



## Switzerland - Low



Switzerland Country Map



POLITICAL



ARMED CONFLICT



TERRORISM



CRIME



CIVIL UNREST



MARITIME AND PIRACY



HEALTH



ENVIRONMENTAL



TRANSPORTATION

Last Published: 14 December 2025

## COUNTRY OVERVIEW

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Switzerland is considered a safe and secure country, with most visits being trouble-free. The primary concerns for travellers include petty criminality and envi-

ronmental factors.

In the spring and summer, melting snow can cause flooding in low-lying areas. In the winter months, freezing temperatures, especially at high altitudes, combined with the possibility of landslides and avalanches, present serious concerns. Every year, there are incidents involving mountaineers and hikers getting into difficulty and requiring the help of emergency services. Travellers should anticipate weather-related disruptions during the winter months and periods of adverse weather.

Despite a low crime rate, petty theft and opportunistic crime do occur, especially in areas frequented by tourists. There has been a recent uptick in thefts, particularly in larger cities, at Geneva Airport, and on trains to and from Geneva. Travellers to Switzerland should exercise the same security precautions they would in other Western countries, such as remaining aware of personal possessions and exercising caution when walking after dark.

Protests and strikes occur fairly regularly. Although travellers are unlikely to be directly affected, such events are likely to trigger localised transportation and business disruptions.

The terrorism threat in Switzerland is low, on par with much of Western Europe. Despite this, there remains an underlying global threat of terrorism by groups motivated by extreme political ideologies. An attack in Switzerland would most likely be perpetrated by a self-radicalised individual using low-tech means, such as knives or vehicles, to inflict casualties. Such attacks are notoriously difficult to predict and counter and can occur with little to no warning. Therefore, travellers should maintain a high degree of situational awareness at all times.

## **CULTURAL INFORMATION**

### **Cultural Tips**

- There are four national languages spoken in Switzerland: German, Italian, French and Romansh. Each canton has the right to determine its official language.
- Foreigners should attempt to give a greeting in either French, German or Italian (depending on the area) upon first meeting someone.

- It is common to issue a general greeting to all present when entering bars, cafés, or shops.
- A handshake is the standard greeting in Switzerland. Light kisses on the cheeks are also common in greetings between women -- or a man and a woman, but not usually between men -- in cases where those involved already know each other.
- Visitors should always wait to be invited before addressing someone by his/her first name.
- Swiss people generally have a larger sense of personal space and may be uncomfortable if someone stands too close to them.
- Punctuality is very important for all business engagements, particularly in German-speaking areas. Some allowance is given for social engagements.
- A small gift, such as wine or flowers, is appropriate when visiting someone's home. It is appropriate to clear one's plate when eating at someone's home; setting the knife and fork on the plate indicates that one has finished the meal.
- Smoking is prohibited in many public places, but specific regulations depend on the city.
- A 15 per cent service charge is customarily included in the price quoted at all service and hotel providers. In restaurants, a 15 per cent service charge is typically included in the bill. If one chooses to tip on top of this, it is common for the total bill to be rounded to the next franc or applicable unit. Taxi rates generally include the tip, although some may also choose to round up the total bill. Porters at hotels receive tips of Fr1- 2 per bag.
- Although there are no specific security threats to women in Switzerland, travellers should take basic precautions, such as not walking alone at night, locking the door to hotel rooms, and never opening their door to strangers.
- Switzerland remains a relatively conservative country; women did not receive the right to vote at the federal level until 1971, and the last canton to institute women's suffrage for regional elections was Appenzell in 1991. Despite this conservatism, an increasing number of women are moving into the ranks of management positions in advertising, banking, engineering, insurance and public relations.
- In business situations, many Swiss will shake hands with all males present but wait until a female offers her hand to shake it.
- There is no equivalent in German or French for the title "Ms."

Businesswomen are generally addressed as Madame (Frau in German) or Mrs., whether the person is married or not. "Mademoiselle" and "Fraulein" are used for those under 18, and may be seen as condescending in any other context.

- Homosexuality is legal in Switzerland. Same-sex marriage is not recognised in the country, but same-sex civil unions are recognised.

<b>KEY FACTS</b>	
<b>CAPITAL</b>	Bern (de facto)
<b>CAPITAL CITY PHONE CODE</b>	31
<b>COUNTRY PHONE CODE</b>	41
<b>CURRENCY</b>	Swiss Franc
<b>ELECTRICITY</b>	220 volts, 50 Hz
<b>GMT</b>	+1 to +2
<b>LANGUAGES</b>	German, French, Italian, Romansh
<b>LEADERSHIP</b>	President Karin Keller-Sutter
<b>OFFICE WORK WEEK</b>	Monday - Friday
<b>OFFICIAL COUNTRY NAME</b>	Swiss Confederation
<b>PLUG STYLES</b>	Types C, J
<b>RELIGION</b>	Roman Catholic 34.4%, Protestant 22.5%, other Christian 5.7%, Muslim 5.4%, other 1.5%, none 29.4%, un-

<b>KEY FACTS</b>	
	specified 1.1%
<b>TIME ZONE OFFSET</b>	UTC +1
<b>TYPE OF GOVERNMENT</b>	Federal Republic

## **RISK SUMMARY**

### **Political - Low**

Switzerland is a politically stable country with a well-established democratic system. It operates as a federal confederation with power shared between the National Council and the Council of States. The country places strong emphasis on direct democracy, constitutional changes require a mandatory referendum, and any law can be subjected to a public vote. All referenda are legally binding.

Political processes, including referenda and elections, are generally peaceful and well-organised, with little to no impact on foreign travellers. Disruptions or unrest related to political activity are rare.

Switzerland is composed of 26 cantons, each with its own constitution and governing institutions. The Swiss Federal Council provides stable leadership, having never been fully replaced since its formation in 1848. This long-standing continuity contributes to a predictable and secure environment for visitors.

