, killing one officer.

October 22, 2014: Ottawa - A uniformed Canadian forces member was shot and killed while standing guard at the War Memorial. Michael Zehef-Bibeau, a Muslim convert, then stormed the Parliament Hill congressional building. He was killed by security forces.

January 2015: Alberta - Al-Shabaab released a video declaring a vague threat against the West Edmonton Mall.

#### Anti-American/Anti-Western Sentiment

The U.S. Consulate General was the focus of several demonstrations in 2015. The demonstrators mostly protested U.S. foreign policy, the Iraq war, and the lack of U.S. support/aid to other countries. There was no identified direct threat against Americans living in Toronto; however, vigilant personal security practices are suggested.

#### Political, Economic, Religious, and Ethnic Violence

Post Political Violence Rating: Low

#### Post-specific Concerns

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## Environmental Hazards

Natural disasters are rare; however, winters can be extremely cold. Small earthquakes have been identified in the Ottawa and Montreal region but are rare in the Toronto area.

## Critical Infrastructure Concerns

The government HAZMAT and Emergency Response Unit is fully capable of responding and providing assistance for all types of industrial and transportation accidents. There have been several railroad-related accidents countrywide since 2013. As a result, federal rail laws have changed, and rail cars transporting fuel are now required to be double hulled.

## Economic Espionage/Intellectual Property Thefts

According to the RCMP, "the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) and other Canadian law enforcement agencies are committed to undertaking coordinated action to counter the threats posed by intellectual property crime."

## Privacy Concerns

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There is a relatively low risk of privacy concerns in Canada. The Privacy Commissioner handles several complaints each year about violations of privacy rights. According to the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada:

Canada has two federal privacy laws, the Privacy Act and the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act. The Privacy Act took effect on July 1, 1983. This Act imposes obligations on some 250 federal government departments and agencies to respect privacy rights by limiting the collection, use and disclosure of personal information. The Privacy Act gives individuals the right to access and request correction of personal information about themselves held by these federal government organizations. Individuals are also protected by the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA) that sets out ground rules for how private sector organizations may collect, use or disclose personal information in the course of commercial activities. The law gives individuals the right to access and request correction of the personal information these organizations maybe have collected about them.

## Personnel-Background Concerns

Toronto is considered among the most cosmopolitan cities in the world. More residents of Toronto are foreign born than natural born Canadians. Toronto, and Canada itself, is a very open and welcoming community. Diveristy is celebrated.

## Drug-related Crimes

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Cannabis and methamphetamine use occurs in parks in metro Toronto. TPS and OPP continue to pursue and arrest drug operations. Organized crime is present and centered around drug trafficking and outlaw motorcycle gangs.

### Kidnapping Threat

International parental child abductions between Canada and the U.S. do occur. Procedures for coordinating with courts, establishing jurisdiction, other issues associated with handling these cases are prescribed under the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction (the "Hague Convention").

In 2012, the RCMP created a unit, The National Centre for Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains. The new unit will maintain a national database for finding missing people and identifying human remains that will link investigators from across the country when their cases match. The database will provide support to police, coroners, and medical examiners and let them compare their findings to cases from across the country.

### Police Response

The Toronto Police Services (TPS) are the local law enforcement and the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) is the state police for Ontario. Both police services are extremely proactive and

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responsive in addressing criminal activity surrounding the U.S. Consulate General in Toronto. TPS is the police of jurisdiction in the city of Toronto.

## How to Handle Incidents of Police Detention or Harassment

There are no guarantees that law enforcement authorities would notify the U.S. Embassy/Consulates when crimes (kidnappings) are reported. Police detention of a U.S. citizen can be directed toward American Citizen Service (ACS) in Consular Affairs during normal working hours (tel: 416-595-6506). All issues involving U.S. diplomats or American citizens detained after hours should call the Consulate Duty Officer (tel: 416-938-4963). The Regional Security Office (RSO) will handle any issues any issues of police harassment.

## Crime Victim Assistance

Dial 911. The TPS can provide assistance if you are the victim of a crime.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) does not communicate with the Regional Security Office (RSO) at U.S. Consulate General Toronto in cases of violent deaths of U.S. citizens, opting instead for liaison with the FBI.

