



Taiwan 2016 Crime & Safety Report

Stolen items; Theft; Burglary; Fraud; Transportation Security; Travel Health and Safety; Earthquakes; Hurricanes; Floods; Riots/Civil Unrest; Economic Espionage; Drug Trafficking; Disease Outbreak

East Asia & Pacific > Taiwan; East Asia & Pacific > Taiwan > Kaohsiung; East Asia & Pacific > Taiwan > Taipei

7/12/2016

Overall Crime and Safety Situation

Post Crime Rating: Low

Crime Threats

There is extensive CCTV coverage throughout Taiwan (approximately 15,953 cameras in Taipei, 35,672 in New Taipei City, 23,449 in Kaohsiung). The network of security and traffic cameras, surveillance cameras in commercial establishments, and public areas of hotels and residential buildings ensures that most activity occurring outside the home can be monitored/recorded. The extensive coverage plays a significant role in deterring the majority of criminal activity, as the overall crime rate is 1.3 percent.

Pickpocketing and petty theft can occur in crowded areas (night markets, large-scale public

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events).

Residential thefts occur, particularly in buildings without 24-hour security coverage.

Violent crime against foreigners is unusual, with overall violent crime in Taiwan at a worldwide low of just 0.01 percent.

Fraud is endemic. Victims are usually contacted telephonically by an individual claiming to represent the police, prosecutor's office, other government agency, or the victim's bank, insurance company, or other financial institution. Many of these frauds are perpetrated by criminals in mainland China or Southeast Asia, making identification, arrest, and prosecution difficult.

Cybersecurity Issues

Many businesses offer free Wi-Fi with varying levels of security protection.

Transportation-Safety Situation

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Road Safety and Road Conditions

Taiwan is left-side drive. Taiwan has an extensive list of traffic laws and regulations, including mandatory use of seatbelts.

The most challenging aspect of driving is the multiple streams of scooters and motorcycles. Scooter and bicycle accidents are the largest source of accidental American citizen deaths in Taiwan, as scooters often fail to obey traffic laws and follow generally-accepted driving practices.

Although pedestrians have the right-of-way in marked crosswalks, drivers often do not yield; therefore, it is incumbent on pedestrians to check for traffic when at crosswalks.

Public Transportation Conditions

All forms of public transportation are safe to use.

Taxis are metered, and drivers are licensed. All taxi drivers must display their license either on the dashboard or on the rear of the front passenger seat. This license includes a unique identifying number for the taxi driver that is useful for retrieving personal items left in taxi cabs or for filing complaints.

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Buses and subway systems are used by locals and foreigners alike without concern. Directions are posted in English on buses and in the subway system, and there are several free phone apps available that list subway and bus routes.

A high-speed rail connects Taipei to Kaohsiung, with trains running throughout the day.

Aviation/Airport Conditions

Taoyuan airport in Taipei and the Kaohsiung airport are major airports, with Songshan airport in Taipei serving some flights from Hong Kong and Tokyo. Taoyuan airport has many direct flights to the U.S. and is a hub for Asia. China Airlines and Eva Airlines are the two major Taiwanese airlines, both having multiple direct flights from the U.S. and many other countries.

Other Travel Conditions

The roads in eastern Taiwan, particularly coastal roads, are older and prone to flooding and collapse during typhoons and after earthquakes. Road closures in the mountainous and rural areas are not uncommon during/after typhoons.

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Terrorism Threat

Post Terrorism Rating: Low

Political, Economic, Religious, and Ethnic Violence

Taiwan is a vibrant democracy.

Post Political Violence Rating: Low

Civil Unrest

Protests and demonstrations occur on a regular basis in major cities, particularly during elections. Protests are an accepted part of political life. Demonstrations rarely turn violent, although they may become confrontational between opposing groups. Protest organizers must obtain a protest permit from the police. Police often set aside areas for demonstrators, and police presence is clearly visible.

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Post-specific Concerns

Environmental Hazards

Earthquakes registering above 6.0 have caused damage annually.

Taiwan is subject to typhoons (July-November). Typhoons have caused road closures, collapse of building structures, and major mudslides each year.

Critical Infrastructure Concerns

Absent power outages in rural areas as a result of earthquakes or typhoons, Taiwan's infrastructure causes few concerns. Within Taipei even during large typhoons and earthquakes, there is little flooding and very rarely any power outages.

Economic Espionage/Intellectual Property Thefts

Growing economic and business ties between China and Taiwan has increased concern that employees will take corporate trade secrets to China for personal profit. A recent amendment to the Trade Secrets law increased the maximum penalty for such activities to 10 years and

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fines; however, this amendment does not provide investigators with tools (wiretapping) to prevent trade secret theft. Once an employee absconds to China, the individual is beyond the reach of Taiwan's prosecutorial system.

Privacy Concerns

Taiwan's personal information protection act is very protective of Taiwanese nationals and is designed to prevent the inappropriate dissemination of personal information by government, law enforcement, or private organizations.

Personnel-Background Concerns

While in local bars or clubs, foreign males should avoid directly engaging with or making overtures toward Taiwanese females accompanied by other men. Such behavior has resulted in severe injury and lengthy hospital stays for foreign males. Observe cultural boundaries by approaching the female's male friends first and gradually requesting an introduction, if appropriate to her personal circumstances.

