

SAFETY IN PARIS

ENTRY/EXIT REQUIREMENTS: France is a party to the Schengen agreement. As such, U.S. citizens may enter France for up to 90 days for tourist or business purposes without a visa. The passport should be valid for at least three months beyond the period of stay. Anyone intending to stay more than 90 days must obtain the appropriate visa issued by one of the French Consulates in the U.S., prior to departure for France.

For further information concerning entry requirements for France, travelers may contact the Embassy of France at 4101 Reservoir Road NW, Washington, DC 20007, tel. (202) 944-6000, email: info@ambafrance-us.org, or the French Consulates. For more information visit the Embassy of France web site at www.consulfrance-washington.com.

SAFETY AND SECURITY: The Government of France maintains a threat rating system known locally as "Vigipirate" it is similar to the U.S. Homeland Security Advisory System. Under this plan, in times of heightened security concerns, the government augments police with armed forces and increases visibility at airports, train and metro stations, and other high-profile locations such as schools, major tourist attractions, and government installations.

Although Americans have not been specifically targeted in terrorist attacks in France within the past few years, travelers should maintain vigilance. French law enforcement authorities are proactive and will respond immediately. If there is a security incident or suspicious package, do not linger in the area to observe. For the latest security information, Americans traveling abroad should regularly monitor the Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs' web site at <http://travel.state.gov>, where the current Travel Warnings and Travel Alerts, including the Worldwide Caution, can be found. Up-to-date information on safety and security can also be obtained by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll free in the U.S., or, for callers outside the U.S. and Canada, a regular toll line at 1-202-501-4444. These numbers are available from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays).

The Department of State urges American citizens to take responsibility for their own personal security while traveling overseas. For general information about appropriate measures travelers can take to protect themselves in an overseas environment, see the Department of State's pamphlet *A Safe Trip Abroad*.

CRIME: While both France and Monaco have relatively low rates of violent crime, a limited number of neighborhoods in the larger French cities merit extra caution. Additionally, although the overall crime rate has fallen slightly in recent years, the violent crime rate has increased. Thieves commonly target vehicles with non-local license plates, and work in or near tourist attractions such as museums, monuments, restaurants, hotels, beaches, trains, train stations, airports, and subways.

Americans in France should be particularly alert to pickpockets in train stations and subways. Photocopies of travel documents and credit cards should be kept separate from the originals, and key telephone numbers maintained to contact banks if credit cards are stolen or lost.

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Although thieves may operate anywhere, the U.S. Embassy in Paris receives frequent reports of theft from several areas in particular:

Paris: The Paris Police Prefecture has published a pamphlet entitled "Paris In Complete Safety", which provides practical advice and useful telephone numbers for visitors and can be accessed at http://www.prefecture-police-paris.interieur.gouv.fr/prevention/article/paris_securite_anglais.htm. Thieves operate on the rail link (RER) from Charles de Gaulle Airport to downtown Paris, where they prey on jet-lagged, luggage-burdened tourists. In one common ruse, a thief distracts a tourist with a question about directions, while an accomplice steals a momentarily unguarded backpack, briefcase, or purse. Thieves also time their thefts to coincide with train stops so they may quickly exit the car just before the automatic doors close. Travelers may wish to consider taking an airport shuttle bus or taxi from the airport into the city.

Reports of stolen purses, briefcases, and carry-on bags at Charles de Gaulle Airport have been on the rise. Travelers should monitor their bags at all times and never leave them unattended. As thieves commonly target laptop bags, travelers should avoid carrying passports and other valuables in computer bags. One common method involves timing the theft so that while the traveler is busy at the ticket counter, the traveler's shoulder bag is picked up after being placed on the floor. Also be aware that unattended bags are subject to destruction by airport security.

There have been reports of robberies in which thieves on motorcycles reach into a moving car by opening the car door or accessing an open window or even breaking the window to steal purses and other bags visible inside. The same technique is used against pedestrians walking with purses/bags/cameras slung over their street-side shoulder. Those traveling by car should remember to keep the windows up and the doors locked and items that may be attractive to thieves out of sight. Pedestrians are encouraged to walk as far from the street side as possible, and to keep bags slung across the body, with the bag hanging away from the street.

Many thefts occur on the Number One Subway Line, which runs through the center of Paris by many major tourist attractions (including the Grand Arch at La Défense, the Arc de Triomphe, the Champs Elysées, Place de la Concorde, the Louvre, and the Bastille). Pickpockets are especially active on this metro line during the summer months and use a number of techniques. The most common, and unfortunately the most successful, is the simple "bump and snatch," where an individual bumps into the tourist while at the same time reaching into the pockets/purse/bag. Visitors should be particularly careful when metro doors are closing, as this is a favored moment for the less-sophisticated pickpockets to simply grab valuables and jump through the closing doors, leaving the victim helplessly watching as the thief flees. Visitors are encouraged NOT to confront thieves aggressively; they often operate in groups and may become violent if cornered. Simply drawing attention to an attempted theft will most likely stop the operation and cause a tactical withdrawal by the thief.

