

Thursday March 1, 2007

A SAFE TRIP ABROAD

Foreword

When you travel abroad, the odds are in your favor that you will have a safe and incident-free trip. Travelers are, however, sometimes victimized by crime and violence, or experience unexpected difficulties. No one is better able to tell you this than the U.S. consular officers who work in more than 250 U.S. embassies and consulates around the globe. Every day of the year, U.S. embassies and consulates receive calls from American citizens in distress.

Happily, most problems can be solved over the telephone or by a visit to the Consular Section of the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate. There are other occasions, however, when U.S. consular officers are called upon to help U.S. citizens who are in foreign hospitals or prisons, or to assist the families of U.S. citizens who have passed away overseas.

We have prepared the following travel tips to help you avoid serious difficulties during your overseas travel. We wish you a safe and wonderful journey!

BEFORE YOU GO

What to Take

Safety begins when you pack. To help avoid becoming a target, do not dress so as to mark yourself as an affluent tourist. Expensive-looking jewelry, for instance, can draw the wrong attention.

Always try to travel light. You can move more quickly and will be more likely to have a free hand. You will also be less tired and less likely to set your luggage down, leaving it unattended.

Carry the minimum number of valuables, and plan places to conceal them. Your passport, cash and credit cards are most secure when locked in a hotel safe. When you have to carry them on your person, you may wish to put them in various places rather than all in one wallet or pouch. Avoid handbags, fanny packs and outside pockets that are easy targets for thieves. Inside pockets and a sturdy shoulder bag with the strap worn across your chest are somewhat safer. One of the safest places to carry valuables is in a pouch or money belt worn under your clothing.

If you wear glasses, pack an extra pair. Bring them and any medicines you need in your carry-on luggage.

To avoid problems when passing through customs, keep medicines in their original, labeled containers. Bring copies of your prescriptions and the generic names for the drugs. If a medication is unusual or contains narcotics, carry a letter from your doctor attesting to your need to take the drug. If you have any doubt about the legality of carrying a certain drug into a country, consult the embassy or consulate of that country before you travel.

Bring travelers checks and one or two major credit cards instead of cash.

Pack an extra set of passport photos along with a photocopy of your passport's information page to make replacement of your passport easier in the event it is lost or stolen.

Put your name, address and telephone numbers inside and outside of each piece of luggage. Use covered luggage tags to avoid casual observation of your identity or nationality. If possible, lock your luggage.

Consider getting a telephone calling card. It is a convenient way of keeping in touch. If you have one, verify that you can use it from your overseas location(s). Access numbers to U.S. operators are published in many international newspapers. Find out your access number before you go.

What to Leave Behind

Don't bring anything you would hate to lose. Leave at home:

- valuable or expensive-looking jewelry
- irreplaceable family objects
- all unnecessary credit cards
- your Social Security card, library card, and similar items you may routinely carry in your wallet.

Leave a copy of your itinerary with family or friends at home in case they need to contact you in an emergency.

Make two photocopies of your passport identification page, airline tickets, driver's license and the credit cards that you plan to bring with you. Leave one photocopy of this data with family or friends at home; pack the other in a place separate from where you carry the originals.

Leave a copy of the serial numbers of your travelers' checks with a friend or relative at home. Carry your copy with you in a separate place and, as you cash the checks, cross them off the list.

What to Learn About Before You Go

Security

The Department of State's Consular Information Sheets are available for every country of the world. They describe entry requirements, currency regulations, unusual health conditions, the crime and security situation, political disturbances, areas of instability, and special information about driving and road conditions. They also provide addresses and emergency telephone numbers for U.S. embassies and consulates. In general, Consular Information Sheets do not give advice. Instead, they describe conditions so travelers can make informed decisions about their trips.

For some countries, however, the Department of State issues a Travel Warning in addition to a Consular Information Sheet. The Travel Warning may recommend that Americans defer travel to that country because of a dangerous situation there.

Public Announcements are a means to disseminate information about relatively short-term conditions posing significant risk to the security of American travelers. They are issued when there is a perceived threat, even if it does not involve Americans as a particular target group. In the past, Public Announcements have been issued to deal with coups, pre-election disturbances, violence by terrorists and anniversary dates of specific terrorist events.

You can access [Consular Information Sheets](#), [Travel Warnings](#) and [Public Announcements](#) 24-hours a day in several ways.

Internet

The most convenient source of information about travel and consular services is the Consular Affairs home page. The web site address is <http://travel.state.gov>.