## Police/Security Agencies

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Ontario Provincial Police: The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) is the largest deployed police force in Ontario and the second largest in Canada. The service is responsible for providing policing services throughout the province in areas lacking police forces. It also offers specialized support to smaller municipal forces, investigates province-wide and cross-jurisdictional crimes, patrols provincial highways, and is responsible for many of the waterways in the province.

Federal Police: The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) is the national police service and an agency of the Ministry of Public Safety Canada. The RCMP is unique since it is a national, federal, provincial, and municipal policing body. The RCMP provide a total federal policing service to all Canadians and policing services under contract to the three territories, eight provinces (except Ontario and Quebec), more than 190 municipalities, 184 Aboriginal communities, and three international airports.

## **Medical Emergencies**

Visitors to Ontario and Toronto can receive access to medical practitioners. Acceptance of insurance is on a case by case basis. Depending upon the location, the traveler may have to pay for services up front and seek reimbursement from their individual insurance provider in the U.S. Emergency cases will not be denied medical services.

## **Contact Information for Recommended Hospitals/Clinics**

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Toronto General Hospital (200 Elizabeth St. Toronto, ON M5G 2C4) is a full-service hospital including trauma care and air-lift unit. The hospital is located near the downtown area and is easily accessible.

Main Line: 416 340 4800

Administrative Offices/General Inquiries: 416 340 3111

Emergency: 416 340 3946

Patient Inquiries: 416 340 3131

Patient Relations - Complaints/Compliments: 416 340 4907

Public Affairs: 416 340 3895

Lost Articles/Security: 416 340 4111

Recommended Air Ambulance Services

Toronto General Hospital

Recommended Insurance Posture

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Ontario provides insurance for its tax paying citizens.

Country-specific Vaccination and Health Guidance

For additional information on vaccines and health guidance, please visit the CDC at:  
<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/canada.htm>

## **OSAC Country Council Information**

There is an active OSAC Country Council in Toronto and typically convenes once every quarter. To reach OSAC's Western Hemisphere team, please email [OSACWHA@state.gov](mailto:OSACWHA@state.gov).

## **U.S. Consulate Location and Contact Information**

Consulate Address and Hours of Operation

360 University Ave, Toronto, Ontario M5G 1S4

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Hours of Operation: Mon-Fri 0800-1700

### Consulate Contact Numbers

Operator: 416-595-1700

American Citizen Services (ACS): 416-595-6506

Regional Security Office (RSO): 416-595-1700 (ext. 257)

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

### Nearby Posts

Embassy Ottawa: <http://canada.usembassy.gov/>

Consulate Calgary: <http://calgary.usconsulate.gov/>

Consulate Halifax: <http://halifax.usconsulate.gov/>

Consulate Montreal: <http://montreal.usconsulate.gov/>

Consulate Quebec: <http://quebec.usconsulate.gov/>

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Consulate Vancouver: <http://vancouver.usconsulate.gov/>

Consulate Winnipeg: <http://winnipeg.usconsulate.gov/>

## **Tips on How to Avoid Becoming a Victim**

### Scams

E-mail scams for money (grandparent scams), utilizing U.S. military information and U.S. federal law enforcement agencies, have been identified and reported to the U.S. Consulate for verification.

### Situational Awareness Best Practices

Visitors are advised to take the same security precautions they would take while traveling to any major city in the U.S. All visitors should practice sound security procedures, be aware of their surroundings, and periodically re-evaluate daily activities to reduce the chance of victimization. All visitors are encouraged to report unusual incidents immediately to law enforcement.

Visitors should always be aware of their surroundings. Avoid short cuts, narrow alleys, or poorly illuminated streets. Travel in groups at night. Avoid public demonstrations and other

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civil disturbances. Keep a low profile and avoid loud conversations/arguments. Be wary of strangers who approach you and offer to be your guide or sell you something at bargain prices. If you are confronted by a criminal, give up your valuables; no personal possession is worth your life. Keep the door to your hotel room locked. Do not flash large amounts of money. Make sure your credit card is returned to you after each transaction.

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