



Security Message for U.S. Citizens: San Jose (Costa Rica), Hurricane Otto

Hurricanes

Western Hemisphere > Costa Rica > San Jose

11/24/2016

The U.S. Embassy in San Jose alerts U.S. citizens living or traveling in Costa Rica of the possibility of heavy rains, strong winds, flooding, and mudslides throughout Costa Rica as a result of Hurricane Otto. This message provides updates on Costa Rica's declaration of a national emergency and the expansion of "Red" emergency zones. Otto is currently a Category Two hurricane and appears to be strengthening with increasingly forceful winds and the potential for life-threatening rainfall. Costa Rica has a three-level warning system (Green, Yellow, and Red), and the Costa Rica National Emergency Commission (Comision Nacional de Emergencias, or CNE) reports that a Red alert (the highest degree of danger) is in place in approximately half of Costa Rica, with a Yellow alert in effect for the rest of the country. Red alerts are in effect in the Northern, Caribbean, Central Pacific, and Southern Pacific Zones. Included in these areas are Delta Costa Rica, Puerto Limon, Tortuguero, Barra de Parismina, Boca Tapada, Boca Pacuare, Barra del Colorado, Calero, San Montes de Oro, Esparza, San Mateo, Orotina, Puntarenas, Garabito, Buenos Aires, Zarcero, Pococi, Quepos, Parrita, Perez Zeledon, Osa, Golfito, Corredores, Coto Brus, Grecia, Valverde Vega, Naranjo, San Ramon, San Carlos, Upala, Los Chiles, Guatuso, La Cruz de Guanacaste, Sarapiqui, and Rio Cuarto de Grecia. Government of Costa Rica offices and all schools nationwide will be closed Thursday, November 24 and Friday, November 25. The Government of Costa Rica has requested that drivers in areas under Red alerts to avoid being on the roads, especially after 12 noon Thursday, November 24. .

U.S. citizens are also advised to exercise caution wherever they are in Costa Rica, as the hurricane may affect the entire country for several days as road, visibility, and river conditions may worsen. The U.S. Embassy in San Jose has advised its personnel to limit their travel to the Central Valley area as of Wednesday, November 23 and through the weekend.

U.S. citizens are advised to monitor local media for updates or possible changes to weather conditions and to follow any instructions and/or warnings issued by the Costa Rican government. Preparations to protect life and property in any storm or weather-related event

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should be considered. U.S. citizens should carry their travel documents (i.e. U.S. passport book) with them at all times or secure them by placing them in a safe, waterproof location. If you must travel during this time, please take reasonable precautions such as avoiding entering swiftly moving water. Drivers should remain vigilant for possible landslides, flooding, and reduced visibility, particularly in mountainous areas. Due to the potential severity of the storm, power outages are a possibility, and communications systems, including cell phones, may be affected in certain areas. U.S. citizens may need to shelter in place and should be prepared with sufficient provisions (food, water, working flashlights, etc.) for such a circumstance.

To follow the storm's path and follow updates, please visit the National Weather Service's website (<http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/gtwo.php?basin=atlc&fdays=2>), the CNE website <http://www.cne.go.cr>, and the CNE Facebook

page <https://www.facebook.com/CNECostaRica/>. Costa Rica-specific information is also available on the National Meteorological Institute (Instituto Meteorologico Nacional, or IMN) Twitter feed <https://twitter.com/imncr?lang=en>. For the status of roads, which can change frequently, please consult the transit police

website <http://www.transito.go.cr/estadorutas/index.html>. The Twitter feed of Costa Rican President Luis Guillermo Solis also contains useful information, including a map of shelters ("albergues") and can be found at <https://twitter.com/luisguillermosr?lang=en>.

The U.S. Embassy will continue to monitor the situation and will issue updated messages as necessary. U.S. citizens in affected areas are urged to monitor media reports and follow all official instructions. When feasible, U.S. citizens in Costa Rica may wish to contact loved ones to inform them of their status.

We strongly recommend that U.S. citizens traveling to or residing in Costa Rica enroll in the Department of State's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP). STEP enrollment gives you the latest security updates, and makes it easier for the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate to contact you in an emergency. If you don't have Internet access, enroll directly with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate.

U.S. Citizens traveling abroad should regularly monitor the U.S. Department of State's, Bureau of Consular Affairs website (www.travel.state.gov), where the current Worldwide Caution, Travel Warnings, Travel Alerts, and Country Specific Information can be found. The U.S. Embassy also encourages U.S. citizens to review the "Traveler's Checklist," which includes valuable security information for those both living and traveling abroad, and enroll with the Department of State or the U.S. Embassy through the State Department's Smart

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Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP). Follow us on Twitter and the Bureau of Consular Affairs page on Facebook as well. In addition to information on the Internet, travelers may obtain up-to-date information on security conditions by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll-free in the United States and Canada, or outside the United States and Canada on a regular toll line at 1-202-501-4444. These numbers are available from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays).

The U.S. Embassy in San Jose is located at Avenida 0, Calle 120, Rohrmoser, and is open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., (telephone number: 2519-2590). The U.S. Embassy will be closed for regular business on Thursday, November 24 in celebration of the Thanksgiving holiday. If you are a U.S. citizen in need of urgent assistance outside of business hours, the emergency after-hours number for the U.S. Embassy is 2519-2000.

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