



Japan 2016 Crime & Safety Report: Fukuoka

Travel Health and Safety; Stolen items; Theft; Financial Security; Rape/Sexual Violence; Riots/Civil Unrest; Earthquakes; Tsunamis; Volcanoes; Maritime; Hate Crimes

East Asia & Pacific > Japan; East Asia & Pacific > Japan > Fukuoka

7/5/2016

Overall Crime and Safety Situation

Post Crime Rating: Low

Crime Threats

The general crime rate in Japan is below the U.S. national average.

Non-violent crimes do occur on a regular basis in Fukuoka. Crimes against U.S. citizens usually involve personal disputes, theft, or vandalism. Pickpocketing and other petty crimes do take place in crowded shopping areas, bars/nightclubs, train stations, and airports. Every year, a number of U.S. citizens report their passports lost or stolen at Narita airport. Non-violent crimes, especially financial crimes that include the use of stolen credit cards and credit card numbers, occur on a regular basis.

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Although underreported, there is strong anecdotal evidence to suggest that sexual groping is a regular occurrence on crowded railways. The large entertainment district of Nakasu, adjacent to the Grand Hyatt Hotel in downtown Fukuoka, has hundreds of restaurants, clubs, and late night drinking establishments. In general, this area is well-policed and safe for couples/groups to visit at night; however, prostitution and a mafia presence is endemic to this area. There is a similar entertainment district in Kitakyushu, Sendo-machi. After-hours, these entertainment districts have large numbers of intoxicated people who may be prone to engaging strangers on the street, especially women walking alone. Visitors should also be aware that most drinking establishments have a set charge as part of the bill that does not include food or beverages. This charge can range from approximately U.S.\$5 to several hundred dollars, depending on the establishment. This charge has led to misunderstandings and confrontations between businesses and foreign visitors who are unaware of the custom and think they are being scammed or overcharged. As a result, many drinking establishments have opted to put "no charge" signs in English that are visible to foreign patrons. If no sign is visible, this issue may be inquired about with the management of an unfamiliar drinking establishment upon entry in order to avoid any possible misunderstandings.

Violent crime is rare but does exist. By U.S. standards, violent crime is extremely rare in Fukuoka. Homicide, armed robbery, and rape statistics reveal rates of these crimes are a small fraction of what is typically found in similarly-sized U.S. cities, with crimes involving firearms almost non-existent. Throughout 2015, U.S. Consulate Fukuoka has been made aware of three cases of sexual assault against Westerners.

Other Areas of Concern

The Fukushima Nuclear Reactor is a continuing nuclear incident. The government maintains a 20-kilometer exclusion zone around the plant. All U.S. personnel should avoid personal travel

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to this area.

Transportation-Safety Situation

Road Safety and Road Conditions

Road conditions and road safety standards meet or exceed U.S. standards except in the most remote areas or islands. Roads are well maintained, and extensive lighting exists; however, rural roadways in Kyushu are not as well-illuminated or maintained. Vehicle accidents, including accidents involving pedestrians, are common. Traffic enforcement includes extensive use of cameras. There is zero tolerance for drunk driving in Japan.

Public Transportation Conditions

The overall transportation system is an efficient, safe system. The railway system is a combination of local trains and high-speed trains.

Aviation/Airport Conditions

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All major U.S. airlines service the international airports. Fukuoka Airport is serviced by Delta (Honolulu) and United (Guam).

Other Travel Conditions

There are a number of tour organizations that arrange travel throughout the country, with varying degrees of service. None are deemed off-limits.

Terrorism Threat

Post Terrorism Rating: Low

Local, Regional, and International Terrorism Threats/Concerns

There are no known indigenous terrorist organizations, and Japan is not a known base of support or sympathy for terrorists.

In 2015, there was a rise of ISIL-related sympathizers among Japanese nationals. Media has reported on Japanese nationals who travelled or attempted to travel to Syria to join ISIL.

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While Japan has experienced no terrorist incidents in the last decade, all visitors should be familiar with the contents of the Department of State's periodic worldwide cautionary statement. This statement expresses the Department's concern about continued threat of attacks, demonstrations, and other violent actions against American citizens and American interests abroad.

Anti-American/Anti-Western Sentiment

The U.S. Embassy routinely is the target for peaceful demonstrations, usually protesting the U.S. military presence on Japanese soil. Demonstrations in front of the U.S. Consulate in Fukuoka are rare.

Political, Economic, Religious, and Ethnic Violence

Post Political Violence Rating: Low

Civil Unrest

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Violent demonstrations and acts of civil disobedience are generally limited. Most protests are peaceful. Numerous demonstrations with the number of participants varying in size from a few to several thousand took place in 2015. Demonstrators are required to apply for a permit from the government prior to any activity. The police closely monitor demonstrations, and information is usually passed to the RSO.

Post-specific Concerns

Environmental Hazards

Japan is in an active seismic region, known as the “Ring of Fire,” and often experiences minor tremors and earthquakes. Japan has suffered from large earthquakes in major metropolitan areas, and the 9.0 earthquake north of Tokyo in 2011 resulted in a tsunami that caused widespread damage to coastal cities and the Fukushima nuclear reactor. Coastal cities remain susceptible to tsunamis, which stem from earthquake epicenters in the ocean and can arrive on shore within minutes. Experts warn that an earthquake in the underwater Nankai Trough southeast of Kyushu would create powerful tsunamis that would damage the coasts of southern Oita, Miyazaki, and Kagoshima islands.