Telephone

Overseas Citizens Services at 1-888-407-4747 can answer general inquiries on safety and security overseas. This number is available from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays). Callers who are unable to use toll-free numbers, such as those calling from overseas, can obtain information and assistance from OCS during these hours by calling 1-202-501-4444.

In Person

Consular Information Sheets, Travel Warnings and Public Announcements are available at any of the regional passport agencies and U.S. embassies and consulates abroad.

Local Laws and Customs

When you leave the United States, you are subject to the laws of the country you are visiting. Therefore, before you go, learn as much as you can about the local laws and customs of the places you plan to visit. Good resources are your library, your travel agent, and the embassies, consulates or tourist bureaus of the countries you will visit. In addition, keep track of what is being reported in the media about recent developments in those countries.

THINGS TO ARRANGE BEFORE YOU GO

Your Itinerary

As much as possible, plan to stay in larger hotels that have more elaborate security. Safety experts recommend booking a room from the second to seventh floors above ground level – high enough to deter easy entry from outside, but low enough for fire equipment to reach.

When there is a choice of airport or airline, ask your travel agent about comparative safety records.

Legal Documents

Have your affairs in order at home. If you leave a current will, insurance documents, and power of attorney with your family or a friend, you can feel secure about traveling and will be prepared for any emergency that may arise while you are away. If you have minor children, consider making guardianship arrangements for them.

Register your travel

It is a good idea to register your travel with the State Department so that you may be contacted if need be, whether because of a family emergency in the U.S. , or because of a crisis in the area in which you are traveling. Travel registration is a free service provided by the State Department, and is easily accomplished online at <https://travelregistration.state.gov>. (In accordance with the Privacy Act, the Department of State may not release information on your welfare or whereabouts to inquirers without your express written authorization.)

Credit

Make a note of the credit limit on each credit card that you bring, and avoid charging over that limit while traveling. Americans have been arrested for innocently exceeding their credit limit. Ask your credit card company how to report the loss of your card from abroad. 1-800 numbers do not work from abroad, but your company should have a number that you can call while you are overseas.

Insurance

Find out if your personal property insurance covers you for loss or theft abroad. Also, check on whether your health insurance covers you abroad. Medicare and Medicaid do not provide payment for medical care outside the United States . Even if your health insurance will reimburse you for medical care that you pay for abroad, health insurance usually does not pay for medical evacuation from a remote area or from a country where medical facilities are inadequate. Consider purchasing a policy designed for travelers, and covering short-term health and emergency assistance, as well as medical evacuation in the event of an accident or serious illness.

PRECAUTIONS TO TAKE WHILE TRAVELING

Safety on the Street

Use the same common sense traveling overseas that you would at home. Be especially cautious in (or avoid) areas where you may be more easily victimized. These include crowded subways, train stations, elevators, tourist sites, market places, festivals and crime-ridden neighborhoods.

Don't use short cuts, narrow alleys or poorly lit streets.

Try not to travel alone at night.

Avoid public demonstrations and other civil disturbances.

Keep a low profile and avoid loud conversations or arguments.

Do not discuss travel plans or other personal matters with strangers.

Avoid scam artists by being wary of strangers who approach you and offer to be your guide or sell you something at bargain prices.

Beware of pickpockets. They often have an accomplice who will:

- jostle you,

- ask you for directions or the time,
- point to something spilled on your clothing,
- or distract you by creating a disturbance.

Beware of groups of vagrant children who create a distraction while picking your pocket.

Wear the shoulder strap of your bag across your chest and walk with the bag away from the curb to avoid drive-by purse-snatchers.

Try to seem purposeful when you move about. Even if you are lost, act as if you know where you are going. Try to ask for directions only from individuals in authority.

Know how to use a pay telephone and have the proper change or token on hand.

Learn a few phrases in the local language or have them handy in written form so that you can signal your need for police or medical help.

Make a note of emergency telephone numbers you may need: police, fire, your hotel, and the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.

If you are confronted, don't fight back -- give up your valuables.

Safety in Your Hotel

Keep your hotel door locked at all times. Meet visitors in the lobby.

Do not leave money and other valuables in your hotel room while you are out. Use the hotel safe.

If you are out late at night, let someone know when you expect to return.

If you are alone, do not get on an elevator if there is a suspicious-looking person inside.

