

Travel Warning U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE February 08, 2012

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_5665.html

The Department of State has issued this Travel Warning to inform U.S. citizens about the security situation in Mexico ...

General Conditions Millions of U.S. citizens safely visit Mexico each year for study, tourism, and business, including more than 150,000 who cross the border every day. The Mexican government makes a considerable effort to protect U.S. citizens and other visitors to major tourist destinations, and there is no evidence that Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs) have targeted U.S. visitors and residents based on their nationality. Resort areas and tourist destinations in Mexico generally do not see the levels of drug-related violence and crime reported in the border region and in areas along major trafficking routes.

Nevertheless, U.S. travelers should be aware that the Mexican government has been engaged in an extensive effort to counter TCOs which engage in narcotics trafficking and other unlawful activities throughout Mexico. The TCOs themselves are engaged in a violent struggle to control drug trafficking routes and other criminal activity. As a result, crime and violence are serious problems throughout the country and can occur anywhere. U.S. citizens have fallen victim to TCO activity, including homicide, gun battles, kidnapping, carjacking and highway robbery.

According to the most recent homicide figures published by the Mexican government, 47,515 people were killed in narcotics-related violence in Mexico between December 1, 2006 and September 30, 2011, with 12,903 narcotics-related homicides in the first nine months of 2011 alone. While most of those killed in narcotics-related violence have been members of TCOs, innocent persons have also been killed. The number of U.S. citizens reported to the Department of State as murdered in Mexico increased from 35 in 2007 to 120 in 2011.

Gun battles between rival TCOs or with Mexican authorities have taken place in towns and cities in many parts of Mexico, especially in the border region. Gun battles have occurred in broad daylight on streets and in other public venues, such as restaurants and clubs. During some of these incidents, U.S. citizens have been trapped and temporarily prevented from leaving the area. TCOs use stolen cars and trucks to create roadblocks on major thoroughfares, preventing the military and police from responding to criminal activity. The location and timing of future armed engagements is unpredictable. We recommend that you defer travel to the areas indicated in this Travel Warning and to exercise extreme caution when traveling throughout the northern border region.

The rising number of kidnappings and disappearances throughout Mexico is of particular concern. Both local and expatriate communities have been victimized. In addition, local police have been implicated in some of these incidents. We strongly advise you to lower your profile and avoid displaying any evidence of wealth that might draw attention.

Carjacking and highway robbery are serious problems in many parts of the border region and U.S. citizens have been murdered in such incidents. Most victims who complied with carjackers at these checkpoints have reported that they were not physically harmed. Incidents have occurred during the day and at night, and carjackers have used a variety of techniques, including bumping/moving vehicles to force them to stop and running vehicles off the road at high speeds. There are some indications that criminals have particularly targeted newer and larger vehicles, especially dark-colored SUVs. However, victims driving a variety of vehicles, from late model SUVs to old sedans have also been targeted. While violent incidents have occurred at all hours of the day and night on both modern toll ("cuotas") highways and on secondary roads, they have occurred most frequently at night and on isolated roads. To reduce risk, we strongly urge you to travel between cities throughout Mexico only during daylight hours, to avoid isolated roads, and to use toll roads whenever possible. The Mexican government has deployed federal police and military personnel throughout the country as part of its efforts to combat the TCOs. U.S. citizens traveling on Mexican roads and highways may encounter government checkpoints, which are often staffed by military personnel or law enforcement personnel. TCOs have erected their own unauthorized checkpoints, and killed or abducted motorists who have failed to stop at them. You should cooperate at all checkpoints.

Effective July 15, 2010, the U.S. Mission in Mexico imposed restrictions on U.S. government employees' travel. U.S. government employees and their families are not permitted to drive for personal reasons from the U.S.-Mexico border to or from the interior of Mexico or Central America. Personal travel by vehicle is permitted between Hermosillo and Nogales but is restricted to daylight hours and the Highway 15 toll road (cuota).

U.S. government personnel and their families are prohibited from personal travel to all areas described as "defer non-essential travel" and when travel for official purposes is essential it is conducted with extensive security precautions. USG personnel and their families are allowed to travel for personal reasons to the areas where no advisory is in effect or where the advisory is to exercise caution...

Baja California (north): Tijuana is a major city/travel destination in the Northern portion of Baja California -see attached map to identify its exact location: You should exercise caution in the northern state of Baja California, particularly at night. Targeted TCO assassinations continue to take place in Baja California. Turf battles between criminal groups proliferated and resulted in numerous assassinations in areas of Tijuana frequented by U.S. citizens. Shooting incidents, in which innocent bystanders have been injured, have occurred during daylight hours throughout the city. In one such incident, an U.S. citizen was shot and seriously wounded.

According to the Government of Mexico, as of August 2011, the city's murder rate was approximately 20 per 100,000. During 2011, 34 U.S. citizens were the victims of homicide in the state. In the majority of these cases, the killings appeared to be related to narcotics trafficking...

For the latest security information, U.S. citizens traveling abroad should regularly monitor the State Department's internet web site, where the current Worldwide Caution, Travel Warnings, and Travel Alerts can be found. Follow us on Twitter and the Bureau of Consular Affairs page on Facebook as well. Up-to-date information on security can also be obtained by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll free in the United States and Canada or, for callers outside the United States and Canada, a regular toll line at 001-202-501-4444. **Tijuana Consulate:** Paseo de Las Culturas s/n Mesa de Otay; phone (011) (52) (664) 977-2000. Tijuana.usconsulate.gov + Facebook.

WAIVER OF LIABILITY / ASSUMPTION OF RISK

I have read and understood the current Travel Alert for Mexico, posted by the U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, Bureau of Consular Affairs. I have voluntarily joined a Maquiladora Tour to Tijuana, Mexico. I understand that there are great differences between this country and my own. These differences include climate, living conditions, diet, water quality, transportation, medical care, and physical safety. I also understand that health care facilities in Mexico are minimal and that access to all types of health care, including for emergencies, may be difficult. I understand that I will not be able to expect the same type of health care as I would receive in my own country. I understand that the San Diego Maquiladora Workers' Solidarity Network (SDMWSN) and other individuals and organizations that sponsor, organize and promote this maquiladora tour are not responsible for my health care or coverage, either during the tour or afterwards. Furthermore, I realize that there are no guarantees against personal injury, robbery, or death while part of this Maquiladora Tour.

I understand that there are specific legal requirements for travel to Mexico, and illegal activity could result in grave legal consequences for myself, the SDMWSN, and individuals and organizations that sponsor, organize and promote this maquiladora tour. For this reason, I agree to abide by Mexican law while I am in Mexico. I understand that the Maquiladora Tour ends with the final planned activity of the tour followed by the immediate return across the border, and after this time SDMWSN and individuals and organizations that sponsor, organize and promote this maquiladora tour are discharged and held harmless in any participant's decision which deviates from this process after the tour is completed in Mexico.

With this understanding, and in consideration for my participation in the Maquiladora Tour, I completely accept and assume all responsibility for any and all risks of damage, sickness, or personal injury which may occur during, or resulting from my participation in the tour, including, but not limited to, those risks described above. In signing this document I expressly release, discharge, and hold harmless the SDMWSN and individuals and organizations that sponsor, organize and promote this maquiladora tour to the maximum extent permitted by law in any state, territory, district, or country.

I have read and understand the foregoing and sign it voluntarily. I am of sound mind and act of my own free will and without any coercion or duress in signing this *WAIVER OF LIABILITY AND ASSUMPTION OF RISK*.

Name:
Signature:
Date: