According to the current U.S. Department of State Travel Advisory at the date of this report’s publication, China has been assessed as Level 2: Exercise Increased Caution.

Overall Crime and Safety Situation
The U.S. Consulate in Shenyang does not assume responsibility for the professional ability or integrity of the persons or firms appearing in this report. The American Citizens’ Services unit (ACS) cannot recommend a particular individual or establishment, and assumes no responsibility for the quality of service provided.

The U.S. Department of State has assessed Shenyang as being a Low-threat location for crime directed at or affecting official U.S. government interests.

Please review OSAC’s China-specific webpage for original OSAC reporting, consular messages, and contact information, some of which may be available only to private-sector representatives with an OSAC password.

Crime Threats
Shenyang, with a population of over eight million people, is generally safe when compared with other major urban areas of comparable size. The police and security service presence deters most serious crimes, though petty crimes do occur with some regularity. The economies of parts of northeastern China, Liaoning province in particular, has lagged behind much of the rest of China in recent years. This has resulted in social frictions, which have been identified as a root cause of much of the economic crime experienced in the region. Shenyang, as well as other major cities of northeastern China, has a large migrant population made up of laborers from the countryside and smaller towns. This population increases during the warmer months when large construction projects are in full swing, and it ebbs during the...
colder months when construction slows. Workers are often housed in large, temporary housing structures on-site that move from one construction project to the next. This migrant population is associated with certain crimes (petty thefts, assaults, etc.), which may be fueled in part by opportunity, alcohol, and desperation.

Shenyang, like most of northeastern China, has a small Western/expatriate community. The most common crimes affecting Westerners are crimes of opportunity (purse snatching, pickpocketing, taxi-fare extortion, counterfeit currency). Though not specifically targeted by criminal elements, Westerners sometimes fall prey to these crimes, especially around tourist centers.

Violent crime is relatively uncommon but does occur. Violent crime affecting the expatriate community most often occurs in bars, clubs, and other nightlife establishments. Bar fights are common, and 2016 and 2017 witnessed several reports of violence against Westerners. Prostitutes and drugs are present in some clubs and karaoke bars.

Violence and assaults are less common but also occur, with several Americans and other expatriates reportedly being threatened or assaulted as a result of contract or wage disputes with business partners and employers.

Fraud and corruption persist in northeastern China, although in recent years the central government’s sweeping anti-corruption campaign has seen a large number of officials in the region investigated and arrested.

The distribution of counterfeit Chinese currency is a common risk to official and private Americans. Unsuspecting Americans are passed fraudulent notes at restaurants, stores, ATMs, and taxi cabs. Large numbers of 100 RMB and 50 RMB counterfeit notes circulate, while even fake 10 RMB and 20 RMB denominations have been reported. A common tactic seen in taxis involves a passenger paying with a 100 RMB note, followed by the driver switching the note with a counterfeit bill, “returning” the bill as counterfeit, and then demanding a genuine note. This can be repeated until individuals have lost significant sums of money.

Criminals use various other scams to defraud foreign victims. Scams involve locals approaching tourists and asking to practice English, visit an art house, or experience a traditional tea ceremony. After tourists partake in the services, they are charged very high sums (up to US$1,000), often with a group of threatening men demanding payment.

Another scam involves prostitutes taking foreigners to a room, where they are assaulted and robbed by organized crime elements. In such instances, victims are forced to use credit/debit cards to access additional cash. Such robberies usually begin in bars and clubs frequented by foreigners.
Scam artists have also sent text messages and emails referring to fraudulent bills and/or traffic tickets to trick people into paying money. Other techniques involve criminals posing as police and levying fake criminal charges against their victims, and then extorting money from them.

Cybersecurity Issues
China is known for the use of sophisticated cyber capabilities (spear phishing, targeting of mobile devices, and social engineering/social network manipulation). Viruses, malware, and other forms of malicious software are common.

Transportation-Safety Situation

Road Safety and Road Conditions
All drivers must possess a Chinese driver’s license. International or U.S. licenses are not valid.

The physical road conditions in larger cities are generally good, while driving conditions in rural areas off of major highways are usually poor. Roads in Shenyang are extremely crowded, and many drivers are new to operating a motor vehicle. They are often either overly cautious or overly aggressive, resulting in numerous accidents every day. Traffic laws are rarely adhered to, and policing is done remotely by video camera (mainly through speed traps). Yielding to oncoming traffic or pedestrians is virtually unheard of, as is signaling one’s intentions in advance. Traffic signals at key intersections are often lacking, stop signs may be absent, and road closures are often poorly -- or not -- marked. Incidents of individuals driving while impaired are also relatively common. Travelers are encouraged not to overreact to aggressive driving by local nationals, but rather to defuse the situation in a safe and timely manner.

