












United States - Moderate



United States Country Map

-  POLITICAL
-  ARMED CONFLICT
-  TERRORISM
-  CRIME
-  CIVIL UNREST
-  MARITIME AND PIRACY
-  HEALTH
-  ENVIRONMENTAL
-  TRANSPORTATION

Last Published: 14 December 2025

COUNTRY OVERVIEW

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The United States is the world's largest economy and one of the world's largest countries by area and population. Since the middle of the twentieth century, the United States has remained a military, economic, and cultural superpower.

The main risk to travellers in the US is that of crime, including petty and opportunistic offences. Gun-related crime poses a higher threat in the US than in other Western countries, and mass shootings occur frequently. Drug-trafficking networks from Central and South America are important drivers of crime in large urban centres and near the US-Mexico border.

Protests are frequent and can turn violent. They can be caused by various domestic and international drivers. Political violence is a growing trend in the US, also driven by growing domestic polarisation.

Due to the US's central role in combating terrorism worldwide, the country remains a desirable target for terrorist groups. The main threat is posed by Islamist and far-right groups. In recent years, there have been numerous cases of lone-wolf terrorism carried out by self-radicalised individuals.

CULTURAL INFORMATION

Cultural Tips

- English is the primary language in the United States. For the most part, signs in airports, on roads, and in other public places will be in English only. The main exceptions to this are in the international terminals of major airports. Additionally, airport administrators in the U.S. endeavour to use common symbols to communicate directions to non-English speaking passengers.
- American English differs in certain respects in vocabulary, phraseology and spelling from British English; however, the differences are rarely so pronounced as to impede communication. Spanish is also widely spoken in the country, particularly in the southwestern states that border Mexico, as well as in southern Florida and in major urban centres, such as New York City.
- Shaking hands is common when greeting someone.
- Dress expectations tend to vary, ranging from formal attire to "business casual" in most professional settings.
- Avoid negative comments about U.S. politics.
- Extending the middle finger of one's hand is considered an offensive gesture.
- Tipping is expected at virtually all restaurants and for various services, such as taxi rides. In general, a 15 per cent tip is expected in restaurants, with a

higher percentage given for better-than-normal service. Many restaurants will include a 15 per cent tip automatically in the bill for groups of eight or more.

- Tipping for services varies considerably. A taxi driver should be given a dollar or two in tips for most rides. When using a porter service at airports, a tip of 1 dollar is expected per bag.
- Homosexuality and same-sex marriage are legal in the U.S.

KEY FACTS	
CAPITAL	Washington D.C.
CAPITAL CITY PHONE CODE	202
COUNTRY PHONE CODE	1
CURRENCY	US Dollar
ELECTRICITY	120 V, 60 Hz
GMT	-4 to -12
LANGUAGES	English (no official language)
LEADERSHIP	President Donald Trump
OFFICE WORK WEEK	Monday - Friday
OFFICIAL COUNTRY NAME	United States of America
PLUG STYLES	Types A, B
RELIGION	Protestant 46.5%, Roman Catholic 20.8%, Jewish 1.9%, Church of Jesus Christ 1.6%, other Christian

KEY FACTS	
	0.9%, Muslim 0.9%, Jehovah's Witness 0.8%, Buddhist 0.7%, Hindu 0.7%, other 1.8%, unaffiliated 22.8%, don't know/refused 0.6%
TIME ZONE OFFSET	Six time zones (Washington, D.C. UTC -5, DST Observed)
TYPE OF GOVERNMENT	Constitutional Federal Republic

RISK SUMMARY

Political - Moderate

The political risk level is moderate.

Historically, the United States of America has been a stable and functioning democracy. It has a two-party system, with power regularly changing hands between the Republicans (conservative) and the Democrats (liberal). The federal government has two legislative chambers, the Senate and the House of Representatives, and an executive branch headed by the President. The Supreme Court exercises judicial power. In addition to the federal government, the US is comprised of 50 states, which have considerable political autonomy.

In November 2024, Donald Trump was elected president. Prior to his election, Trump already served one term (2016-2020) and lost his first re-election bid to Democratic candidate and former Vice President Joe Biden. The 2024 elections also granted the Republican Party control of both the House and the Senate.

US politics has become increasingly polarised in recent years. On 6 January 2021, supporters of President Trump stormed the Capitol Building in Washington, DC, to stop the certification of the 2020 election results. During the 2024 election campaigns, there were two suspected assassination attempts on former

President Donald Trump. Political tensions continued into 2025, including the shooting of right-wing political activist Charlie Kirk at Utah Valley University on 10 September.

There are ongoing and unresolved debates concerning the status of some US territories. Campaigns in support of statehood are present in Puerto Rico, as well as in the District of Columbia.

The US government experienced a 43-day shutdown from 01 October to 12 November 2025. During this period, federal employees deemed non-essential were placed on unpaid leave, while others, such as air traffic controllers, continued working without pay. The shutdown occurred because Congress was unable to pass a spending plan through the Senate due to Democratic opposition, preventing the legislation from reaching the president for approval.

Armed Conflict - Low

The US borders no hostile nations, and the US-Canada border is the longest undefended border in the world. The United States Armed Forces are the most widely dispersed military forces in the world, with nearly 800 military bases in 70 countries and are involved in several operations across the globe. US bases are potential targets for various anti-American state and non-state actors.

As a global superpower, the US's global interests often lead to tensions with other states. The primary state-based threats to the US are Russia and China, and both countries have conventional and nuclear weapons capable of targeting the continental United States. Moreover, regional powers like Iran and North Korea have the potential to threaten US assets and personnel in their respective regions. For instance, on 28 January 2024, three US troops were killed, and a further 34 were injured following a drone strike on a US outpost in the Al-Mafraq area of northeast Jordan. The outpost was attacked by an Iran-backed militia. This was the first time US soldiers had been killed by enemy fire in the region since the start of the latest phase of the Hamas-Israel conflict in 2023.