Read the fire safety instructions in your hotel room. Know how to report a fire, and be sure you know where the nearest fire exits and alternate exits are located. (Count the doors between your room and the nearest exit; this could be a lifesaver if you have to crawl through a smoke-filled corridor.)

Safety on Public Transportation

If a country has a pattern of tourists being targeted by criminals on public transport, that information is mentioned in the Consular Information Sheets in the section about crime.

Taxis. Only take taxis clearly identified with official markings. Beware of unmarked cabs.

Trains. Well-organized, systematic robbery of passengers on trains along popular tourists routes is a problem. It is more common at night and especially on overnight trains.

If you see your way being blocked by a stranger and another person is very close to you from behind, move away. This can happen in the corridor of the train or on the platform or station.

Do not accept food or drink from strangers. Criminals have been known to drug food or drink offered to passengers. Criminals may also spray sleeping gas in train compartments. Where possible, lock your compartment. If it cannot be locked securely, take turns sleeping in shifts with your traveling companions. If that is not possible, stay awake. If you must sleep unprotected, tie down your luggage and secure your valuables to the extent possible.

Do not be afraid to alert authorities if you feel threatened in any way. Extra police are often assigned to ride trains on routes where crime is a serious problem.

Buses. The same type of criminal activity found on trains can be found on public buses on popular tourist routes. For example, tourists have been drugged and robbed while sleeping on buses or in bus stations. In some countries, whole busloads of passengers have been held up and robbed by gangs of bandits.

Safety When You Drive

When you rent a car, choose a type that is commonly available locally. Where possible, ask that markings that identify it as a rental car be removed. Make certain it is in good repair. If available, choose a car with universal door locks and power windows, features that give the driver better control of access. An air conditioner, when available, is also a safety feature, allowing you to drive with windows closed. Thieves can and do snatch purses through open windows of moving cars.

Keep car doors locked at all times. Wear seat belts.

As much as possible, avoid driving at night.

Don't leave valuables in the car. If you must carry things with you, keep them out of sight locked in the trunk, and then take them with you when you leave the car.

Don't park your car on the street overnight. If the hotel or municipality does not have a parking garage or other secure area, select a well-lit area.

Never pick up hitchhikers.

Don't get out of the car if there are suspicious looking individuals nearby. Drive away.

Patterns of Crime Against Motorists

In many places frequented by tourists, including areas of southern Europe, victimization of motorists has been refined to an art. Where it is a problem, U.S. embassies are aware of it and consular officers try to work with local authorities to warn the public about the dangers. In some locations, these efforts at public awareness have paid off, reducing the frequency of incidents. You may also wish to ask your rental car agency for advice on avoiding robbery while visiting tourist destinations.

Carjackers and thieves operate at gas stations, parking lots, in city traffic and along the highway. Be suspicious of anyone who hails you or tries to get your attention when you are in or near your car.

Criminals use ingenious ploys. They may pose as good Samaritans, offering help for tires that they claim are flat or that they have made flat. Or they may flag down a motorist, ask for assistance, and then steal the rescuer's luggage or car. Usually they work in groups, one person carrying on the pretense while the others rob you.

Other criminals get your attention with abuse, either trying to drive you off the road, or causing an "accident" by rear-ending you.

In some urban areas, thieves don't waste time on ploys, they simply smash car windows at traffic lights, grab your valuables or your car and get away. In cities around the world, "defensive driving" has come to mean more than avoiding auto accidents; it means keeping an eye out for potentially criminal pedestrians, cyclists and scooter riders.

How to Handle Money Safely

To avoid carrying large amounts of cash, change your travelers checks only as you need currency. Countersign travelers checks only in front of the person who will cash them.

Do not flash large amounts of money when paying a bill. Make sure your credit card is returned to you after each transaction.

Deal only with authorized agents when you exchange money, buy airline tickets or purchase souvenirs. Do not change money on the black market.

If your possessions are lost or stolen, report the loss immediately to the local police. Keep a copy of the police report for insurance claims and as an explanation of your plight.

After reporting missing items to the police, report the loss or theft of:

- travelers' checks to the nearest agent of the issuing company
- credit cards to the issuing company
- airline tickets to the airline or travel agent
- passport to the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate

How to Avoid Legal Difficulties

When you are in a foreign country, you are subject to its laws and are under its jurisdiction. You can be arrested overseas for actions that may be either legal or considered minor infractions in the United States. Familiarize yourself with legal expectations in the countries you will visit. Consular Information Sheets include information on unusual patterns of arrests in particular countries, as appropriate.

