
Travel Health and Safety; Transportation Security; Surveillance; Cyber; Financial Security; Natural Disasters; Employee Health Safety; Economic Espionage

East Asia & Pacific > China

1/30/2017

Overall Crime and Safety Situation
U.S. Consulate General Wuhan does not assume responsibility for the professional ability or integrity of the persons or firms appearing in this report. The American Citizen Services (ACS) Unit cannot recommend a particular individual or establishment and assumes no responsibility for the quality of services provided.
The U.S. Department of State has assessed Wuhan as being a low-threat location for crime directed at or affecting official U.S. government officials.
Please review OSAC’s China-specific webpage proprietary analytic reports, Consular Messages, and contact information.

Cybersecurity Issues
The Chinese government strictly controls and monitors the Internet. Many popular services and websites (Google, Twitter, Facebook) are blocked. Viruses, malware, and other malicious software are common. WeChat and other alternative Chinese applications are nearly ubiquitous; however, they have built-in features that allow the Chinese government to monitor and censor messages, read the device’s address book, access photos, track the user’s current location, and even activate the microphone or camera.

Other Areas of Concern
Counterfeit currency is common, including mainly the 100 RMB notes, but some smaller denominations as well. For more information, see the OSAC Report “Common China Scams.”

Transportation-Safety Situation
Road Safety and Road Conditions
Road conditions in Wuhan and the surrounding cities are generally good; in contrast, driving conditions in rural areas are usually poor. Driving outside the city after dark should be avoided due to poor lighting and road hazards, including stopped vehicles and other obstructions.

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More and more newly registered vehicles are added to the roads every day, causing increased congestion and traffic problems.

The greatest road hazard remains the Chinese driver. Most have little experience operating motor vehicles, and are 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 speed traps). Yielding to oncoming traffic or pedestrians is virtually unheard of, as is signaling one’s intentions in advance. Traffic signals are absent at key locations, and road closures are poorly, or not, marked. Drivers and riders can be extremely unpredictable.

Commercial transportation accidents involving motorized vehicles are not uncommon. Trucks are often overloaded, and drivers are poorly trained. Electric scooters are numerous and maneuver through any available gap in traffic, often without any engine noise to signal their presence. At night, operators of electric scooters and bicycles often do not turn on lights to indicate their presence.

In traffic accidents involving expatriates, the expatriate is often ruled at fault, regardless of the actual cause. The RSO encourages employees and dependents not to argue with another party involved in a traffic accident, regardless of who is responsible. Employees are encouraged not to react to aggressive driving by local nationals and to defuse the situation in a safe, expeditious manner.

Public Transportation Conditions

Taxis are inexpensive and relatively reliable. RSO recommends the use of marked cabs and not the use unofficial cabs. Personnel should not have to negotiate the price of a trip. If the taxi driver refuses to use the meter, take a different taxi.

Ride sharing services are popular, but Uber’s app is localized: the app is only in Chinese and only accepts Chinese credit cards. An Uber app downloaded in the U.S. will not work in China.

Public transportation in major metropolitan areas is comparatively modern. Buses, subways, and taxis are of relatively new design. However, buses and trains are often crowded.

Wuhan has three train stations with numerous destinations throughout China. The G-series high speed trains are safe and rarely delayed.

Aviation/Airport Conditions

There are numerous domestic and international flights out of Wuhan’s International Airport (WUH). As with much of mainland China, flight delays are common.

Terrorism Threat
The U.S. Department of State has assessed Wuhan as being a low-threat location for terrorist activity directed at or affecting official government interests.

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

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

**Post-specific Concerns**

**Environmental Hazards**

In July 2016, Wuhan experienced significant flooding. Some 180 people in the central provinces were killed during the flooding due to heavy rains.

**Critical Infrastructure**

Accidents and fatalities continue to plague China’s heavy industries. Worker safety and quality assurance are lacking.