As of November 2025, the US has increased its military presence in the Caribbean and conducted 21 strikes on Venezuelan suspected drug trafficking vessels, resulting in 83 fatalities. These operations are part of ongoing efforts to combat the flow of narcotics into the US.

The US is a member of NATO and has bilateral and defence agreements with numerous regional powers. Since the 2022 invasion of Ukraine by Russia, the United States has been one of the key military supporters of Kyiv alongside its NATO partners. This support has undergone a significant decrease under the second Trump administration.

Terrorism - Low

The US involvement in the global war on terror, its status as a global superpower, and its high cultural and economic importance make it a desirable target for terror groups.

The main threat comes from Islamist groups, including the Islamic State and al-Qaeda. The latter carried out the 2001 9/11 attacks, which remain the deadliest terror attacks on US soil. In addition, far-right groups operate in the country. While the threat of group terror attacks remains, the main threat is currently from self-radicalised lone wolves who, although inspired by the aforementioned groups and ideologies, act independently. The ease of access to firearms means that lone wolf attacks are often deadlier in the US than in Western European countries. Data from the Global Terrorism Database shows that, since 9/11, approximately a quarter of all terror attacks in the US were carried out using firearms.

In recent years, other, smaller ideologies have driven terror attacks, mostly lone-wolf ones. These include radical environmentalism, left-wing extremism, black supremacy, and "incel" (or "involuntary celibate") ideology.

Crime - Moderate

Crime levels vary hugely due to the disparities between individual states.

The highest crime levels are found in inner-city neighbourhoods and economically disadvantaged areas. Cities with significant crime rates include St. Louis (Missouri), Jackson (Mississippi), Birmingham (Alabama), Baltimore (Maryland) and Cleveland (Ohio). Violent gang crime can be an issue in some areas, most notably in large cities on the East and West coasts. The illegal drug trade is present in border regions with Mexico in Arizona, California, New Mexico, and

Texas. Mexican organised criminal groups are active on both sides of the US-Mexico border.

Gun crime is a threat across the United States, particularly in major population centres. If in the vicinity of a shooting, travellers should undertake the 'Run, Hide, Tell' procedure. It is best to assume that criminals are armed.

Bomb threats are a common issue across the United States. Buildings such as schools, universities, and hospitals are frequently evacuated due to bomb threats, which, the majority of the time, turn out to be hoaxes.

Civil Unrest - Moderate

Political protests are common in the US, and they can turn violent without warning.

Drivers of protests include both domestic and international developments. Due to the US's engagement with multiple international partners and Washington's influence on global affairs, developments linked to global conflicts often result in unrest in the US. Growing political polarisation has been the key driver of protests during the last decade.

Protests can occur nationwide. However, hotspots include large urban centres and especially state capitals, as well as cities that have large university campuses.

There have been notable recent waves of protests in recent years. Since 2023, following the 7 October attack by Hamas on Israel, large-scale protests have occurred across the US. These have been particularly severe in university cities. Road blockades have been carried out with some frequency by pro-Palestine protesters. Police have intervened violently to disperse some of these protests, resulting in dozens of injuries.

Protests against Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) have increased across the US, involving marches, sit-ins, and road blockades, with some incidents escalating to clashes, the use of tear gas and arrests, such as in South Portland on 05 October 2025. Demonstrations have occurred in response to the federal immigration enforcement surge since 2025 and related human rights concerns. These protests are geographically widespread across multiple US cities.

In 2021, following the November 2020 presidential elections, the widespread popularisation of conspiracy theories claiming that the vote was rigged resulted in severe cases of protests, including the 6 January 2021 takeover of the Capitol Building in Washington.

In June 2020, the killing of George Floyd, a Black US citizen, by a police officer ignited widespread protests against police brutality and institutional racism. Some of these protests turned violent, with cases of arson, rioting, and looting reported in some large urban centres like Minneapolis, Atlanta, and Detroit. Moreover, multiple cases of vehicle attacks on protesters were recorded. These protests, also referred to as the Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests after the movement that partly led them, were the largest in US history.

Travellers are advised to avoid any protests in the US. Police often employ violent crowd control tactics, which may also impact bystanders.

Maritime and Piracy - Low

There is no risk of piracy off the coasts of the US. The US Navy is the largest in the world and secures the country's maritime border along with the United States Coast Guard. Maritime drug trafficking operations by criminal organisations are present in the Caribbean, with the aim of trafficking drugs into the United States from South America, bypassing the heavily policed US-Mexico border.

There are multiple traffic separation schemes (TSSs) in place in American waters. These include approaches to the Chesapeake Bay, Delaware Bay, New York, Rhode Island, Boston, and Portland on the East Coast. On the Pacific coast, TSSs are present around Alaska and the Aleutian Islands, as well as at locations including approaches to San Francisco, Santa Barbara, and Los Angeles. TSSs require vessels to abide by specific rules, such as entering and exiting maritime routes at specific points.

In case of emergency at sea, use VHF channel 16.

Health - Low

There is a low health risk.

US healthcare is among the best in the world, but it can be extremely expensive for travellers who lack adequate medical insurance.

Mosquito-borne diseases such as West Nile virus, eastern equine encephalitis, dengue fever, and chikungunya are threats in many southern and coastal states. It is therefore advised that preventative measures be put in place to stop mosquito bites, such as the use of DEET spray and mosquito nets. Locally transmitted Zika has also been detected in Florida and parts of Texas. It is therefore advised that pregnant women avoid these areas or take preventative measures against mosquitoes, as infection while pregnant can cause severe birth defects. Although the recorded number of transmissions has plummeted, there is still a risk of infection.