Some of the offenses for which U.S. citizens have been arrested abroad are:

Drug Violations

More than 1/3 of U.S. citizens incarcerated abroad are held on drug charges. Some countries do not distinguish between possession and trafficking, and many have mandatory sentences - even for possession of a small amount of marijuana or cocaine. A number of Americans have been arrested for possessing prescription drugs, particularly tranquilizers and amphetamines, that they purchased legally elsewhere. Other U.S. citizens have been arrested for purchasing prescription drugs abroad in quantities that local authorities suspected were for commercial use. If in doubt about foreign drug laws, ask local authorities or the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.

Possession of Firearms

The places where U.S. citizens most often experience difficulties for illegal possession of firearms are nearby - Mexico, Canada and the Caribbean. Sentences for possession of firearms in Mexico can be up to 30 years. In general, firearms, even those legally registered in the U.S., cannot be brought into a country unless a permit is obtained in advance from the embassy or a consulate of that country and the firearm is registered with foreign authorities on arrival. (Note: There are also strict rules about bringing firearms or ammunition into the U.S; check with U.S. Customs at http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/vacation/kbyg/prohibited_restricted.xml before your trip.)

Photography

In many countries you can be detained for photographing security-related institutions, such things as police and military installations, government buildings, border areas and transportation facilities. If you are in doubt, ask permission before taking photographs.

Purchasing Antiques

Americans have been arrested for purchasing souvenirs that were, or looked like, antiques and which local customs authorities believed were national treasures. This is especially true in Turkey, Egypt and Mexico. Familiarize yourself with any local regulations of antiques. In countries with strict control of antiques, document your purchases as reproductions if that is the case, or if they are authentic, secure the necessary export permit (often from the national museum). It is a good idea to inquire about exporting these items before you purchase them.

Terrorism

Terrorist acts occur unpredictably, making it impossible to protect yourself absolutely. The first and best protection is to avoid travel to areas where there has been a persistent record of terrorist attacks or kidnappings.

Most terrorist attacks are the result of careful planning. Just as a car thief will first be attracted to an unlocked car with the key in the ignition, terrorists are looking for the most accessible targets. The chances that a tourist, traveling with an unpublished program or itinerary, would be the victim of terrorism are slight. In addition, many terrorist groups, seeking publicity for political causes within their own country or region, may not be looking for American targets. Nevertheless, the following pointers may help you avoid becoming a target of opportunity. They should be considered as adjuncts to the tips listed in the previous sections on how to protect yourself against the far greater likelihood of being a victim of crime. These precautions may provide some degree of protection, and can serve as practical and psychological deterrents to would-be terrorists.

Schedule direct flights if possible and avoid stops in high-risk airports or areas.

Be cautious about what you discuss with strangers or what others may overhear.

Try to minimize the time spent in the public area of an airport, which is a less protected area. Move quickly from the check-in counter to the secured areas. Upon arrival, leave the airport as soon as possible.

As much as possible, avoid luggage tags, dress and behavior that may identify you as an American.

Keep an eye out for abandoned packages or briefcases, or other suspicious items. Report them to airport authorities and leave the area promptly.

Avoid obvious terrorist targets such as places where Americans and Westerners are known to congregate.

Travel to High-Risk Areas

If you must travel in an area where there has been a history of terrorist attacks or kidnappings, make it a habit to:

Discuss with your family what they would do in the event of an emergency. Make sure your affairs are in order before leaving home.

As noted earlier, it's a good idea to register your travel with the Department of State. This may be accomplished online at <https://travelregistration.state.gov>. Registration will make it easier to contact you in case of an emergency.

Remember to leave a detailed itinerary and the numbers or copies of your passport or other citizenship documents with a friend or relative in the United States .

Remain friendly but be cautious about discussing personal matters or your itinerary.

Leave no personal or business papers in your hotel room.

Watch for people following you or "loiterers" observing your comings and goings.

Keep a mental note of safe havens, such as police stations, hotels, and hospitals. Formulate a plan of action for what you will do if a bomb explodes or there is gunfire nearby.

Let someone else know what your travel plans are. Keep them informed if you change your plans.

Report any suspicious activity to local police, and the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.

Select your own taxicabs at random. Don't take a vehicle that is not clearly identified as a taxi. Compare the face of the driver with the one on his or her posted license.

If possible, travel with others.

Be sure of the identity of visitors before opening the door of your hotel room. Don't meet strangers at your hotel room, or at unknown or remote locations.

Refuse unexpected packages.

Check for loose wires or other suspicious activity around your car.

Be sure your vehicle is in good operating condition.

Drive with car windows closed in crowded streets. Bombs can be thrown through open windows.

If you are ever in a situation where somebody starts shooting, drop to the floor or get down as low as possible. Don't move until you are sure the danger has passed. Do not attempt to help rescuers and do not pick up a weapon. If possible, shield yourself behind a solid object. If you must move, crawl on your stomach.

Hijacking/Hostage Situations

While every hostage situation is different, there are some general considerations to keep in mind.

The U.S. Government's policy is firm: we do not make concessions to terrorists. When Americans are abducted overseas, we look to the host government to exercise its responsibility under international law to protect all persons within its territories and to bring about the safe release of hostages. We work closely with these governments from the outset of a hostage-taking incident to ensure that our citizens and other victims are released as quickly and safely as possible.

At the outset of a terrorist incident, the terrorists typically are tense, high-strung and may behave irrationally. It is extremely important that you remain calm and alert and manage your own behavior.

Avoid resistance and sudden or threatening movements. Do not struggle or try to escape unless you are certain of being successful. Don't try to be a hero, endangering yourself and others.

Consciously put yourself in a mode of passive cooperation. Talk normally. Do not complain, avoid belligerency, and comply with all orders and instructions.

If questioned, keep your answers short. Don't volunteer information or make unnecessary overtures.

Make a concerted effort to relax. Prepare yourself mentally, physically and emotionally for the possibility of a long ordeal.

Try to remain inconspicuous, avoid direct eye contact and the appearance of observing your captors' actions.

Avoid alcoholic beverages. Eat what they give you, even if it does not look or taste appetizing, but keep consumption of food and drink at a moderate level. A loss of appetite and weight is normal.

If you are involved in a lengthier, drawn-out situation, try to establish a rapport with your captors, avoiding political discussions or other confrontational subjects.

Establish a daily program of mental and physical activity.

Think positively. Avoid a sense of despair. Rely on your inner resources. Remember that you are a valuable commodity to your captors. It is important to them to keep you alive and well.

ASSISTANCE ABROAD

The Consular Section can provide updated information on the security situation in a country.

If you are ill or injured, contact the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate for a list of local physicians and medical facilities. If you request, consular officers will help you contact family or friends. If necessary, a consul can assist in the transfer of funds from family or friends in the United States. Payment of hospital and other medical expenses is your responsibility.

Should you find yourself in legal difficulty, contact a consular officer immediately. Consular officers cannot serve as attorneys, give legal advice, or get you out of jail. If you are arrested, consular officials will visit you, advise you of your rights under local laws, provide a list of local attorneys who speak English and who may have had experience in representing U.S. citizens, and ensure that you are held under humane conditions and are treated fairly under local law. A consular officer will contact your family or friends if you desire. When necessary, consuls can transfer money from home for you and will try to get relief for you, including food and clothing in countries where this is a problem. If you are detained, remember that under international treaties and customary international law, you have the right to talk to the U.S. consul. If you are denied this right, be politely persistent. Try to have someone get in touch for you.

Resources for U.S. Citizen Crime Victims

When a U.S. citizen becomes the victim of a crime overseas he or she may suffer physical, emotional, or financial injuries. The emotional impact of the crime may be intensified if the victim is in unfamiliar surroundings, far away from sources of comfort and support, and not fluent in the local language or knowledgeable about local laws and customs. Consuls and consular agents can provide assistance to U.S. citizen crime victims.

If you become the victim of a crime overseas, contact the nearest U.S. embassy, consulate, or consular agency for assistance. Also contact local police to report the incident and obtain immediate help with safety concerns.

While consular officials cannot investigate a crime, provide legal advice, represent you in court, serve as official interpreters or translators, or pay legal, medical, or other fees for U.S. citizens, they can assist crime victims in many other ways. Consular personnel overseas are familiar with local government agencies and resources in the countries in which they are located, and they can help you::

- replace a stolen passport
- contact family, friends, or employers
- obtain appropriate medical care
- address emergency needs that arise as a result of the crime
- obtain general information about the local criminal justice process and information about your case
- obtain information about local resources to assist victims, including foreign crime victim compensation programs
- obtain information about crime victim assistance and compensation programs in the U.S.
- obtain a list of local attorneys who speak English

Victim Assistance: If you are the victim of a crime while overseas, you may benefit from specialized resources for crime victims available in the United States . Throughout the United States , thousands of local crime victim assistance programs offer help to victims of violent crime and most will help residents of their community who have been the victim of a crime in another country. These include rape crisis counseling programs, shelter and counseling programs for battered women, support groups and bereavement counseling for family members of homicide victims, diagnostic and treatment programs for child abuse victims, assistance for victims of drunk driving crashes, and others. Information about locating crime victim assistance programs is below.