Local authorities in the areas around two active volcanoes in Kyushu regularly update their danger level warnings.

Japan has made great advances in building, railway, and road construction that minimizes collateral damage in the metropolitan areas. All U.S. personnel should have an emergency

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plan for earthquakes and tsunamis. These plans should include contingencies for communications and evacuations.

Critical Infrastructure Concerns

The Fukushima Nuclear Reactor is a continuing nuclear incident. The government maintains a 20-kilometer exclusion zone around the plant.

Privacy Concerns

There are very strict privacy laws that govern the release of personal information.

Personnel Background Concerns

Hate-related crimes rarely occur, though some U.S. citizens have reported being the target of comments or actions because of their nationality or race.

Police Response

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Police are well-trained and can be counted on to provide travelers with assistance. The quality of interpreting from Japanese to English can vary, and for some U.S. citizen victims, this has caused a problem.

Police substations, called Kobans, are located throughout cities. They are staffed by one or more police officers and are open 24/7.

Japan has strict laws regarding the use and possession of dangerous weapons. Firearms are illegal without a proper license. Carrying a pocket knife (including Swiss Army-style knife), craft/hunting knife, or box cutter in public is illegal. Violators can be subject to arrest and incarceration.

How to Handle Incidents of Police Detention or Harassment

U.S. Embassy Tokyo's American Citizen Services provides assistance to American citizens in Japan (Tel: 03-3224-5000; address: 1-10-5 Akasaka, Minato-Ku Tokyo).

Crime Victim Assistance

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The police emergency number is 110. Response is dependable although may be hampered by the Japanese/English language barrier.

Some U.S. citizens report that police procedures appear to be less sensitive and responsive to a victim's concerns, particularly in cases of domestic violence or sexual assault or when the victim and the perpetrator are foreigners, compared to the procedures in the U.S. Few victims' assistance resources or battered women's shelters exist in urban areas, and they are generally unavailable in rural areas. In cases of female victims, investigations of sexual assault crimes are often conducted without female police officers present, and police typically ask about the victim's sexual history and previous relationships.

Police/Security Agencies

The National Police Agency, Prefectural Police Department, city police, and police Kobans comprise the police system.

The National Police Agency is responsible for the administration of police services.

Prefectural Police Departments maintain a regional responsibility.

The city police provide police services at a more local level.

And, the Koban is the most typical point of interaction for people with the police.

Medical Emergencies

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The countrywide emergency number for fire and ambulance service is 119. This number may not work from cell phones, and English-speaking dispatchers may not be available.

Contact Information for Recommended Hospitals/Clinics

Consult the Embassy's American Citizen Services website (<http://japan.usembassy.gov/e/tacs-main.html>) for information on English-speaking medical facilities.

Available Air Ambulance Services

There are many air ambulance services available in Japan. There is no specific company or service that is recommended.

Recommended Insurance Posture

Travelers should verify the validity of their medical insurance prior to travel. Medical caregivers require full payment at the time of treatment or proof of the ability to pay before

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treating a foreigner who is not a member of the Japanese national health insurance plan.

CDC Country-specific Vaccination and Health Guidance

For CDC country-specific vaccination and health guidance please visit the CDC at: <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/japan.htm>.

OSAC Country Council Information

The OSAC Country Council is active in Tokyo, meeting on a monthly basis at the Embassy or a pre-arranged location. Additional or interested members are always welcomed and may obtain further information at: <https://www.osac.gov/Pages/Home.aspx>. The Embassy's Regional Security Office can be reached at 03-3224-5000 from phones in Japan or 81-3-3224-5000 when calling from outside Japan. Additionally, the RSO can also be reached at: DSRSOTKY@state.gov.

To reach OSAC's East Asia & Pacific team, please email OSACEAP@state.gov.

U.S. Consulate Location and Contact Information

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Consulate Address and Hours of Operation

U.S. Consulate in Fukuoka is located at 5-26 Ohori 2-chome, Chuo-ku Fukuoka 810-0052.

Business Hours: 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Mon-Fri. The Embassy and Consulates are closed on American and Japanese holidays.

Consulate Contact Numbers

Switchboard: 092-751-9331 (or 011-81-92-751-9331 from the U.S.)

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

Nearby Posts

Embassy Tokyo: <http://japan.usembassy.gov/>

Consulate Osaka/Kobe: <http://osaka.usconsulate.gov/>

Consulate Naha: <http://naha.usconsulate.gov/>

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Consulate Sapporo: <http://sapporo.usconsulate.gov/>

Consulate Nagoya: <http://nagoya.usconsulate.gov/>

Consulate Guidance

Check of the Embassy's American Citizen Services website to obtain the latest Japan-specific threat information.

Tips on How to Avoid Becoming a Victim

Situational Awareness Best Practices

All visitors should use common sense and take basic security precautions. Travelers should always strive to maintain a low profile and should always be aware of their surroundings.

All personnel should use caution in all entertainment and nightlife districts throughout Japan.

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