Gare du Nord train station, where the express trains from the airport arrive in Paris, is also a high-risk area for pocket-picking and theft. Travelers should also beware of thefts that occur on both overnight

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and day trains, especially on trains originating in Spain, Italy, and Belgium. These involve the theft of valuables while passengers are sleeping, or when the bags are left unattended.

In hotels, thieves target lobbies and breakfast rooms, and take advantage of a minute of inattention to snatch jackets, purses, and backpacks. While many hotels do have safety latches that allow guests to secure their rooms from inside, this feature is not as universal as it is in the United States. If no chain or latch is present, a chair placed up against the door and wedged under the handle is usually an effective obstacle to surreptitious entry during the night. There are, however, reports of thieves breaking into hotel rooms on lower floors through open windows while the occupants are sleeping. To guard against this, hotel room windows should be kept locked at all times. Whenever possible, valuables should be kept in the hotel safe.

Many Americans have reported thefts occurring in restaurants and nightclubs/bars, where purses are stolen from the back of a chair or from under the table. Again, keep valuables on your person and do not leave them unattended or out of sight. Thefts also occur at the major department stores such as Galeries Lafayette and Printemps where tourists often place wallets, passports, and credit cards on cashier counters during transactions.

Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) are very common in France and provide ready access to cash, allowing travelers to carry as much money as they need for each day. The rates are competitive with local exchange bureaus, and an ATM transaction is easier than the cashing of travelers' checks. However, crime involving ATMs is increasing. Travelers should not use ATMs in isolated, unlit areas or where loiterers are present. Travelers should be especially aware of persons standing close enough to see the Personal Identification Number (PIN) being entered into the machine. Thieves often conduct successful scams by simply observing the PIN as it is entered and then stealing the card from the user in some other location. If the card becomes stuck, travelers should immediately report it to the bank where the machine is located.

Large criminal operations in Paris involving the use of ATMs that "eat" the user's ATM card have been reported. This most often happens during a weekend or at night when the bank is closed. The frustrated traveler often walks away after unsuccessfully trying to retrieve the card, with plans to return the first day the bank is open. In such cases, a criminal gang has modified the machine using an add-on device equipped with a microchip that records the user's PIN when it is typed in, and also prevents the card from being ejected. The criminal retrieves the card from the device once the visitor departs, downloads the recorded PIN and then goes to other ATMs and withdraws as much cash as possible. ATM users are strongly encouraged to carry a 24-hour emergency number for their ATM card and bank account that will enable the immediate prevention of withdrawals from the account if difficulties occur.

Pigalle is the "adult entertainment district" of Paris. Many entertainment establishments in this area engage in aggressive marketing and charge well beyond the normal rate for drinks. There have been reports of threats of violence to coerce patrons into paying exorbitant beverage tabs. There have also been several violent confrontations between rival gangs in the district, including one in August 2007 one

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block from the famous Moulin Rouge cabaret. Visitors are encouraged to avoid this area unless touring with a well-organized and reputable tour company.

INFORMATION FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME: The loss or theft abroad of a U.S. passport should be reported immediately to the local police and the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate. If you are the victim of a crime while overseas, in addition to reporting to local police, please contact the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate for assistance. The Embassy/Consulate staff can, for example, assist you to find appropriate medical care, to contact family members or friends, and explain how funds could be transferred. Although the investigation and prosecution of the crime is solely the responsibility of local authorities, consular officers can help you to understand the local criminal justice process and to find an attorney if needed. Under French law, compensation is available to victims of crime committed on French soil under certain circumstances.

The emergency numbers in France for police, fire, and medical assistance are as follows: 17 (police emergency), 18 (fire department) and 15 (emergency medical/paramedic team/ambulance). In Monaco, the numbers are 17 (police emergency), 18 (fire department) and 9375-2525 (medical/paramedic team/ambulance).

CRIMINAL PENALTIES: While in a foreign country, a U.S. citizen is subject to that country's laws and regulations, which sometimes differ significantly from those in the United States and may not afford the protections available to the individual under U.S. law. Penalties for breaking the law can be more severe than in the United States for similar offenses. Persons violating French laws, even unknowingly, may be expelled, arrested, or imprisoned. Penalties for possession, use, or trafficking in illegal drugs in France are severe, and convicted offenders can expect long jail sentences and heavy fines. Engaging in sexual conduct with children or using or disseminating child pornography in a foreign country is a crime, prosecutable in the United States. Please see our information on Criminal Penalties.

REGISTRATION/EMBASSY AND CONSULATE LOCATIONS: Americans living or traveling in France or Monaco are encouraged to register with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate through the State Department's travel registration web site and to obtain updated information on travel and security within France and Monaco. Americans without Internet access may register directly with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate. By registering, American citizens make it easier for the Embassy or Consulate to contact them in cases of emergency.

The U.S. Embassy / Consular Section in Paris is located at 4 avenue Gabriel, 75008 Paris (Place de La Concorde, métro stop Concorde), telephone: in country 01-43-12-22-22. Further information can be obtained at the U.S. Embassy's web site at <http://france.usembassy.gov/>.