### **Armed Conflict - Negligible**

Switzerland maintains an official policy of armed neutrality, which has been in place since the Treaty of Paris in 1815. The policy is self-imposed, but the country does maintain its own armed forces to defend its independence and territorial integrity. The Swiss Armed Forces consist of conscripts and reservists, with manda-

tory military service for all able-bodied male citizens.

Switzerland engages in international cooperation and peace-building efforts, although it does not join military alliances. The country enjoys friendly diplomatic and economic relations with most European countries and other states worldwide. As a result, the risk of interstate war involving Switzerland is highly likely to remain negligible.

## **Terrorism - Low**

The Swiss Federal Intelligence Service has previously warned about a heightened threat of Islamist terrorism; however, compared to other European states, the risk remains very low. Switzerland's foreign policy promotes neutrality, making it less likely to become a deliberate target for jihadi groups. Despite this, Switzerland hosts several international organisations operating in volatile regions, which could be viewed as potential targets for terror groups. The threat posed by Islamist extremist groups is low, though there have been reports of Swiss nationals travelling to Iraq to fight for the so-called Islamic State (IS).

The ongoing Gaza conflict has likely increased terrorism-related incidents in Switzerland. In February 2024, an axe-wielding Iranian asylum seeker was shot dead by police after taking passengers of a train hostage in the Vaud district. In March 2024, a teenager, who described himself as a "soldier" of the IS stabbed a Jewish individual in Zurich, severely wounding him. Between April and June, Swiss intelligence and security forces, in cooperation with other European partners, dismantled multiple IS-affiliated cells, some of which were based in Switzerland.

Potential targets for terrorist attacks would likely include public transport hubs, crowded public spaces, security forces, or international organisations, mostly based in Geneva. An attack in Switzerland would most likely be perpetrated by a radicalised 'lone wolf' utilising low-tech, low-capability methods, such as knife attacks or vehicle ramming.

## **Crime - Low**

Overall, crime levels in Switzerland remain low, with violent crime being rare. Pickpocketing and petty theft present the greatest crime threats, particularly in Geneva and Zurich. These incidents often occur in hotel lobbies, tourist hot spots, or on public transport. The British Embassy has reported increased thefts in larger cities and when travelling to and from Geneva.

Switzerland is actively working to reduce the effects of foreign organised crime groups, as the country is used as a transit point for the trafficking of controlled goods, people, and money. While these groups are unlikely to substantially impact travellers, businesses planning to operate in Switzerland should be aware of potential compliance issues if a front business for one of these groups enters the supply chain.

Switzerland continues to adopt one of the toughest stances and legal systems in the world to fight money laundering, ensuring that such criminal activity will be reduced over the coming years. Smoking in public is prohibited in Switzerland, except for some local bars where smoking licenses are granted.

### **Civil Unrest - Low**

Demonstrations occur regularly in Geneva, due to the presence of several United Nations offices and the referendum-focused nature of Swiss domestic politics. While protests generally remain peaceful, localised disruptions can be expected around demonstration sites.

Throughout the European refugee crisis, Switzerland has become host to approximately 44,000 temporary refugees. Such an influx has led to small-scale, localised protests in some of the areas they have settled.

In the past year, the volume of protests in Switzerland has increased slightly due to the Israel-Hamas conflict, with most incidents of civil unrest occurring near major universities. In general, larger rallies are most likely to take place in Zurich, Geneva, Basel, Lucerne, St. Gallen, and Bern.

### **Maritime and Piracy - Negligible**

Switzerland is a landlocked country and is therefore not subjected to any major maritime-related security issues.

Despite this, the Swiss Armed Forces do maintain a service of armed patrol boats for the sizeable lakes on the country's border, most notably across Lake Geneva and Lake Constance. However, these boats are rarely used and predominantly serve to aid in water-based search and rescue efforts.

### **Health - Negligible**

The risk of tick bites increases between April to October, which could lead to cases of Lyme disease and tick-borne Encephalitis (TBE). While excellent medical care is widely available, it may require immediate cash payment. Travellers should carry proof of insurance at all times.

For those engaging in winter sports, it is important to ensure that your policy covers helicopter evacuation from mountainous areas. Many accidents occur during outdoor activities, often due to insufficient information and inappropriate equipment. Always seek advice from local experts.

Emergency services may be delayed when responding to an incident, as they often prioritise their response to those with the most severe injuries.

### **Environmental - Low**

Earthquakes and floods have occurred in the Valais and Fribourg regions. As a mountainous country, Switzerland is prone to flooding, landslides, and avalanches, especially in winter and spring. Travellers planning on driving in Switzerland should ensure their vehicle is equipped for seasonal conditions, including snow chains and other cold-weather gear during winter.

Increasing temperatures have made Switzerland, like several other European states, more susceptible to forest fires in the summer months. In July 2023, fires led to the evacuation of over 300 people. If affected by a forest fire, travellers should adhere to safety directives issued by local authorities, including evacuations.

## **Transportation - Low**

Travellers should be cautious when travelling through Switzerland, as many roads are narrow and contain hidden bends. Heavy rainfall and poor weather can create dangerous driving conditions with little notice. Despite this, road safety standards are high.

Switzerland has a reliable and efficient public transport system, including tram and bus networks, cable cars, boats and trains, which are all well-coordinated and organised. Travel must be pre-booked, and tickets should be purchased before use to avoid fines.

Taxi services in Switzerland are expensive and include service charges. There are many public taxi stands available; however, hailing taxis on the streets can be difficult as they are unlikely to stop.

Bike and cycle trails are common across Switzerland and are great tourist attractions. Bike hire stations are posted across the country and are frequently used for leisure purposes and exploring. However, using bikes carries a heightened risk of injury despite their popular use.