Busy roads often lack shoulders, and drivers often contend with many bicycles in driving lanes. Where there are shoulders, cars generally use them as another travel lane, especially on crowded highways. It is common to see drivers reverse on the highway to get to an exit they missed, stop on the side of the highway to drop off passengers and slowly merge into high-speed travel lanes, or veer horizontally across several lanes of traffic to get to an off ramp.

Most accidents are minor and are resolved on the scene. Cars must remain at the scene of an accident and are not expected to pull over to the side of the road. In traffic accidents, the foreigner is often ruled at fault, regardless of the actual cause of the accident. The Regional
Security Office (RSO) encourages U.S. citizens not to argue with the other party involved in a traffic accident regardless of who is responsible.

Commercial transportation accidents involving motorized transportation are relatively common due to poor driver training, overloaded buses, and a lack of safety checks.

Public Transportation Conditions
Taxis are plentiful but can be hard to find during morning/evening rush hours. Seat belts are rarely used, and taxi drivers have been known to discourage passengers from wearing them. The average fare for a ride in downtown Shenyang starts at 8 RMB and increases 1 RMB with every kilometer. Passengers are cautioned to avoid traveling in “black taxis” that do not use meters or do not clearly display a taxi driver’s license on the dashboard. Marked taxi cabs are generally safe. Passengers should always insist that the cab driver use the meter. In a limited number of cases, Americans have reported having their luggage stolen, and some have reported being charged exorbitant fares. Luggage theft typically involves a taxi transporting individuals to/from the airport with the driver intentionally leaving the scene before bags have been unloaded.

Buses are frequent and convenient, with routes connecting many parts of the city. The use of public buses, however, is strongly discouraged due to overcrowding. Buses may also be prone to petty theft and pickpocketing. Tickets for the bus cost about 2 RMB depending on the distance traveled.

Shenyang has two metro lines that run perpendicular; Line 1 runs east-west and Line 2 runs north-south. Three additional metro lines are under construction and are scheduled to be completed in 2018. Tickets for the metro cost about 2 RMB depending on the distance traveled.

Shenyang is linked via high-speed rail lines (gao tie) to Dalian, Changchun, Harbin, Dandong, and Beijing. Slower inter-city rail lines connect Shenyang with dozens of other smaller cities in the northeast. Inter-city train trips can be quite long due to the long distances between major cities, and train safety remains a concern as a result of the break neck expansion of high-speed rail lines. Additionally, trains and train stations are extremely overcrowded during holiday travel periods (in 2014, 266 million travelers rode the country’s rail system during the Lunar New Year, surpassing the Hajj Pilgrimage as the world’s largest annual population movement). In 2013, train stations became the target for several terrorist incidents in western and southwestern China by minority groups, which created a tense environment at stations across the country.
Few taxi drivers, bus operators, or train station attendants speak/read any English.

**Aviation/Airport Conditions**

Flight delays are common, which often makes travel planning difficult and too unpredictable for weekend trips. These delays may result from sudden military closures, among other factors, and are not announced or explained.

**Terrorism Threat**

The U.S. Department of State has assessed Shenyang as being a **Low**-threat location for terrorist activity directed at or affecting official U.S. government interests.

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

China’s domestic counterterrorism efforts remain primarily focused against the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM, also known as the East Turkestan Islamic Party, ETIP), a Pakistan-based terrorist group, which seeks independence for the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR) of northwestern China. In public statements, Chinese government officials have singled out the “Three Evils” of extremism, separatism, and terrorism in Xinjiang as the main terrorist threat to the nation and characterized Uighur discontent as terrorist activity. Human rights organizations maintain that China uses counterterrorism as a pretext to suppress Uighurs, a predominantly Muslim ethnic group comprising a large percentage of the population in Xinjiang. Indigenous terrorism is not a principal security concern in northeastern China, and there are no known terrorist organizations based or conducting operations in the region.

In July 2015, a SWAT team component of the Shenyang Public Security Bureau reportedly killed three Uighur terrorism suspects from Xinjiang in a residential district of central Shenyang.