Environmental - Moderate

The environmental risks vary across states.

Hurricane season takes place between June to November in the Atlantic Ocean, the Caribbean Sea, and the Gulf of Mexico, and in the eastern Pacific, including Hawaii and Guam, hurricanes occur usually between May and November.

Tornadoes are also very common across the United States. Although these have been documented in every US state, states like Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Iowa, and South Dakota are at greater risk. The North-eastern US has also suffered from violent and damaging tornadoes, including in Pennsylvania and Maryland.

Wildfires are frequent and particularly affect states like Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Louisiana, Montana, New Mexico, Oregon, Texas, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. Local authorities are likely to issue evacuation warnings and/or orders to affected communities and could declare a state of emergency. Travellers to areas that are regularly impacted by wildfires are advised to monitor local media outlets and should adhere to emergency directives issued by authorities. In August 2023, at least 115 people were killed after a devastating wildfire in Lahaina in Maui, Hawaii. The high casualty toll makes the fire the deadliest US wildfire in more than a century.

The states of Alaska, California, Hawaii, Nevada, Oklahoma, Oregon, and Washington all lie in active seismic zones. The west coast of the country lies on the edge of the Pacific Ring of Fire, which makes it much more prone to earthquakes than other parts of the country. In April 2018, Hawaii's Big Island suffered a major volcanic eruption on its southern side. At least 600 homes were engulfed by the slow-moving lava flows.

There is a risk of snowstorms in mountainous areas, but the country also features dry desert areas that can experience extreme heat.

Transportation - Low

Most international flights will stop or have a layover at one of the major airports such as JFK, O'Hare, or LAX. Due to the country's size, the quickest and most effective method of travel around the US is by air. Following the 9/11 attacks, the US now has some of the most stringent security measures in the world, and queues can be lengthy.

The US has a well-developed interstate highway system stretching from coast to coast, which makes road travel relatively easy. If travelling to rural areas, it is advised to plan and take the weather into account, as some roadways traverse remote areas where timely help may not be available. Those planning to drive in the United States should check the driving laws in the state or states to be visited. In most states, a full driving licence is sufficient. However, some states may also require an International Driving Permit. Note that there is a high rate of road traffic accidents (RTAs).

Most of the cities in the US are laid out in a grid system. It is advised to allow additional time for road travel in urban areas during rush hours.

Licensed cabs are common in most cities, along with Uber or similar ride-sharing apps. For a shorter journey, these are cheap, effective, and trusted means of transport. For longer distances, it is always best to get an upfront price. Buses in the US cover both long and short distances and are cheap and reliable, albeit a slower form of transport.

The US rail network is limited but well-maintained. Amtrak is the network provider that also operates buses for connection to and from rail networks in more rural ar-

eas. Most of the rail system across the country is reserved for freight transport. Many larger cities have their own metro systems that are cheap and convenient but also hotspots for criminal activity.

EMERGENCY DETAILS	
EMERGENCY SERVICES - 911	
FOR FURTHER ASSISTANCE, TRAINING, OR ADVICE, PLEASE CONTACT THE SOLACE GLOBAL RISK OPERATIONS CENTRE ON +44 (0) 1202 795 801 OR VIA SGR@SOLACEGLOBAL.COM	
POLICE NUMBER	911
AMBULANCE NUMBER	911
FIRE NUMBER	911
EMERGENCY DETAILS	

TRAVEL

TRAVEL ADVICE

The United States has a well-developed transport infrastructure. Roads are well maintained however, road conditions in mountainous, rural, or isolated areas may be less accessible. The US is also well connected by air, with airports in all cities and major towns. There are a number of restrictions on flights to the US from a number of countries. Citizens of most Western countries, along with Chile, Japan, Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore, can enter the US via a visa waiver program if they are travelling for tourist purposes. The US has imposed expanded immigration and travel restrictions affecting nationals from 10 countries, as well as asylum

seekers and refugees, which may affect visa issuance and entry. Specific details can be found on the US Embassy website.

The US has introduced requirements for travellers to provide social media identifiers, email addresses, and phone numbers as part of visa or ESTA applications.

Avoid walking alone during night hours. Minimise travel after dark as risks are not entirely mitigated even when in a small group.

Be aware when in restaurants and bars and always keep an eye on your drink; never accept food or drink from strangers.

Avoid engaging in political discourse due to tensions created by ongoing political developments.

Comply with the instructions of law enforcement officers.

SIGNIFICANT DATES

FEBRUARY 11, 2026

- **International Day of Women and Girls in Science:** United States - UN observance
- **World Day of the Sick:** United States - Worldwide

FEBRUARY 12, 2026

- **Lincoln's Birthday:** United States - Florida - Local observance

FEBRUARY 13, 2026

- **World Radio Day:** United States - UN observance

FEBRUARY 14, 2026

SIGNIFICANT DATES

- **Valentine's Day:** United States - Observance

FEBRUARY 15, 2026

- **Susan B. Anthony's Birthday:** United States - Wisconsin - Local observance

FEBRUARY 16, 2026

- **Elizabeth Peratrovich Day:** United States - Alaska - Local observance
- **Daisy Gatson Bates Day:** United States - Arkansas - Local holiday

FEBRUARY 18, 2026

- **Ash Wednesday:** United States - Christian

FEBRUARY 20, 2026

- **World Day of Social Justice:** United States - UN observance

FEBRUARY 21, 2026

- **International Mother Language Day:** United States - UN observance

FEBRUARY 28, 2026

- **Linus Pauling Day:** United States - Oregon - Local observance

MARCH 01, 2026

SIGNIFICANT DATES

- **St. David's Day:** United States - Observance
- **Zero Discrimination Day:** United States - UN observance
- **Self-Injury Awareness Day:** United States - Worldwide