Airports are well connected to the rest of the country, with many having designated railway stations. Despite this, airports can be busy, and travellers should maintain heightened awareness to mitigate the risk of opportunistic theft.

All public transport across Switzerland is typically focused on leisure travel and can lack a schedule. Travellers should ensure they allow plenty of time for transfers and are aware of transport timetables.

<b>EMERGENCY DETAILS</b>	
<b>SOLACE GLOBAL:- +44(0)1202 795801.</b>	
<b>AMBULANCE:- 144, FIRE:- 118, POLICE:- 117.</b>	
<b>BRITISH EMBASSY BERN:- +41 (31) 359 77 00, U.S EMBASSY BERN:- +41 (31) 357-7011. SOUTH KOREAN EMBASSY, BERN:- +41 31 356 24 44.</b>	
<b>POLICE NUMBER</b>	112
<b>AMBULANCE NUMBER</b>	112
<b>FIRE NUMBER</b>	112
<b>EMERGENCY DETAILS</b>	

## TRAVEL

### TRAVEL ADVICE

Travellers should exercise caution when driving through Switzerland due to the country's varied terrain and road conditions. Many roads are narrow and contain hidden bends, which can present challenges even for experienced drivers. Heavy rainfall and poor weather conditions can create dangerous driving conditions with

little notice. Despite these challenges, Switzerland is known for its high road safety standards. It is advised that travellers follow local instructions and the advice of officials.

During the winter months, travellers should ensure that their vehicle is equipped with snow chains and other cold-weather gear, as sudden weather changes, especially in mountainous regions, are common. In case of emergency, dial 117 for police assistance. It is also advisable to keep a first aid kit, a warning triangle, and a reflective vest in your vehicle at all times. Following local instructions and the advice of officials is essential for a safe and pleasant journey through Switzerland.

## SIGNIFICANT DATES

### DECEMBER 21, 2025

- **December Solstice:** Switzerland - Seasonal

### DECEMBER 24, 2025

- **Christmas Eve:** Switzerland - Observance

### DECEMBER 25, 2025

- **Christmas Day:** Switzerland - Zurich, Bern, Lucerne, Uri, Schwyz, Obwalden, Nidwalden, Glarus, Zug, Fribourg, Solothurn, Basel-Stadt, Basel-Land, Schaffhausen, Appenzell Ausserrhoden, Appenzell Innerrhoden, St. Gallen, Aargau, Graubünden, Thurgau, Ticino, Vaud, Valais, Neuchâtel, Geneva, Jura - Local holiday

### DECEMBER 26, 2025

- **St. Stephen's Day:** Switzerland - Zurich, Bern, Lucerne, Uri, Schwyz, Obwalden, Nidwalden, Glarus, Zug, Fribourg, Solothurn, Basel-Stadt, Basel-

## SIGNIFICANT DATES

Land, Schaffhausen, Appenzell Ausserrhoden, Appenzell Innerrhoden, St. Gallen, Aargau, Graubünden, Thurgau, Ticino, Valais, Neuchâtel - Local holiday

### DECEMBER 31, 2025

- **Restoration Day:** Switzerland - Geneva - Local holiday
- **New Year's Eve:** Switzerland - Observance

### JANUARY 01, 2026

- **New Year's Day:** Switzerland - Zurich, Bern, Lucerne, Uri, Schwyz, Obwalden, Nidwalden, Glarus, Zug, Fribourg, Solothurn, Basel-Stadt, Basel-Land, Schaffhausen, Appenzell Ausserrhoden, Appenzell Innerrhoden, St. Gallen, Aargau, Graubünden, Thurgau, Ticino, Vaud, Valais, Neuchâtel, Geneva, Jura - Local holiday

### JANUARY 02, 2026

- **Berchtold Day:** Switzerland - Aargau, Bern, Fribourg, Glarus, Jura, Lucerne, Neuchâtel, Obwalden, Schaffhausen, Solothurn, Thurgau, Vaud, Zug, Zurich, Nidwalden - Local holiday

### JANUARY 06, 2026

- **Epiphany:** Switzerland - Graubünden, Schwyz, Ticino, Uri - Local holiday

### FEBRUARY 14, 2026

## SIGNIFICANT DATES

- **Valentine's Day:** Switzerland - Observance

### MARCH 01, 2026

- **Republic Day:** Switzerland - Neuchâtel - Local holiday

### MARCH 19, 2026

- **Saint Joseph's Day:** Switzerland - Graubünden, Lucerne, Nidwalden, Solothurn, Schwyz, Ticino, Uri, Valais, Zug - Local holiday

### MARCH 20, 2026

- **March Equinox:** Switzerland - Seasonal

### MARCH 29, 2026

- **Daylight Saving Time starts:** Switzerland - Clock change

### APRIL 02, 2026

- **Näfelser Fahrt:** Switzerland - Glarus - Local holiday

## RECENT ALERTS

**PLANNED PROTEST IN ZÜRICH ON 05 NOVEMBER**

## RECENT ALERTS



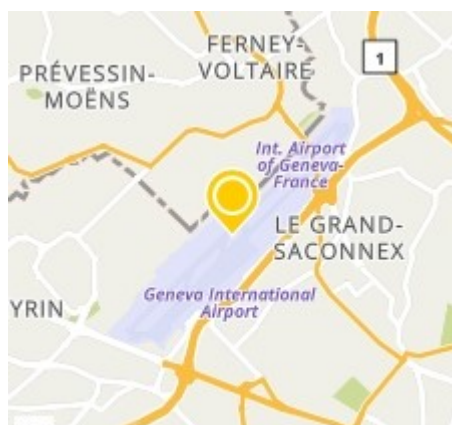
**Category:** Civil Unrest - **Risk:** Low



02-Nov-2025 15:58

According to local media sources, a planned protest will take place in Zürich on 05 November to oppose the alleged financing of the conflict in Gaza. Participants will gather at the Gessnerallee from 19:30 local time, with the duration of the event not being immediately clear. The turnout also remains unknown at this time, as further information is limited. We will continue to monitor the situation and update accordingly.

