

Personal Safety

Personal safety is an important precaution travelers must take abroad. Foreigners are often victims of crimes, accidents, and illness simply due to their unfamiliarity with the location. The following sections offer suggestions and resources to ensure you are prepared for the most common safety concerns. The U.S. Department of State also has detailed information about [personal safety during international travel](#) [1]

Travel Advisories

- [University of Michigan Travel Policy and Warnings](#) [2]
- [U.S. Department of State Travel Advisories](#) [3]
 - The U.S. Department of State's [International Travel Information](#) [4] is the best source of information about potential health and safety risks in the countries where you intend to travel. The State Department monitors political conditions around the world and issues the following kinds of [travel advisories](#) [3]:
 - [Travel Warnings](#) [3]: The strongest warning; issued when the State Department decides to recommend that Americans avoid travel to a certain country.
 - [Travel Alerts](#): [3] Warnings about short-term conditions, either transnational or within a particular country, that pose significant risks to the security of U.S. citizens. These could include natural disasters, a risk of terrorist attacks, or epidemics.
 - [Country Specific Information](#) [5]: Available for every country of the world. Includes information such as the location of the U.S. embassy or consulate, visa requirements, health conditions, minor political disturbances, currency regulations, crime and security information, and drug penalties.
 - The [Department of State website](#) [6] also has information about emergency assistance.

Travel Registration

- Leave your travel itinerary with family, friends, and/or program directors and have a method of contact in case of emergency.
- Members of the University of Michigan community should register their itinerary at [U-M International Travel Registration](#) [7].
- Register online with the Department of State's [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#) [8] so that the State Department can contact you with updates about events that may affect your safety, or with information about family emergencies if your family or friends cannot contact you directly.

Daily Precautions

- Report suspicious persons following you or loitering around where you live, study, or work.

- Keep your residence area locked. Do not reveal information to strangers about where you live, study or work, or your travel itinerary.
- Do not draw attention to yourself through expensive dress and accessories, accessories or careless behavior.
- Do not impair your judgment through excessive consumption of alcohol and/or illegal drugs.

Harassment

- Dress conservatively
- Avoid walking alone late at night
- Avoid walking in questionable neighborhoods
- Do not agree to meet someone you do not know in a secluded place.
- Be aware that the friendliness of American women may be mistaken for romantic interest

Money and Theft

- Use banks to exchange money
- Do not exchange it on the black market.
- Do not carry more money than you need for the day.
- Put most of your money in a very safe place such as a money belt.
- Always have multiple forms of money, like cash, traveler's checks, ATM and credit cards.

Crowds and Public Spaces

- Americans abroad are subject to the laws of the foreign countries they are visiting and are not protected by U.S. laws by virtue of being a U.S. citizen
- Avoid crowds, protest groups, or other potentially volatile situations
- Avoid restaurants and entertainment places where Americans and other foreign tourists are known to congregate.
- Keep abreast of local news. English-language papers such as the Herald Tribune are widely available.
- Check with the U.S. Embassy or speak with local officials to learn about any potential civil unrest.
- In the event of disturbances, do not get involved.
- Be wary of unexpected packages and stay clear of unattended luggage in public places

Safe Road Travel

Before you leave, learn about the safety record of various modes of transportation. Driving rules and customs may vary from those of the U.S. The State Department's Country Specific Information includes a section on road safety, which you should read to see if you want to drive in the place(s) you are going. Avoid renting a car unless you feel very comfortable with the driving habits of the locals.

For more information on international road travel see:

- [Association for Safe International Road Travel](#) ^[9]
5413 West Cedar Lane, Suite 103C
Bethesda, MD 20814
301.983.5252 Fax 301.983.3663
- [U.S. Department of State Road Safety Overseas](#) ^[10]

Source URL: <https://internationalcenter.umich.edu/abroad/swt/health/personal-safety>

Links

- [1] <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/before-you-go/travelers-checklist.html>
- [2] <https://global.umich.edu/travel-resources/>
- [3] <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html>
- [4] <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel.html>
- [5] <https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country.html>
- [6] <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/emergencies.html>
- [7] https://mcompass.umich.edu/index.cfm?FuseAction=Abroad.ViewLink&Link_ID=2F8B304F-EB6F-70-1-B50285339FE7CF23
- [8] <https://step.state.gov/step/>
- [9] <http://www.asirt.org/>
- [10] <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/before-you-go/driving-and-road-safety.html>