RECENT ALERTS

HAWAII - POWER OUTAGE REPORTED AT U.S. ARMY GARRISON AMID SEVERE WEATHER CONDITIONS ACROSS HAWAII



Category: Environmental - **Risk:** Moderate



08-Feb-2026 21:16

The U.S. Army Garrison Hawaii has reported that storm-related power outages are currently affecting Fort Shafter, located in Honolulu. Local media sources have reported that severe weather including heavy rain, flash flooding, and high winds are affecting numerous areas across the state. At present, no evacuations or casualties have been reported. The full extent of the damage caused by

RECENT ALERTS

the storm is currently unclear. Various storm warnings are due to remain in place until at least the afternoon of Monday 09 February local time.

MINNESOTA - HEIGHTENED POLICE PRESENCE OUTSIDE THE WHIPPLE FEDERAL BUILDING IN MINNESOTA



Category: Environmental - **Risk:** Moderate

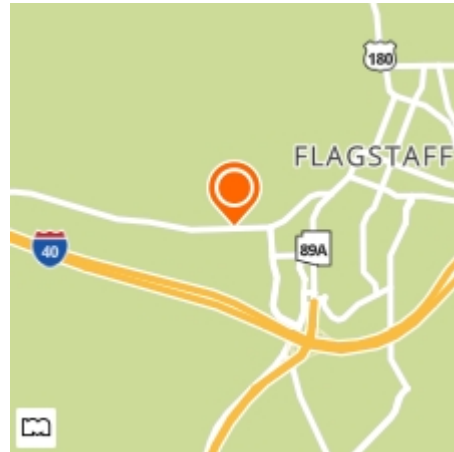


07-Feb-2026 20:51

Social media outlets have reported a heightened police presence outside the Whipple Federal Building amid anti-Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) protests. Arrests have been made and there have been no reports of any tear gas deployment with public disorder appearing minimal. We will continue to monitor the situation and provide updates if necessary.

ARIZONA - SHELTER-IN-PLACE ORDER ISSUED FOLLOWING A HELICOPTER CRASH AND POLICE SHOOTOUT

RECENT ALERTS



Category: Caution - **Risk:** High

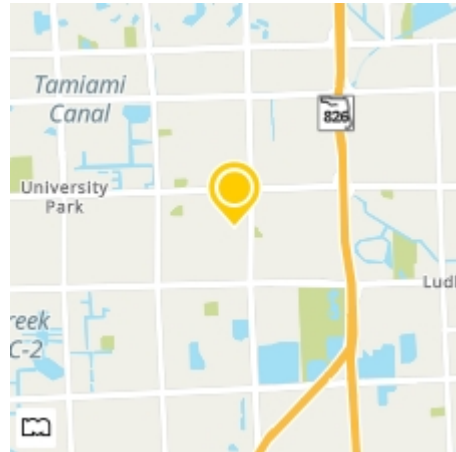


05-Feb-2026 07:48

Local media reports that a shelter-in-place order has been issued for Flagstaff following a helicopter crash near the scene of a shooting involving a police officer. The incident took place north of Route 66, between Thompson Street and Mark Lane. Ground sources report that three gunshots were heard, then two more at approximately 2040 local time, after this, between 15 to 20 more gunshots were heard. The helicopter arrived at the scene at around 2200 local time, more gunfire was heard, followed by a very large crash involving the helicopter, which then started a large fire. At 2215 the public were told to remain in their homes. The helicopter that crashed belonged to the Arizona Department of Public Safety. The circumstances of the shooting are not fully clear. Police have refused to confirm if there have been any casualties at this time. Police officers have urged the public to avoid the area. Footage circulating online shows a large police presence on the scene.

FLORIDA - HEIGHTENED POLICE PRESENCE AT CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS HIGH SCHOOL DUE TO SUSPECTED SHOOTING

RECENT ALERTS



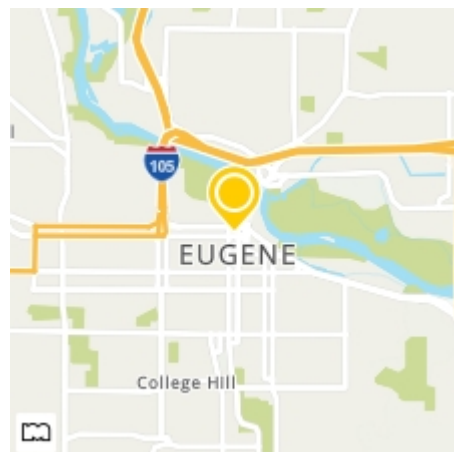
Category: Caution - **Risk:** Moderate



04-Feb-2026 16:27

Social media outlets have reported that there is a heightened police presence at the Christopher Columbus High School in Miami due to a suspected school shooting. The school remains on lockdown and there have been no reports of any casualties. We will continue to monitor for further information.

OREGON - ANTI-ICE DEMONSTRATORS GATHER OUTSIDE FEDERAL BUILDING IN EUGENE



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

RECENT ALERTS



03-Feb-2026 03:44

Local media sources report that anti-ICE demonstrators have gathered outside the federal building in Eugene. Videos circulating on social media show crowds demonstrating with signs. At this time the crowds seem small however, the full extent is unclear. Ground sources have not reported on any clashes amid the demonstrations. We will continue to monitor the situation and update accordingly.