## FLIGHT DELAYS REPORTED AT GENEVA AIRPORT FOLLOWING RECENT SECURITY INCIDENT





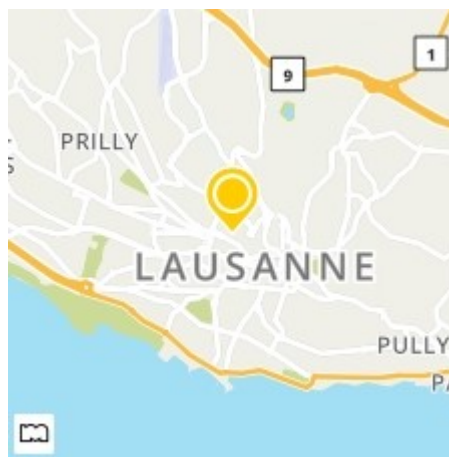
**Category:** Travel Information - **Risk:** Moderate



21-Sep-2025 16:43

Officials at Geneva Airport (GVA) report that multiple flights are experiencing delays due to re-screening procedures following a security incident earlier today. An arriving flight was declared a breach, prompting the evacuation of airside areas. Operations began resuming from 14:45 local time, but delays are expected to continue into the evening. Further details remain limited.

### **ISOLATED CLASHES BETWEEN POLICE AND PRO-PALESTINE PROTESTERS ON ON RUE DE L'ALE IN LAUSANNE, VAUD**



**Category:** Civil Unrest - **Risk:** Moderate



18-Sep-2025 18:18

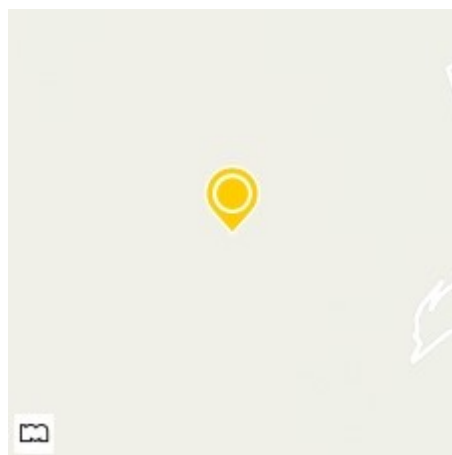
Local media reports isolated clashes between police and pro-Palestine protes-

## RECENT ALERTS

tors in Lausanne, Vaud. Both pro-Palestine and pro-Israel protestors organised demonstrations in the city. At roughly 19:00 local time, police deployed tear gas and a water truck to push back the pro-Palestine protestors on Rue de l'Ale.

Reports indicate that the pro-Palestine protestors were approaching the pro-Israel demonstration and threw bottles at police. There have been no confirmed reports of arrests or further clashes at this time. Further information is currently limited.

## FIRE REPORTED IN RESIDENTIAL AREA IN VALAIS



**Category:** Caution - **Risk:** Moderate



01-Sep-2025 11:08

According to local media, a fire has been reported burning in a residential area of the Visp municipality in Valais. Alertswiss has issued a heavy smoke alert, and residents have been advised to close all windows and doors to prevent smoke inhalation. It is currently unclear how the fire was started. No casualties have been reported at this time. Further information is limited.

## RECENT ALERTS

### TEAR GAS RELEASED DURING ONGOING PROTEST IN LAUSANNE



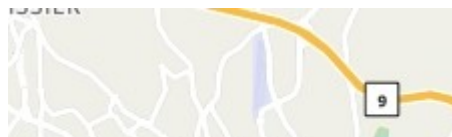
**Category:** Civil Unrest - **Risk:** High

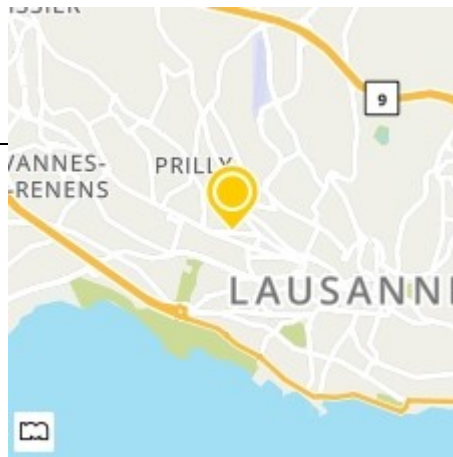


25-Aug-2025 21:26

According to local media, there is currently an ongoing protest in Lausanne following the death of a 17-year-old boy, who died in the early hours of 24 August after reportedly crashing a stolen scooter during a police pursuit. Reports include garbage bins being set alight on Avenue de Prélaz and of fireworks being released. Riot police have been deployed, and tear gas has been used to disperse gathering crowds. Further reports suggest that the protests have now spread to Praz-Séchaud, in addition to Prélaz. No casualties have been reported at this time. We will continue to monitor the situation and provide updates accordingly.

### ONGOING PROTEST IN PRÉLAZ, LAUSANNE





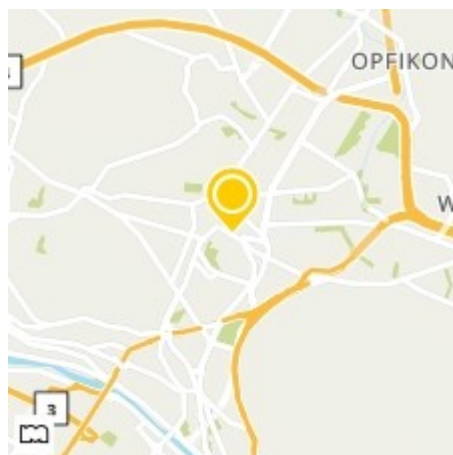
**Category:** Civil Unrest - **Risk:** Moderate



24-Aug-2025 21:31

According to local media sources, over a hundred people gathered in Lausanne to protest the death of a 17-year-old boy, who died in the early hours of 24 August after reportedly crashing a stolen scooter during a police pursuit. Protesters have gathered in Prélaz since approximately 21:30 local time. Videos online show protesters setting rubbish bins on fire and firing fireworks. At this time, there have been no clashes with authorities, arrests, or injuries. We will continue to monitor the situation and update accordingly.

