



Security Message for U.S. Citizens: Brazzaville (Congo Rep.), Holiday Security Precautions

Crime

Africa > Congo, Republic of the

12/1/2016

The incidence of burglaries, thefts, and robberies increases during the holiday season. In response, local police have initiated operations aimed at reducing the annual increase in crime. We would like to take this opportunity to remind all U.S. citizens of the need to exercise caution, and to practice heightened personal security during the holidays. Below are some tips to help you reduce your vulnerability to holiday crime.

In Your Home

Beware of strangers posing as representatives of charitable organizations, police officers, or other solicitors. They may be casing your house.

Never automatically open the door. Always verify the identity of the visitor through the optical viewer, or a window from which you cannot be observed. If you know the person, ensure that no strangers are forcing them to have the door opened.

Be aware of people loitering on your street or in your neighborhood. They may be conducting surveillance.

Make a habit of keeping doors double-locked (dead bolted) even when you are in the house.

Get in the habit of setting your alarm, even when you are at home.

Don't place holiday gifts where they can be seen from outside the home.

Consider breaking down boxes and turning them inside-out for expensive, easily sold items before placing them on the street for garbage pick-up. Nothing screams "rob me!" like a box for a large flat screen TV or other electronic items.

In Your Car

Drive defensively. The number of drunk drivers greatly increases during the holidays.

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Don't leave valuables in your vehicle – in the seat or in the trunk. Return home to drop off your purchases rather than leave them in the car.

Be careful returning home from shopping. A vehicle full of gifts is a target for a follow home robbery.

When in crawling or stopped in traffic, try leaving at least a half car length between you and the car ahead to allow space to exit rapidly if necessary.

While Shopping

Remember exactly where you parked your car. Make a mental note or write it down if necessary. Wandering around a parking garage or parking lot is an invitation for trouble.

Have your keys out and ready as you approach your vehicle. Someone fumbling for keys with an armload of packages is a prime target for a mugging or carjacking.

Be alert to your surroundings. If someone is watching you closely, is following you, or is loitering near your vehicle, return to the store or contact the police and request help.

If you're paying cash for your purchases, don't show any more cash than is necessary. Split up your money into different pockets.

Keep just the credit cards you routinely use in your wallet. Keep any unused cards out of your wallet and in a safe place.

Monitor credit card bills for fraudulent charges.

If You're Going to be Away for the Holidays

Be careful of disclosing travel plans to domestic employees or service providers.

Ask a trusted friend or neighbor to check on your house occasionally, making sure your house keeps a "somebody's at home" look.

Receive important information from the Embassy about safety conditions in your destination country, helping you make informed decisions about your travel plans.

Help the U.S. Embassy contact you in an emergency, whether natural disaster, civil unrest, or family emergency.

Help family and friends get in touch with you in an emergency



For further information:

See the State Department's travel website for the Worldwide Caution, Travel Warnings, Travel Alerts, and Country Specific Information for Congo.

Enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) to receive security messages and make it easier to locate you in an emergency.

Contact the U.S. Embassy in Brazzaville, located at 70-83 Boulevard Denis Sassou Nguesso, Brazzaville, Congo, at +242-06-612-2000, 8.00 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. from Monday - Thursday; 8.00 a.m. to 12.00 p.m. on Friday. After-hours emergency number for U.S. citizens is (+242) 06-612-2010.

Call 1-888-407-4747 toll-free in the United States and Canada or 1-202-501-4444 from other countries from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays).

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