MARYLAND - GROUND STOP IN PLACE AT BALTIMORE/WASHINGTON INTERNATIONAL THURGOOD MARSHALL AIRPORT (BWI)



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

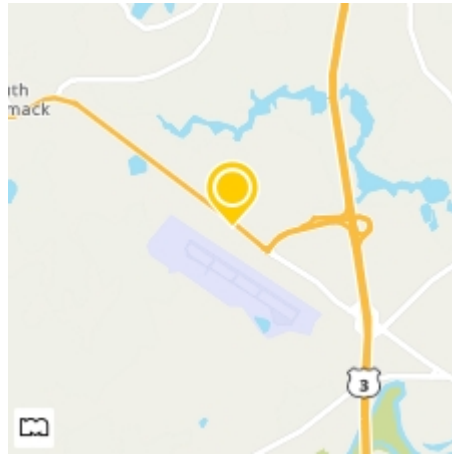


02-Feb-2026 22:57

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reports that there is a ground stop in place at Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport (BWI) until 1845 local time. Further information remains limited. We will continue to monitor the situation and provide updates accordingly.

RECENT ALERTS

MASSACHUSETTS - THREE-ALARM FIRE REPORTED IN NASHUA



Category: Caution - **Risk:** Moderate

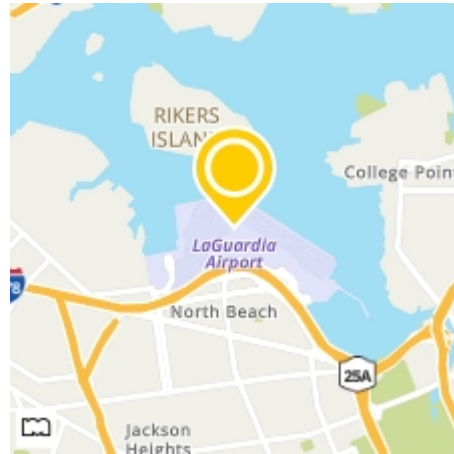


02-Feb-2026 20:11

According to local media sources, a three-alarm fire has been reported at 440 Amherst Street in Nashua. Emergency services are attending the scene. Local footage circulating online shows large flames and significant plumes of smoke. Currently, there have been no reports of any casualties. The cause of the fire is reportedly a gas leak. Authorities have urged people in the surrounding area to shelter in place. Further information remains limited. We will continue to monitor the situation and update accordingly.

NEW YORK - GROUND STOP IN PLACE AT LA GUARDIA AIRPORT (LGA) DUE TO WIND

RECENT ALERTS



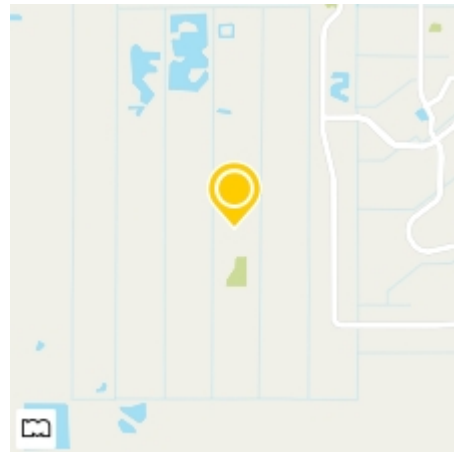
Category: Travel Information - **Risk:** Moderate



02-Feb-2026 01:06

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reports that there is a ground stop in place at La Guardia Airport (LGA) due to wind. The time when these flights will resume is not known at this time. Further information remains limited. We will continue to monitor the situation and provide updates accordingly.

FLORIDA - WILDFIRE REPORTED IN BREVARD COUNTY



Category: Environmental - **Risk:** Moderate

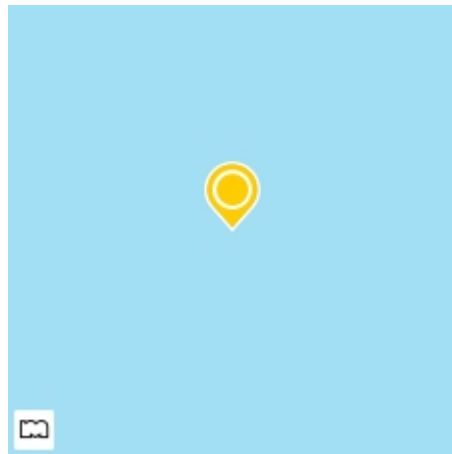
RECENT ALERTS



01-Feb-2026 20:31

According to local media sources, a wildfire has been reported in Brevard County. The wildfire has reportedly resulted in the closure of all lanes on the I-95. Local footage circulating online shows large plumes of smoke. The fire is reportedly near Madden Avenue. The cause of the fire is unknown. Currently, there have been no reports of any casualties or damages.

NORTH PACIFIC OCEAN - MAGNITUDE 5.2 EARTHQUAKE LOCATED EAST-SOUTHEAST OF ADAK, ALASKA



Category: Environmental - **Risk:** Moderate



01-Feb-2026 12:56

The United States Geological Survey (USGS) has detected a magnitude 5.2 earthquake 55 kilometres east southeast of Adak, Alaska. The tremor occurred at 1243 UTC at a depth of 45.2 kilometres. No tsunami warnings, casualties or damages have been reported. Aftershocks remain possible.

FCDO SUMMARY

Last updated: 12/10/2025 13:11:45

Warnings and insurance

This travel advice also covers American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and United States Virgin Islands.

World Cup 2026

The US is co-hosting the 2026 World Cup which takes place between 11 June and 19 July.

If you are planning to travel to the US during these times, see the [World Cup page](#) for more information.

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](#).

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- [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.

You should comply with all entry, visa and other conditions of entry. The authorities in the US set and enforce entry rules strictly. You may be liable to arrest, detention, or removal if you violate the rules or break the law. Even if you have a visa or visa waiver, the final decision on entry is made at the border by a US border official. If you’re not sure how these requirements apply to you, contact the [US Embassy or a consulate in the UK](#).