## **LARGE FIRE REPORTED IN RESIDENTIAL BUILDING IN OERLIKON**



## RECENT ALERTS

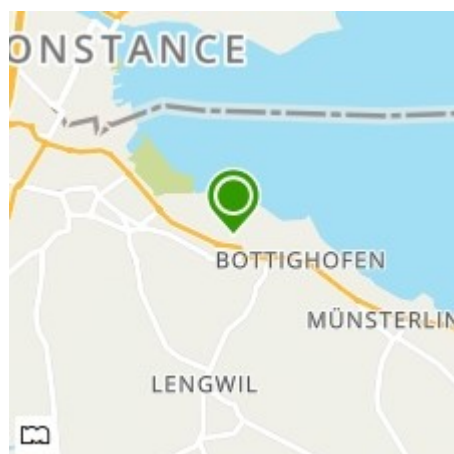
**Category:** Caution - **Risk:** Moderate



13-Jul-2025 02:56

According to local sources, a large fire broke out around 03:00 local time in a residential building in Oerlikon, Zurich. Large plumes of black smoke have been reported over the neighbourhood. At this time, it is unclear what caused the fire, and the full extent of the blaze has yet to be determined. Emergency services remain at the scene, with no confirmed casualties being reported. Further information is limited.

### FIRE ACTIVE AT WASTE DISPOSAL CENTRE IN KREUZLINGEN



**Category:** Caution - **Risk:** Low



09-Jul-2025 11:41

Local news sources report that a large fire is active in a waste disposal centre in Kreuzlingen. Fire services are active at the scene, and there has been no indica-

## RECENT ALERTS

tion of any casualties at present. The cause of the blaze is also currently unclear. Authorities are asking those in the area to keep their windows and doors shut, due to the large amount of smoke. Further information is limited.

### COMMUNITIES OF WILER AND KIPPEL EVACUATED AMID ONGOING RISK FOLLOWING RECENT GLACIER COLLAPSE



**Category:** Caution - **Risk:** Moderate

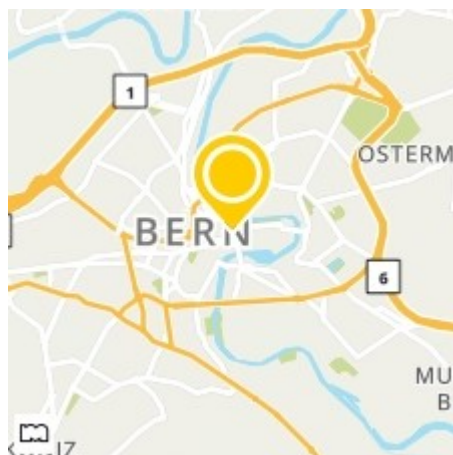


29-May-2025 12:46

Local media reports that the communities of Wiler and Kippel have been evacuated due to the ongoing threat from the recent glacier collapse. Debris from the collapse has dammed the Lonza River, forming a lake that has caused flooding of the remaining homes. Significant risk remains from unstable ice and debris, and it is currently unclear how long the evacuation will continue. No further information is readily available at this time.

## RECENT ALERTS

### CLASHES REPORTED AMONG PROTESTERS AND AUTHORITIES DURING PRO-PALESTINE PROTEST IN BERN



**Category:** Civil Unrest - **Risk:** Moderate



24-May-2025 16:28

Local authorities have reported clashes between protesters and police officers in Bern during a pro-Palestine protest. A heightened police presence is expected however the protests look relatively localised. It is unclear the exact location of the protest however the crowd looks relatively sparse.

## FCDO SUMMARY

Last updated: 12/10/2025 12:44:40

### Warnings and insurance

## Before you travel

No travel can be guaranteed safe. Read all the advice in this guide. You may also find it helpful to:

- see [general advice for women travellers](#)
- read our [guide on disability and travel abroad](#)
- see [general advice for LGBT+ travellers](#)
- read about [safety for solo and independent travel](#)
- see [advice on volunteering and adventure travel abroad](#)

### Travel insurance

If you choose to travel, research your destinations and [get appropriate travel insurance](#). Insurance should cover your itinerary, planned activities and expenses in an emergency.

## About FCDO travel advice

The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) provides advice about risks of travel to help you make informed decisions. Find out [more about FCDO travel advice](#).

### Get travel advice updates

Sign up to [get email notifications](#) when this travel advice is updated.

Follow FCDO:

- [travel advice on X](#)
- [travel advice on Facebook](#)
- [Travel Aware on Instagram](#)

## Entry requirements

This information is for people travelling on a full ['British citizen' passport](#) from the UK. It is based on the UK government's understanding of the current rules for the most common types of travel.

The authorities in Switzerland set and enforce entry rules. If you're not sure how these requirements apply to you, contact the [Swiss Embassy in the UK](#).

## Passport validity requirements

Switzerland follows [Schengen area rules](#). Your passport must:

- have a 'date of issue' less than 10 years before the date you arrive – if you renewed your passport before 1 October 2018, it may have a date of issue that is more than 10 years ago
- have an 'expiry date' at least 3 months after the day you plan to leave the Schengen area (the expiry date does not need to be within 10 years of the date of issue)

Check with your travel provider that your passport and other travel documents meet requirements. [Renew your passport](#) if you need to.