**Economic Concerns**

Several U.S. firms have complained about theft of intellectual property, and at least one is pursuing legal action in Chinese courts. Many of the foreign prisoners in Wuhan’s consular district are often incarcerated for business- and financial-related crimes. A lack of transparency regarding business practices is sometimes cited as a danger for foreigners who wish to conduct business in China.

**Privacy Concerns**

Visitors have no reasonable expectation of privacy in public or private locations. The Consulate regularly receives reports of 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 diplomatic quarters (offices and residential neighborhoods). Overt microphones and video cameras are common in taxis.

All hotel rooms and offices are considered to be subject to on-site or remote technical monitoring. Hotel rooms, residences, and offices may be accessed without the occupants’ consent/knowledge. Elevators and public areas of housing compounds are also under continuous surveillance.

Consulate employees are warned not to discuss sensitive information in their homes, vehicles, or offices. Members of the private sector are encouraged to take similar precautions to safeguard sensitive, personal, and proprietary information.
All means of communication – telephones, mobile phones, faxes, e-mails, text messages, etc. – are likely monitored. The Chinese government has access to the infrastructure operated by the limited number of Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and wireless providers operating. Wireless access to the Internet in major metropolitan areas is becoming more and more common. As such, the Chinese can more easily access official and personal computers. The Chinese government has publicly declared that it regularly monitors private e-mail and Internet browsing through cooperation with local ISPs. Some bloggers are subject to particular scrutiny; such activity is often carefully monitored and, depending upon the subject matter, blocked.

Kidnapping Threat
Kidnappings are rare. When they do occur, the matter is usually a business dispute and might better be categorized as “unlawful detentions,” often in the office or hotel room of the victim. Some local businesspeople who feel that they have been wronged by a foreign business partner may hire “debt collectors” to harass and intimidate the foreigner in hopes of collecting that debt. Foreign managers or company owners have, in some cases, been physically “held hostage” as leverage during dispute negotiations. Additionally, travel bans have been placed on foreigners involved in business disputes, preventing them from leaving the country. Victims are generally allowed to use their mobile phones (in order to arrange the resolution of the dispute) and should immediately call the police for assistance.

Police Response
China gives the police the authority to detain and deport foreigners for a wide variety of reasons. Travelers who do not have their passport with them may be taken in for questioning. English-language capabilities will vary significantly. Police officers have the right to assess fines on the scene of an incident. This is sometime perceived as soliciting a bribe, but it is not. Investigative training and forensic equipment are improving but remain substandard in comparison with those of Western countries. Reports of investigations are never provided to RSO, despite repeated formal requests.

How to Handle Incidents of Police Detention or Harassment
If an American is arrested in China, the U.S.-China Consular Convention requires Chinese authorities to notify the U.S. Embassy or nearest Consulate General of the arrest within four days. If a traveler holds the citizenship of another country, including China, and entered China using a passport of that country, Chinese authorities are not required to notify the U.S. Embassy/Consulate of the arrest. Typically, the police will not allow anyone other than a
A consular officer to visit the traveler during the initial detention period, to include family members or an attorney. Bail is rarely granted, and persons can be subject to detention for many months before being granted a trial.

Crime Victim Assistance
If private U.S. citizens become the victim of a crime, they should contact the police by dialing 110. Victims may also contact American Citizen Services (ACS) at the Embassy/Consulate for assistance. ACS officers can recommend appropriate medical facilities, provide contact information for local attorneys, notify family members, and explain how to transfer funds to China. The Embassy/Consulates have no legal or law enforcement authority in a foreign country and cannot get involved in private disputes nor give legal advice.

Police/Security Agencies
Police response to foreign victims of crime depends upon the type of infraction, where it transpired, and the social status of the victim (private citizen, diplomat, VIP). Urban forces are better trained and equipped, especially in first-tier cities, where authorities spend millions of dollars on security-related infrastructure. Local police are somewhat 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.