The US may change entry conditions at any time without prior notice.

Passport validity requirements

To enter the US, your passport must be valid for the length of your planned stay.

If you’re travelling through another country on your way to or from the US, check the entry requirements for that country. Many countries will only allow entry if you have at least 6 months validity remaining on your passport.

Dual nationals

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

British-US dual nationals

US law requires US citizens to enter and exit the US using a US passport.

Contact the [US Embassy or a consulate in the UK](#) for more information.

Visa requirements

To enter or transit through the US, you must have either an [Electronic System for Travel Authorisation \(ESTA\)](#) or a [visa](#).

The US State Department has [more information on visas](#).

Travellers whose sex on their passport differs from their sex recorded at birth should contact [the US Embassy or a consulate](#) in the UK for further advice.

Applying for an ESTA

ESTA is an automated system that determines the eligibility of visitors to travel to the US under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP). You can apply for an ESTA via the [Official ESTA Application Website](#) or using the [ESTA Mobile app on android](#) or on [iOS](#).

All Visa Waiver Program (VWP) travellers intending to enter the US by land, sea and air will be required to obtain an approved ESTA prior to application for admission at land border ports of entry. Individuals who are not eligible to travel under the VWP may apply for a visa at any [U.S. Embassy & Consulates](#).

You may not be able to apply for an ESTA visa waiver if you have:

- been arrested (even if the arrest did not result in a criminal conviction)
- a criminal record
- been refused admission into, or have been deported from, the US
- previously overstayed under an ESTA visa waiver

Information on whether you are eligible for an ESTA visa waiver can be found in the help section of the [official ESTA Application Website](#).

You cannot normally apply for an ESTA visa waiver if you were in the following countries on or after March 2011:

- Iran
- Iraq
- Libya
- North Korea

- Somalia
- Sudan
- Syria
- Yemen

You cannot apply for an [ESTA](#) visa waiver if you travelled to or were in Cuba on or after 12 January 2021.

An [ESTA](#) may not be sufficient for all types of business travel – particularly if you are travelling on behalf of a US company. Please check the rules on the [ESTA website](#) carefully.

If you are not eligible for an [ESTA](#), you must instead apply for a US visa. Travelling on an [ESTA](#) when ineligible can lead to detention and deportation by the US authorities.

Applying for a visa

The US Embassy in London has information on [how to apply for a visa](#). Please check the guidance carefully.

US visa appointments

Visa appointments at the US Embassy in London are limited. Plan your application as far ahead as possible before travel. If you need to travel urgently, you can request an expedited interview through the US Embassy's appointment service provider.

The US Embassy has more [information on visa appointments](#).

Children and young people

Anyone aged 17 and under must:

- have a valid visa or [ESTA](#) on arrival
- be able to provide evidence about the purpose, location and length of their visit if asked by immigration officials
- have a letter of consent, preferably in English and notarised from one or both parents if travelling alone, with only one parent, or with someone who is not a parent or legal guardian

The US authorities can stop you entering the country if they have safeguarding concerns about a child. If this happens, the US authorities will take the child into their care, and their return from the US could take months. The [ECDO](#) cannot speed up the return of British nationals aged 17 and under from the US.

The US government has [information about children travelling to the US](#). If you have questions, contact the [US Embassy in the UK](#).

Vaccine requirements

For details about medical entry requirements and recommended vaccinations, see [TravelHealthPro's US guide](#).

Electronic devices

Officials may ask to inspect your electronic devices, emails, text messages, and social media activity. If you refuse, they can delay or deny your entry. US Customs and Border Protection has [more information on electronic device searches](#).

Customs rules

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

Global Entry

The US Customs and Border Protection Trusted Traveller Program (TTP) [Global Entry](#) allows pre-approved, low-risk travellers expedited clearance at some US airports. If you're a British citizen, you can [register to get a UK background check](#). If you pass the background checks, you'll be invited to apply for [Global Entry for UK Citizens](#). Check eligibility carefully.

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 the USA

Terrorists are very likely to try and carry out attacks in the US.

Terrorism attacks could be indiscriminate, including in places visited by tourists and foreign nationals such as:

- crowded places and mass gatherings
- transportation networks
- sporting and cultural events
- places of worship and religious sites
- hospitals and clinics, schools and universities

Stay aware of your surroundings, keep up to date with local media reports and follow the advice of local authorities. The US Department of Homeland Security provides alerts within the US and its territories. If there is a life threatening emergency, call 911. US authorities regularly report that they have disrupted planned attacks and made arrests. [Report suspicious activity](#) to local law enforcement authorities.

Crime

Protecting your belongings

Do not leave passports in rental cars, especially not in the boot. Gangs may target vehicles driven by people who look like tourists.

Violent crime

Violent crime and gun crime rarely affect tourists, but take care in unfamiliar areas. Try not to walk through quieter areas alone, especially at night. You can find public advisories and information about recent incidents on local law enforcement websites.

Mass shooting incidents can happen but are a very small percentage of murders. The US Department of Homeland Security has advice on [what to do in an active shooter incident](#).

Research your destination before you travel and follow the advice of local authorities. Crime linked to illegal drugs is a major issue in Mexican states bordering Arizona, California, New Mexico and Texas. Some foreign nationals have been victims of crime in the border regions, but there is no evidence they were targeted because of their nationality.

Protests

Protests are common and can become violent. Follow the instructions of local authorities who may introduce curfews or emergency orders. If you attend peaceful protests or mass gatherings:

- be mindful of your surroundings
- move away if there are signs of trouble
- follow the instructions of local authorities

Laws and cultural differences

US states may have different laws. While you are in a state, you are subject to both that state's laws as well as national (federal) law. Not adhering to all US state and federal law can put your visa status and future travel to the US at risk.