You will be denied entry if you do not have a valid travel document or try to use a passport that has been reported lost or stolen.

## Dual nationals

When returning to the UK, British citizens must carry a valid [British passport](#) or [certificate of entitlement](#). See [Dual citizenship](#).

## Visa requirements

You can [travel without a visa to the Schengen area](#), which includes Switzerland, for up to 90 days in any 180-day period. This applies if you travel:

- as a tourist
- to visit family or friends
- to attend business meetings, cultural or sports events

- for short-term studies or training

At passport control, use the 'All passports' lane.

The [requirements for working in Switzerland](#) are different.

If you're travelling to other Schengen countries as well, make sure your whole visit is within the 90-day limit. Visits to Schengen countries in the 180 days before you travel count towards your 90 days. If you overstay the 90-day visa-free limit, you may be banned from entering Schengen countries for up to 3 years.

Until the Entry-Exit System (EES) is fully rolled out, make sure you get your passport stamped on entry and exit (read 'New Schengen entry requirements').

If you're a visitor, border guards will look at your entry and exit stamps to check you have not overstayed the 90-day visa-free limit for the Schengen area.

If your passport is missing a stamp, show evidence of when and where you entered or left the Schengen area (for example, boarding passes or tickets) and ask the border guards to add the date and location in your passport.

At Swiss border control, you may also need to:

- show proof of your accommodation, for example, a hotel booking or proof of address if visiting your own property
- show proof of insurance for your trip
- show a return or onward ticket
- prove that you have enough money for your stay – around 100 Swiss francs a day

## **Staying longer than 90 days in a 180-day period**

To stay longer, you must meet the Swiss government's entry requirements. Check which type of visa or work permit you need with the [Swiss Embassy in the UK](#).

If you are in Switzerland with a residence permit or long-stay visa, this does not count towards your 90-day visa-free limit.

See [entry processes if you live in Switzerland](#).

## **New Schengen entry requirements**

From 12 October 2025, the European Union's (EU) new Entry/Exit System (EES) will begin roll out.

This means that when you travel into the Schengen area for short stays, you may need to register your biometric details, such as fingerprints and a photo. You do not need to take any action before you arrive at the border, and there is no cost for EES registration.

On your first visit into a Schengen country from 12 October onwards, you may be asked to register your details at a special booth before proceeding to the immigration desk. Follow directions from your travel operator or the staff at your port of entry. You may also need to provide either your fingerprint or photo when you leave the Schengen area. Children aged 11 or younger will not have their fingerprints scanned but can be required to have their photo taken.

EES may take each passenger a few extra minutes to complete so be prepared to wait longer than usual at the border.

EES will not be rolled out to all ports of entry at once, the numbers of passengers being registered at each port of entry will vary, and some destinations may take up to 6 months to fully roll out the new process.

Until EES is fully rolled out your passport will continue to be stamped, even if you've already been registered for EES. Once EES is fully rolled out, it will replace the current system of manually stamping passports when visitors arrive in the Schengen area for short stays and you will input biometric details every time you enter or exit.

If you enter the Schengen area through the Port of Dover, Eurotunnel at Folkestone or Eurostar at St Pancras International and you are asked to register for EES, the information will be taken at the border before you leave the UK.

Read more [information on the EU Entry/Exit System and to understand which countries are in the Schengen area](#).

## Vaccine requirements

At least 8 weeks before your trip, check the vaccinations and certificates you need in [TravelHealthPro's Switzerland guide](#).

## Customs rules

There are strict rules about [goods that you can take into and out of Switzerland](#). You must declare anything that may be prohibited or subject to tax or duty.

### Safety and security

## Terrorism

There is a high threat of terrorist attack globally affecting UK interests and British nationals, including from groups and individuals who view the UK and British nationals as targets. Stay aware of your surroundings at all times.

UK Counter Terrorism Policing has information and advice on [staying safe abroad](#) and what to do in the event of a terrorist attack. Find out [how to reduce your risk from terrorism while abroad](#).

### Terrorism in Switzerland

Terrorist attacks in Switzerland cannot be ruled out.

## Crime

There is a low rate of serious crime in Switzerland. However, there have been increased reports of petty theft, especially in larger cities, at Geneva airport and on trains to and from Geneva.

### Protecting yourself and your belongings

Take sensible precautions to avoid mugging, bag-snatching and pickpocketing. Be particularly alert at airports, railway stations and in crowded areas. Do not leave your valuables unattended.

## Laws and cultural differences

### Illegal drugs

Illegal drugs, including cannabis, carry severe penalties. You should expect a long

jail sentence and heavy fines for possessing, using or smuggling illegal drugs, including when transiting through the airport.

Airports in Switzerland have excellent technology and security for detecting illegal items. This is also used to scan the baggage of transiting passengers.

## Face-covering ban

In Ticino and St Gallen, it's illegal to cover your face in public, including for tourists. Do not wear balaclavas, full veils or any other garment or mask that hides your face. You could get a fine of 100 to 10,000 Swiss francs if you do not comply.

## Outdoor activities and adventure tourism

### Hiking, mountaineering and extreme sports

Adventure sports can be risky. British nationals in the Swiss Alps have been involved in accidents and have been hospitalised or died.

Check the company you are using is well-established and that your travel insurance covers any specific activity.

For sports activities like skiing, potholing and mountaineering, and for sports classed as particularly dangerous (for example, off-piste skiing, mountain biking, climbing, paragliding or BASE jumping), you could get into difficulty and need emergency rescue. Your insurance should include:

- mountain rescue services
- helicopter costs
- repatriation to your home country or transfer to neighbouring countries for treatment

See 'Altitude sickness' in [Health](#).

### Skiing and winter sports

Read [FCDO](#) advice about [preparing for winter sports abroad](#). See the guidance on avalanches in 'Extreme weather'.