The lack of transparency and information provided by Chinese authorities and media about alleged terrorist incidents greatly complicates efforts to verify the details of those and other violent acts. In many of the domestic incidents labeled as terrorism, China alleges that ETIM influenced or directed the violence through its online propaganda. Foreign journalists and international observers are also prevented from independently verifying official media accounts, which are often the only source of reporting on violent incidents in its territory.

**Anti-American/Anti-Western Sentiment**

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Protests outside of official U.S. facilities occasionally occur, but gatherings are typically small, relatively peaceful, and generally focused against the Chinese government. Geopolitical events often influence the occurrence of political demonstrations, but such demonstrations are rarely out of the control of Chinese security services.

**Political, Economic, Religious, and Ethnic Violence**

The U.S. Department of State has assessed Shenyang as being a **Low**-threat location for political violence directed at or affecting official U.S. government interests.

**Civil Unrest**

Police are generally quick to react to violent outbreaks, sometimes using force to subdue disturbances. Political violence may be more moderate in Shenyang than in other parts of the country. The government remains focused on maintaining social stability and preventing civil unrest over economic and social grievances.

**Religious/Ethnic Violence**

The largest, most violent incidents have taken place in ethnic minority areas (Tibet and Xinjiang), where grievances over human rights abuses and discriminatory policies have resulted in spontaneous outbursts of violence targeting the government and ethnic Han Chinese interests.

**Post-specific Concerns**

**Environmental Hazards**

Earthquakes, floods, mudslides, and other natural disasters are common throughout China and can occur at any time with little or no warning. The largest environmental hazard impacting northeastern China, however, is the bitter cold. Temperatures often remain well below freezing for several months; heavy snowstorms can leave motorists stranded and bring cities to a standstill.

Other natural disasters include the threat of typhoons and tsunamis along the coastal region.

**Critical Infrastructure Concerns**

Worker safety and quality assurance are lacking in China, and accidents plague China’s heavy industries. Over the past few years, several gas pipeline explosions leading to building fires and other damage have been reported in the Shenyang area.

**Economic Concerns**

Business travelers should be particularly mindful that trade secrets, negotiating positions, and other business sensitive information may be shared with competitors, counterparts, and/or Chinese regulatory and legal entities.

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Counterfeit products are readily available. U.S. Customs and Border Protection officials have the authority to seize suspect goods and impose fines on travelers caught attempting to enter the U.S. with counterfeit items.

Privacy Concerns

U.S. government personnel are warned not to discuss sensitive information in their homes, vehicles, or offices. Members of the private sector are strongly advised to take similar precautions to safeguard sensitive personal and proprietary information.

All visitors should be aware that they have no expectation of privacy in public or private locations. There are regular reports of the human and technical monitoring of U.S. private businessmen and visiting U.S. citizens. The areas around U.S. and other foreign diplomatic facilities and residences are under overt physical and video surveillance; dozens of security personnel are posted outside of facilities and around residences, while video cameras are visible throughout the diplomatic offices and residential neighborhoods. Overt placement of microphones and video cameras are common in taxis.

Activities and conversations in hotel rooms (including meeting rooms), offices, cars, and taxis may be monitored onsite or remotely. Hotel rooms, residences, and offices may be accessed without the occupants’ knowledge or consent. Personal possessions (e.g., computers) in hotel rooms may be searched without the knowledge or consent of the owner. Elevators and public areas of housing compounds are also under continuous surveillance. In 2016, there was a reported increase in the tampering of locks on the front doors of residences, suggesting the possibility of forced entry and/or resulting in door locks that no longer operated as intended.

All means of communication -- telephones, mobile phones, faxes, emails, text messages --, are likely monitored. The Chinese government has publicly declared that it regularly monitors private email and internet browsing through cooperation with the limited number of internet service providers (ISPs) and wireless providers in China. Wireless access to the internet in major metropolitan areas is becoming more common, so Chinese authorities can more easily access official and personal computers. U.S. government personnel have reported seeing unknown computers and devices accessing their home networks; these intrusions likely required advanced computer knowledge and network password hacking.

Many popular services and websites (Google, Twitter, Facebook) are blocked in China. WeChat and other Chinese applications are nearly ubiquitous; however, they have built-in features that allow the Chinese government to monitor and censor messages, access the device’s address book and photos, track the user’s location, and/or activate the microphone or
camera. Bloggers are subject to particular scrutiny and may have their content blocked depending on their profile, their following, and content of their posts.

Drug-related Crimes
The Chinese government is concerned about domestic drug use, and enforcement efforts are widespread; however, there are concerns over reports of drugs (including methamphetamine) being smuggled into China from North Korea or manufactured domestically. Illicit drugs still reportedly remain available to both Chinese and expatriates, but drug use may result in harsh sentences and fines.

Police Response
Police response for foreign victims of crime depends upon the type of infraction, where it transpired, and the social status of the victim (private citizen, diplomat, VIP, foreigner, etc.). Local police are semi-effective at deterring crime; most responses to alarms and emergency calls are sufficiently prompt if the police are informed that the victim is a Westerner or person of importance. In many cases, local police authorities will serve as a mediator between the victim and criminal to agree upon financial compensation (sometimes in lieu of jail time). Investigative training and forensic equipment is improving but remains substandard compared to that of developed countries. Local police cooperation with the Regional Security Officer (RSO) at the Consulate remains scant, and requests for assistance from the RSO are often not met.

Crime Victim Assistance
The local emergency number is 110; however, very few English speakers staff this hotline. Victims may also contact the American Citizen Services (ACS) at the Consulate for assistance. ACS officers can provide information about local medical facilities, provide contact information for local attorneys, notify family members, and explain how to transfer funds to China.

If a passport is stolen, the victim must not only apply for a new passport at the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate but must also apply for a new visa. To receive a new visa, Chinese officials will require a police report about the stolen passport be filed at the police station nearest to where the theft occurred. Individuals may be directed to file a report at the local Entry/Exit Bureau as well. Victims of passport theft are advised to file a police report as soon as possible.

Medical Emergencies
Although medical care continues to improve in many urban areas, it continues to lag in northeastern China. Because Western medical centers are not available in northeastern

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China, U.S. citizens are generally advised to seek out the VIP section (gao gan bing fang) at large public hospitals where there are more likely to be Western-trained physicians and more modern medical equipment. Both municipal and private ambulance service in China remain substandard. Response time is typically very slow, and transport to the nearest hospital can take a considerable amount of time due to congested traffic conditions. Most ambulances are poorly equipped and staffed by individuals without English skills who lack Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) training.

Contact Information for Available Hospitals/Clinics
For medical assistance, please refer to the Consulate’s Medical Assistance page.
Available Air Ambulance Services
The availability of air ambulance services varies by city. International SOS is the main Western air ambulance provider along China’s east coast. MEDEX also provides regional air ambulance services.

Insurance Guidance
Payment of hospital and other expenses is the patient’s responsibility. Before you go abroad, learn what medical services your health insurance will cover overseas. If your health insurance policy provides coverage outside the U.S., remember to carry both your insurance policy identity card as proof of such insurance and a claim form. Although many health insurance companies will pay "customary and reasonable" hospital costs abroad, very few will pay for your medical evacuation back to the U.S. Medical evacuation by air is expensive: $60,000 - $100,000 per flight depending upon the patient's condition and final destination. Visitors are strongly encouraged to purchase medical evacuation insurance prior to traveling to China.

Country-specific Vaccination and Health Guidance
Air quality can be an issue (air quality ratings for Shenyang and other U.S. Mission China posts can be found at the Air Quality Index website). The CDC offers additional information on vaccines and health guidance for China.

OSAC Country Council Information
Although U.S. Consulate Shenyang does not have an active OSAC Country Council, the Regional Security Officer (RSO) routinely receives individual requests for information from the U.S. private sector. Interested private-sector security managers should contact OSAC’s East Asia and the Pacific team with any questions.

U.S. Consulate Location and Contact Information
Consulate Address and Hours of Operation
U.S. Consulate Shenyang
#52, 14 Wei Road
Heping District, Shenyang 110003
Hours: Mon-Fri, 0800-1700 (except U.S. and Chinese holidays)
Consulate Contact Numbers
Phone: +86-24-2322-1198
Website: https://china.usembassy-china.org.cn/embassy-consulates/shenyang/

Nearby Posts
Embassy Beijing: https://china.usembassy-china.org.cn/
Consulate Chengdu: https://china.usembassy-china.org.cn/embassy-consulates/chengdu/
Consulate Guangzhou: https://china.usembassy-china.org.cn/embassy-consulates/guangzhou/
Consulate Shanghai: https://china.usembassy-china.org.cn/embassy-consulates/shanghai/
Consulate Wuhan: USConsulateWuhan@state.gov

Additional Resources
China Country Information Sheet