Personal ID

Always carry a passport showing you have permission to enter or remain in the US.

Alcohol laws

The national legal age for buying and drinking alcohol is 21. Some states have different laws. If you are aged 20 or under, check state laws before drinking or buying alcohol.

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 airports. US law prohibits the importation, exportation, manufacture, sale or transportation of drug paraphernalia. If you are convicted of any of these offenses, you will be subject to fines and imprisonment.

Airports in USA have excellent technology and security for detecting illegal items. This is also used to scan the baggage of transiting passengers. All persons arriving at a port-of-entry to the United States are subject to inspection by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers.

Check state laws to make sure you follow laws on possession and use of controlled substances. The US Department of Justice provides a [list of all controlled substances](#).

LGBT+ travellers

The US is a very diverse society and attitudes towards LGBT+ people differ hugely across the country. Check state and local laws for the areas you plan to travel to. Refer to entry requirements which may apply to LGBT+ travellers (see [entry requirements](#)).

Read more [advice for LGBT+ travellers](#).

Outdoor Activities

If you're taking part in organised outdoor activities, check that the company is reputable and has documented safety procedures.

For sports activities like skiing, potholing and mountaineering, and for sports classed as particularly dangerous (for example off-piste skiing, mountain biking, climbing or paragliding), your insurance should include:

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

Hiking

- Check weather forecasts and conditions and make sure you're properly equipped for the worst-case scenario with items such as a map, compass, GPS and telecommunication equipment.

- Risks are greater if you undertake any activity alone. You may want to hire a guide for expert advice. Always leave copies of your itinerary with someone.
- Check the [US National Park Service website](#) for additional advice.

Winter sports

- Read about [preparing for winter sports abroad](#).
- Take advice on weather and avalanche conditions before you travel. Follow local skiing laws and regulations.
- Off-piste skiing is very dangerous and can invalidate your travel insurance. Avalanches are a risk in some areas. Follow safety instructions carefully and go with a qualified guide. Check ahead on the [National Avalanche Center website](#)

Transport risks

Road travel

If you are planning to drive in the US, see [information on driving abroad](#) and [check the driving rules in the states you'll be visiting](#).

You can use a UK photocard driving licence to drive in the US. You may need to get the [1949 version of the international driving permit \(IDP\)](#) as well. IDP requirements vary in each state. For more information, consult individual states' [Department of Motor Vehicles](#) as well as the [American Automobile Association \(AAA\)](#).

You cannot buy an IDP outside the UK, so get one before you travel.

If you still have a paper driving licence, you must take another form of photo ID, such as your passport. You can also [exchange your paper driving licence for a photocard licence](#).

Hire car companies often have stricter requirements for their customers, such as a year of driving experience, a higher minimum age and holding an IDP.

Vehicle safety

When travelling by car, you should:

- check weather conditions before a long car journey, particularly in mountainous, isolated or desert areas where services may be limited
- not sleep in your car by the road or in rest areas
- avoid leaving any items on display in your car
- stay on main roads
- use well-lit car parks

If you're in an accident, ask any other drivers involved to follow you to a public place and call the police.

Petrol stations

Petrol stations that do not display the price of fuel usually charge considerably more than the national average. They're often close to tourist destinations and airports. Make sure you know the price of fuel before using these services.

Air travel

Before you travel, check the security measures you're likely to face at the airport on the [Transportation Security Administration \(TSA\)](#) website. If you have a medical condition or disability and need assistance, [contact TSA Cares](#).

To monitor airport conditions in the US, check the [Federal Aviation Administration](#) website.

Extreme weather and natural disasters

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

Snowstorms

Snowstorms can disrupt critical infrastructure, and cause power cuts, or delays and cancellations in major transport hubs. Contact your travel company or airline before you travel.

Hurricanes

The Atlantic hurricane season normally runs from June to November. The Pacific hurricane season normally runs from May to November. Hurricanes can affect

coastal regions, Hawaii and Guam. The South Pacific tropical cyclone season normally runs from November to May and can affect American Samoa.

The US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) predicts that there is a very high likelihood of an “[above-normal Atlantic hurricane season](#)” in 2024. Travellers to the USA during the hurricane season should check the websites of local, State and Federal agencies (such as the [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration](#)) for the latest conditions. You should also be aware of the possibility of disruption to flights.

You should:

- monitor approaching storms on the [US National Hurricane Center website](#)
- follow instructions from local authorities, including evacuation orders
- visit the [Federal Emergency Management Agency \(FEMA\) website](#) for information on preparing for extreme weather and evacuating
- check with your airline or travel agent about possible disruption to flights or airport services and follow their advice

Earthquakes

While earthquakes can happen anywhere without warning in the US, Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, Puerto Rico, Washington and the entire Mississippi River Valley are at higher risk for earthquakes.

The [FEMA](#) website has advice about [what to do before, during and after an earthquake](#).

Tornadoes

Tornadoes can happen anytime depending on weather conditions. The [FEMA](#) website has advice about [what to do before, during and after a tornado](#).

Volcanic eruptions

There is volcanic activity across parts of the US with Alaska, Hawaii, California, Washington and Oregon having the largest number of active volcanoes. You should follow the advice of local authorities, including any evacuation orders.

The [FEMA](#) website has advice about [what to do before, during and after a volcanic eruption](#).

Wildfires

Forest and brush fires (wildfires) are a danger in many dry areas, particularly in canyons, hills and forests. High winds can mean fires spread rapidly.