## Transport risks

## Road travel

If you are planning to drive in Switzerland, see [information on driving abroad](#) and read the [rules of the road in the RAC's Switzerland guide](#). The guide lists driving regulations and other legal requirements you need to be aware of.

Road users must observe [Switzerland's traffic laws](#), including speed limits, rules on alcohol intake and child security. Traffic police strictly enforce these regulations. Any serious breach can result in heavy fines or imprisonment.

You can use a UK photocard driving licence to drive in Switzerland. If you still have a paper driving licence, you may need to [update it to a photocard licence](#) or get the [1968 version of the international driving permit \(IDP\)](#) as well.

Check if you need a [UK sticker to drive your car outside the UK](#).

If you are visiting Switzerland, you may be able to use your [Blue Badge](#) in some circumstances. Check local parking rules.

## Tolls

You must buy and display a vignette (sticker) to travel on Swiss motorways. You can buy one at most border crossings, petrol stations, post offices, by phone (+800 1002 0030) or [buy a vignette online](#). If you do not have a vignette, you could get a large fine.

If you're involved in a car accident, use the orange emergency phones to ask for help.

## Road conditions

Roads outside urban areas are narrow and winding. Road conditions can deteriorate fast, even in summer, especially during heavy rainfall and snowfall at higher altitudes. Reduce your speed significantly to suit the conditions.

Alpine winters make driving difficult. Equip your car with winter tyres and snow-chains. Check road conditions before you depart. Carry water, food, warm clothing and medicines in your vehicle.

Find the latest information on road conditions using the [Swiss government's 'Easy](#)

[answers' website](#).

## Accessibility

The official Switzerland Tourism website has useful [information for travellers in wheelchairs or with impaired mobility](#) who are travelling in Switzerland.

## Extreme weather and natural hazards

Find out what you can do to [prepare for and respond to extreme weather and natural hazards](#).

## Alpine conditions

Check weather forecasts and conditions and make sure you're properly equipped for the worst-case scenario. Always carry a map, compass, GPS and fully charged mobile when travelling outside urban areas. Do not undertake any activity alone and consider hiring a guide for expert advice. Always leave copies of your itinerary with someone.

These alpine hazards exist throughout the year:

- avalanches and snowdrifts
- landslides and flooding
- glacial crevasses and hollows
- rockfalls
- thunderstorms
- altitude sickness
- sun exposure
- sudden weather changes

## Avalanches

Avalanches are a risk, particularly during heavy snow. Off-piste skiing is very dangerous due to the risk of avalanches. Follow safety instructions and warnings. Consider carrying search equipment. Avalanche beepers (receivers) are the most common rescue devices and when properly used, are the fastest way of locating an avalanche victim.

Conditions on roads in mountainous areas can quickly become difficult in winter.

Carry water, food, warm clothing and medicines in your vehicle.

Check the latest avalanche risk at the [Federal Office of Meteorology and Climatology](#).

For more information, visit the [official Switzerland Tourism website](#).

## Wildfires

There is a heightened risk of wildfires in summer, especially after a period of drought.

Fires in mountainous areas can lead to rockfalls. Wildfires also cause travel disruption in wider areas.

Always check the [bans on open fires for the area you're visiting](#) and:

- leave no litter
- make sure cigarette ends are properly extinguished
- use only designated concrete-based barbecue areas and douse coals before you leave

Causing a forest fire in a place where there's a ban is illegal, even if unintentional, and can lead to a fine of up to 20,000 Swiss francs.

If you see a wildfire, call the fire department on 118.

## Health

Before you travel check that:

- your destination can provide the healthcare you may need
- you have [appropriate travel insurance](#) for local treatment or unexpected medical evacuation

This is particularly important if you have a health condition or are pregnant.

## Emergency medical number

Dial 112 or 144 and ask for an ambulance.

Contact your insurance or medical assistance company quickly if you're referred to a medical facility for treatment.

## Vaccine recommendations and health risks

At least 8 weeks before your trip:

- check the latest [vaccine recommendations for Switzerland](#)
- see where to get vaccines and whether you have to pay on the [NHS travel vaccinations page](#)

See [what health risks you'll face in Switzerland](#), including:

- biting insects and ticks, especially between April and October
- tick-borne encephalitis

## Altitude sickness

Altitude sickness is a risk in parts of Switzerland, including the ski and hiking areas around:

- 4 Vallées
- Belalp-Blatten
- Chandolin
- Corvatsch
- Engelberg-Titlis
- Hohensaas
- Lauchernalp
- Matterhorn
- Saas-Fee
- St Moritz

Read more about [altitude sickness on TravelHealthPro](#).

## Medication

The legal status and regulation of some medicines prescribed or bought in the UK can be different in other countries.

Read [best practice when travelling with medicines on TravelHealthPro](#).

## Healthcare in Switzerland

[FCDO](#) has a list of [medical providers in Switzerland](#) where some staff will speak English.

### Health insurance cards

To get medically necessary state healthcare in Switzerland, you need a Global Health Insurance Card ([GHIC](#)) or a European Health Insurance Card ([EHIC](#)).

The NHS's [getting healthcare abroad webpage](#) has details about:

- how to apply for a [GHIC](#)
- how to get temporary cover if you lose your card or it does not arrive in time
- who qualifies for a new [EHIC](#) instead of a [GHIC](#)
- what treatment counts as medically necessary

A [GHIC](#) or [EHIC](#) is not an alternative to travel insurance. You may have costs your [GHIC](#) or [EHIC](#) does not cover, including:

- changes to travel and accommodation bookings
- additional standard costs for treatment
- medical repatriation to the UK
- treatment that is ruled non-urgent
- private healthcare
- private clinics

There is also [guidance on healthcare if you're living in Switzerland](#).

## Travel and mental health

Read [FCDO guidance on travel and mental health](#). There is also [mental health guidance on TravelHealthPro](#).