Drug-related Crimes

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Drugs are increasingly available. In particular, Ketamine and methamphetamine usage continue to increase among young people. Narcotics (heroin) are also available. Drug trafficking is a capital offense usually punished by extremely lengthy prison sentences.

Police Response

Police rarely have CPR training, although firefighters do.

How to Handle Incidents of Police Detention or Harassment

Police harassment of law-abiding citizens is rare. Conditions of police detention are generally consistent with international practice. Suspects have the following rights:

- 1) the right to know what crime the suspect has been accused of,
- 2) the right to remain silent,
- 3) the right to contact an attorney, and
- 4) the right to request police to investigate evidence favorable to the suspect.

If detained, contact American Citizen Services at (02) 2162-0000. A Consular officer will attempt to visit the detained individual within 48 hours.

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Crime Victim Assistance

Emergency police may be contacted for criminal matters by calling 110, for the fire department individuals should call 119.

The International Affairs Police (IAP), which is part of the National Police Agency, has English-speaking officers at all major police precincts during normal working hours. The IAP also maintains a 24-hour service center that is staffed by English-speaking officers.

In Taipei, the IAP service center can be reached at (2) 2556-6007.

In Kaohsiung, at (7) 281-5019.

For all other areas of Taiwan, call (2) 2394-0238.

Police/Security Agencies

The National Police Agency (NPA) performs police and law enforcement in Taiwan. NPA's primary missions are to maintain public order, uphold the safety of Taiwan's citizens and society, prevent hazards, and promote the welfare of Taiwan's citizens. NPA conducts criminal investigations, enforces laws, and performs many of the same functions conducted by local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies in the U.S.

The International Affairs Police is a branch of the NPA tasked with assisting foreigners in

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distress or requiring assistance.

The Ministry of Justice, Investigations Bureau (MJIB) is responsible for national security and investigating major crimes. MJIB's national security mandate includes counter-terrorism, counter-infiltration, domestic security investigations, coordination of national internal security, and protection of national secrets. MJIB also investigates public corruption, economic, drug, money laundering, and cyber crimes.

The National Immigration Agency (NIA) is responsible for enforcing and investigating violations of Taiwan's immigration laws. NIA officers staff Taiwan's air and sea ports of entries. NIA also provides extensive services to foreign spouses and children of Taiwan nationals, including counseling, language classes, and protection hotlines.

The Coast Guard Administration (CGA) is the civilian law enforcement agency tasked with protecting the resources of Taiwan's territorial waters, providing first-line defense along coastal areas against smugglers and illegal immigrants, maintaining law and order, and conducting search and rescue operations in Taiwan's territorial waters.

The Customs Directorate (DGOC) is part of the Ministry of Finance and is charged with enforcing Taiwan's custom policies and regulations. DGOC collects custom duties, taxes, and fees, prevents smuggling, and enforces government controls.

Medical Emergencies

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Most medical emergency medical conditions can be appropriately treated in Taiwan.

Contact Information for Recommended Hospitals/Clinics

Taipei

National Taiwan University Hospital: (02) 2312-3456

Taiwan Adventist Hospital: (02) 2771-8151

Veterans General Hospital: (02) 2871-2121

Kaohsiung

Chang Gung Memorial Hospital: (07) 731-7123

Available Air Ambulance Services

Air ambulance services can be arranged through International SOS, tel: (02) 2523-2220

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CDC Country-specific Vaccination and Health Guidance

The CDC suggests that travelers receive vaccinations for hepatitis A and B and routine childhood immunizations. The Japanese encephalitis vaccine is recommended for travelers to rural farm areas. For additional information on vaccines and health guidance, please visit the CDC at: <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/taiwan.htm>

OSAC Country Council Information

Taipei OSAC Country Council POC: Regional Security Officer Gordon Hills, Tel: 92) 2162-2334, E-mail: HillsWG@state.gov

Kaohsiung OSAC Country Council POC: Post Security Officer Jason Chue

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

American Institute in Taiwan Location and Contact Information

Institute Address and Hours of Operation

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Xinyi Road, Section 3, Lane 134, Number 7, Taipei, 106

Business Hours: Mon-Fri (excluding U.S. and Taiwan holidays), 0800-1200 and 1300-1700

Institute Contact Numbers

Taipei Office: (02) 2162-2000

American Citizen Services: 2162-0000 and press *

Post 1 (24 hours): 2162-2319

Kaohsiung Office: (07) 335-6001

Website: <http://www.ait.org.tw/en/>

Nearby Posts

Kaohsiung Branch Office: <http://www.ait.org.tw/en/ait-kaohsiung.html>

Taichung (Virtual) Branch Office: <http://taichung.ait.org.tw/>

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Institute Guidance

The U.S. maintains unofficial relations with the people of Taiwan through the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT), a private nonprofit corporation, which performs citizen and consular services similar to those at diplomatic posts.

Tips on How to Avoid Becoming a Victim

Situational Awareness Best Practices

Travelers should exercise caution and take personal security countermeasures appropriate to any major U.S. city. In particular, travelers should pay close attention to personal belongings. In crowded areas, remain alert to pickpockets. Travelers should exercise caution when using Wi-Fi in hotels and public areas. Victims should immediately report fraud through the fraud hotline at 165.

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