You should:

- monitor local media and [weather reports](#)
- follow the advice of local authorities, including any evacuation orders
- be careful in areas recently affected by wildfires, as there may be mudslides during heavy rainfall

For more information visit the [National Interagency Fire Center](#) and [Fire Research and Management Exchange System](#) websites.

For information about wildfires in California, see the [CAL FIRE](#) website.

Flash flooding

Flash floods can cause travel disruption and damage to property and infrastructure. [Check weather warnings from the US's National Weather Service \(NOAA\)](#) before travel and follow the advice of the local authorities.

Arctic travel

Parts of the US are in the Arctic Circle, including some very remote areas of land and sea. Emergency medical assistance and search and rescue are limited in these areas. See [Arctic travel safety advice](#).

World Cup 2026

The FIFA World Cup takes place in the US, Canada and Mexico from 11 June to 19 July 2026. If you are travelling to attend:

- sign up to get [email updates](#) on travel advice for USA
- download the official FIFA World Cup 26 app (on [iOS](#) and on [Android](#)), and check the official [World Cup 2026 website](#) to stay informed of anything that might affect your travel or plans whilst in the US
- entry requirements, and local laws and customs, will likely be different for each of the countries co-hosting the tournament. If you are planning to visit

or transit through more than one country, check the [Travel advice page](#) for each country

In the US, matches will be hosted in Atlanta, Boston, Dallas, Houston, Kansas City, Los Angeles, Miami, New York/New Jersey, Philadelphia, Seattle and the San Francisco Bay Area. Expect other cities and popular tourist destinations across the US to be busier than usual during the tournament.

Visa and entry requirements

Check the [entry requirements](#) for the US, especially information on passport validity, visa requirements and applying for an Electronic Travel Authorization (eTA).

See [US Embassy London World Cup 2026](#) page for the latest information.

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.

Match tickets and stadium entry

Only purchase tickets through the official FIFA ticketing platform; no tickets will be sold at stadiums. To enter the stadium, you will need an official ticket on the FIFA World Cup app. Printed copies or screenshots may not be accepted at stadium gates. Each ticket is linked to the purchaser's details, and ID checks may be required upon entry.

Tickets sold on unofficial resale websites, social media, or through third-party vendors may not be genuine. Fraudulent tickets can look legitimate but may be rejected at the stadium gate, leaving you without entry on match day. Some scammers sell the same ticket to multiple buyers or resell tickets that have already been voided by FIFA Ticketing. Even if a ticket scans at the gate, you may be denied entry if it is flagged as invalid or already used. Unofficial sources often inflate prices significantly, especially for high-demand matches like play-offs or rivalry matchups without any guarantee of authenticity.

Ensure you check the stadium's code of conduct for any match you are attending. This sets out what you can bring into the World Cup stadiums.

Check the official [FIFA World Cup 2026 ticketing page](#) for more information.

Accommodation

There will be a very high demand for accommodation. Plan ahead to ensure you have accommodation during your stay.

Transport to and from the events

Transport routes around the stadiums will be very busy during the tournament. Local authorities may ask you to enter or leave the stadium by specific routes. Make sure you:

- plan your journey
- leave plenty of time, particularly on match days

If you're planning to hire a car or use taxis in the US, check the 'Transport Risks' section on the [Safety and security page](#) for more information.

Fan zones and public viewings

During the World Cup 2026, the FIFA Fan Festival will be the central fan destination for local communities as well as fans around the globe. Fan Zones and Public Viewing areas will also be available across the US. There may be restrictions on what you can take into football viewing venues and live viewing areas, and restrictions may vary between states.

Check the official [World Cup 2026 website](#) for information about the FIFA Fan Festival, Fan Zones and Public Viewing areas.

Laws and cultural differences

US states may have different laws. While you are in a state, you are subject to both that state's laws and national (federal) law. Not following all US state and federal laws can put your visa status and future travel to the US at risk.

Check the 'Laws and cultural differences' section on the [Safety and security page](#).

Drugs and alcohol regulations

The national legal age for buying alcohol is 21. The laws relating to the purchase and consumption of alcohol and drugs can differ between states and countries.

See more advice on the [Safety and security page](#).

LGBT+

Read the advice for LGBT+ travellers in the US on the [Safety and Security page](#) and check the [entry requirements](#) which may apply to LGBT+ travellers.

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 911 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 the US](#) (or the [US Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico and American Samoa, Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands](#))
- 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 the US](#) (or the [US Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico and American Samoa, Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands](#)), including:

- Zika virus

- [West Nile virus](#)

Altitude sickness is a risk in parts of the US. 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.

You cannot take some prescription drugs into the US. The US Food and Drug Administration provides information on [bringing medicines into the US](#).

UK prescriptions are not valid in the US. To get pharmacy drugs, you need a prescription from a US provider (available from an urgent care facility, emergency room or a doctor).

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

The NHS has information on [whether you can take your medicine abroad](#).

Healthcare in the US

Medical treatment is expensive and there are no special arrangements for British visitors.

Some hospitals ask non-US residents to pay a deposit when admitted. Send any requests for funds to your travel insurance provider first; only pay the hospital if you're advised to do so by your travel insurance company. Your medical care will not be affected while your claim is processed.

Medical facilities in American Samoa are basic and you may need medical evacuation by air ambulance to Hawaii, New Zealand or Australia.

Make sure you have adequate travel health insurance and accessible funds to cover the cost of any medical treatment abroad and repatriation.

Travel and mental health

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

Telephone: 911 (ambulance, fire, police).

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 [lawyers](#) in the US
- dealing with a [death in the US](#)
- being [arrested in the US](#)
- 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](#)

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).

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 for further safety and security information.

For support using your Solace Secure platform or app please contact support@solaceglobal.com.

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