### Getting help

The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office ([FCDO](#)) cannot provide tailored advice for individual trips. Read this travel advice and carry out your own

research before deciding whether to travel.

## Emergency services in Switzerland

Telephone: 112 (ambulance, fire, police)

Ambulance: 144

Fire: 118

Police: 117

## Contact your travel provider and insurer

Contact your travel provider and your insurer if you are involved in a serious incident or emergency abroad. They will tell you if they can help and what you need to do.

## Refunds and changes to travel

For refunds or changes to travel, contact your travel provider. You may also be able to make a claim through insurance. However, insurers usually require you to talk to your travel provider first.

Find out more about [changing or cancelling travel plans](#), including:

- where to get advice if you are in a dispute with a provider
- how to access previous versions of travel advice to support a claim

## Support from FCDO

FCDO has guidance on staying safe and what to do if you need help or support abroad, including:

- finding English-speaking [lawyers](#), [funeral directors](#) and [translators and interpreters](#) in Switzerland
- dealing with a [death in Switzerland](#)
- being [arrested in Switzerland](#)
- getting help if you're a [victim of crime](#)
- what to do if you're [in hospital](#)
- if you are [affected by a crisis](#), such as a terrorist attack

## Contacting FCDO

### Help abroad

See [how to get help from the UK government abroad](#) including in an emergency.

### Help in the UK

You can call [FCDO](#) in London if you need urgent help because something has happened to a friend or relative abroad.

Telephone: 020 7008 5000 (24 hours)

[Find out about call charges](#)

## Get travel advice updates

Sign up to [get email notifications](#) when this travel advice is updated.

Follow [FCDO](#):

- [travel advice on X](#)
- [travel advice on Facebook](#)

## Risk information for British companies

The Overseas Business Risk service offers [information and advice for British companies operating in Switzerland](#) on how to manage political, economic, and business security-related risks.

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**PACK SMART**

Only pack items you can replace, leave valuables at home. You will be less likely to attract criminals and if threatened, you won't be tempted to put up a fight to save your belongings.



Carry a duplicate wallet with small denomination notes and old cards that you could relinquish if threatened by robbers. Only pack items you can replace, leave valuables at home. You will be less likely to attract criminals and if threatened, you won't be tempted to put up a fight to save your belongings.



Always check the destination restrictions regarding medications when planning your trip.

### **STAY SAFE:** Hotels



Request a hotel room between the third & seventh floor. Ground floor rooms should always be avoided as they are easily accessible from the outside. Higher levels mean in the event of a fire there are many stairs to navigate and in some countries firefighters may not have ladders capable of reaching higher than the seventh floor.



Check your room phone works in case you need to call reception for help.



Know where your fire exits are. Count the number of doors to the fire exit from your room so you can feel your way in the event of a fire and a smoke-filled corridor.



To prevent unauthorised entry into your hotel room, make sure the windows and doors lock. Bolt the deadbolt and use the door wedges

you've brought with you from home to wedge the main door closed.

### **TRAVEL SAFE:** Out & About



When you are out and about, be aware of your surroundings - don't display obvious wealth, such as expensive jewellery, watches and mobile phones.



Use ATMs inside banks and shopping centres, where there is greater security and CCTV. Safety in numbers. If you are travelling with colleagues, stay together for meals and trips out. If you are alone, avoid quiet areas and trust your instincts.

### **Road traffic accidents are still the greatest threat to travel safety.**



- Use licensed taxis.
- Always wear a seat belt.
- Keep doors locked & windows up.
- Avoid night-time driving.
- If the driver is using a phone or driving dangerously, insist they slow down/stop using their phone.

Check in regularly. Use the 'Check In' button on the Solace Secure app so your location can be monitored and you can view all intelligence alerts within your vicinity.

### **SAFE TRAVEL:** Health Tips

See a medical travel specialist at least 4 weeks before travel.

Ask about recommended vaccines for specific destinations.

First aid kit with regular & special medication for trip - carry in hand luggage.

Evacuation & travel insurance to cover health emergencies while abroad.



Take an extra month of prescribed medication for pre-existing conditions.

Risk of malaria - take precautions to prevent mosquito bites and take malaria pills as advised.



Avoid drinking alcohol and becoming dehydrated.

Verify & consume safe water and food. Have a supply of medicine for self-treatment of diarrhoea.



Excessive sun exposure should be minimised by the use of sunscreen - sun can be more intense over water, snow and at altitude.

Leave animals alone. Animal bites or scratches can transmit rabies.

### **THINK SAFE:** Know Your Destination

Understand the culture of your destination. Dress and behave so as not to cause offence or draw attention.



Know if the tap water is suitable to drink if not; only accept water from a sealed bottle.

Avoid ice in your drinks & salad washed in tap water.

Research where you are travelling to. Make a note of the local emergency services number. Know the current security and medical threats and advice.

See the FCO website for general information ([gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice](https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice)).

## **DOCUMENT SAFE:** Know Your Destination

Take photos/scans of your essential documents and email them to yourself.  
You can then access them remotely if your belongings are stolen:

- Passport
- Driver's Licence
- Travel Insurance Document
- Visa
- Medical Certificates

For 24/7 travel risk advice and emergency assistance contact Solace Global Risk operations: + 44 (0)1202 795 801

The Solace Secure desktop and app provide up-to-the-minute alerts, providing latest information on your travel location even when you are there.

### CONTACT SOLACE GLOBAL RESPONSE TEAM

This report has been prepared for you by Solace Global Risk Ltd.

If you need urgent help, advice or assistance at any time please contact the 24/7 Response and Assistance Team.

If you have a question about this travel advice or any other location please email [SGR@solaceglobal.com](mailto:SGR@solaceglobal.com) for further safety and security information.

For support using your Solace Secure platform or app please contact [support@solaceglobal.com](mailto:support@solaceglobal.com).

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