Victim Compensation: All states operate crime victim compensation programs and nearly half of them offer benefits to their residents who are victims of violent crime overseas. (See contact information for state compensation programs below.) These state compensation programs provide financial assistance to eligible victims for reimbursement of expenses such as medical treatment, counseling, funeral costs, lost income or loss of support, and others. Generally victim compensation programs require the victim to report the crime to law enforcement and they usually request a copy of the police report.

Contact Information for Victim Compensation and Assistance Programs :

Information about each state's crime victim compensation program and how to apply for compensation is available on the Internet at the web site of the National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards, <http://www.nacvcb.org/> .

The toll-free 24 hours a day/7 days a week hotline for sexual assault crisis counseling and referrals in the United States is 1-800-656-HOPE. It is operated by a non-profit organization, RAINN (Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network), which also has information on the Internet at <http://www.rainn.org/> .

Information about local sexual assault victim assistance programs in the U.S. is also available from each state's sexual assault coalition. Contact information for these state coalitions are listed on the web site of the U.S. Department of Justice Violence Against Women Office, <http://www.usdoj.gov/ovw/> .

The toll-free 24 hours a day /7 days a week National Domestic Violence Hotline, which provides crisis counseling and referrals in the U.S. is 1-800-799-SAFE.

Information about local domestic violence victim assistance programs in the U.S. is also available from each state's domestic violence coalition. Contact information for these state coalitions is listed at the web site of the U.S. Department of Justice Violence Against Women Office, <http://www.usdoj.gov/ovw/> .

The toll-free 24 hours a day/7 days a week crisis counseling and referral line for families and friends of those who have died by violence is 1-888-818-POMC. It is operated by a non-profit organization, POMC, Inc. (The National Organization of Parents of Murdered Children), which also has information on the Internet at <http://www.pomc.org/>.

Information about national and local resources for victims and family members of victims of drunk driving crashes is available at the web site of Mothers Against Drunk Driving, <http://www.madd.org/>.

Contact information for non-emergency victim assistance services in communities throughout the U.S. is available at the web site of the U.S. Department of Justice Office for Victims of Crime, <http://ovc.ncjrs.org/findvictimservices/>.

Information for crime victims on the impact of crime, safety planning, legal rights and civil legal remedies, and options for assistance and referrals to local programs is also available from the National Crime Victim Center (NCVC). Call toll free (8:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. EST) 1-800-FYI-CALL or call TTY for hearing impaired (8:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. EST) 1-800-211-7996. Information is also available on the Internet at <http://www.ncvc.org/>.

Information and referral to victim assistance programs is available from the National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA). Call toll-free 24 hours a day / 7 days a week 1-800-TRY-NOVA. Information is also available on the Internet at <http://www.try-nova.org/>.

Information about victim assistance programs in approximately 20 countries is available at the web site of Victim Assistance Online, <http://www.vaonline.org/>.

Also, consult the State Department brochure entitled *Help for American Victims of Crime Overseas*.

Planning Another Trip?

The following brochures published by the Bureau of Consular Affairs can be found on our web site at <http://www.travel.state.gov>

Your Trip Abroad

[Tips for Americans Residing Abroad](#)

[Travel Tips for Older Americans](#)

Country specific information can be found in the following publications:

[Tips for Travelers to Canada](#)

[Tips for Travelers to the Caribbean](#)

[Tips for Travelers to Central & South America](#)

[Tips for Travelers to the People's Republic of China](#)

[Tips for Travelers to Mexico](#)

[Tips for Travelers to the Middle East & North Africa](#)

[Tips for Travelers to Russia](#)

[Tips for Travelers to South Asia](#)

For more information on the following publications, please consult <http://travel.state.gov> web site.

- General entry and visa information for these and other countries are available in [Foreign Entry Requirements](#).
- Information on how, when and where to apply for your U.S. passport is available in [Passports: Applying for Them the Easy Way](#).



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