Medical Emergencies
Western-style medical facilities with international staff are available in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and a few other large cities. Many other hospitals in major cities have so-called VIP wards (gōng jiàn bìngfán) with reasonably up-to-date medical technology and skilled physicians who typically speak English. Ambulances generally do not carry sophisticated medical equipment, and ambulance personnel may have little/no medical training. Traffic congestion can be severe, with no tradition of yielding to emergency vehicles. Therefore, injured or seriously ill Americans may be required to take taxis or other immediately available vehicles to the nearest major hospital rather than waiting for ambulances to arrive.

In rural areas, only rudimentary medical facilities are generally available. Medical personnel in rural areas are often poorly trained and have limited access to medical equipment or medications. Rural clinics are often reluctant to accept responsibility for treating foreigners, even in emergency situations.

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Contact Information for Available Medical Services
Wuhan Union Hospital

Email: 027-8572 6114
Address: #1277 Jianshe Avenue, Hankou, Wuhan, Hubei

International Clinic Union Hospital West

Phone: 136 2721 4467
Email: wuhanintclinic@yeah.net
Address: #149 Shenlong Avenue, Hanyang

English service available
Tongji Hospital

Phone: 027-8366 2688
Address: #1095 Jiefang Avenue, Hankou, Wuhan, Hubei
Available Air Ambulance Services
Air ambulance service varies by city. International SOS is the main Western air ambulance provider along China's east coast. MEDEX also provides regional air ambulance services; its representatives can be contacted at their website.

Insurance Guidance
Medical evacuation by air is expensive, costing U.S.$60,000-$100,000 per flight depending upon the patient’s condition and final medevac destination. Visitors are strongly encouraged to purchase medical evacuation insurance prior to traveling to China. 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., carry 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.

Country-specific Vaccination and Health Guidance
No China-specific vaccinations are required to visit, but air quality can be an issue. Wuhan’s Air Quality Index is routinely in the range of 101-150 or “Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups.” The AQI in winter often reaches the range of 151-200 or “Unhealthy.” The CDC offers additional information on vaccines and health guidance for China.

OSAC Country Council Information
Wuhan does not currently have an OSAC Country Council. Please contact OSAC’s East Asia Pacific team if you are interested in private-sector engagement in Wuhan or have questions about OSAC’s Country Council programs.

U.S. Consulate Location and Contact Information
Consulate Address and Hours of Operation

U.S. Consulate Wuhan
New World International Trade Tower I

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N. 568 Jianshe Avenue,
Hankou, Wuhan 430022

U.S. Consulate General Wuhan is not open for consular services. Until the new consular section opens – planned in Summer 2018 – those seeking consular services should contact either U.S. Embassy Beijing or another U.S. Consulate.

Consulate Contact Numbers

Phone: 86-027-8555-7791
Email: USConsulateWuhan@state.gov
Website: http://wuhan.usembassy-china.org.cn/

Nearby Posts

Embassy Beijing: http://beijing.usembassy-china.org.cn/service.html
Consulate General Chengdu: http://chengdu.usembassy-china.org.cn/
Consulate General Guangzhou: http://guangzhou.usembassy-china.org.cn/
Consulate General Shanghai: http://shanghai.usembassy-china.org.cn/
Consulate General Shenyang: http://shenyang.usembassy-china.org.cn/

Consulate Guidance

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For the latest security and other information, Americans living and traveling abroad should regularly monitor the Department’s Bureau of Consular Affairs, where the current Worldwide Caution, Travel Alerts, and Travel Warnings can be found, as well as important information for Americans who face emergencies abroad. U.S. citizens residing or traveling in China are reminded to register their travel itinerary and contact information on STEP with the U.S. Embassy or closest U.S. Embassy or Consulate. In case of difficulties registering online, please contact the closest U.S. Embassy or Consulate for assistance.

Additional Resources
China Country Information Sheet