

NORTH AMERICA
SPECIFIC ACTIVITY: STUDY ABROAD

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Assessment date: April 2018

This information is taken from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website
<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/usa>

United States General Information

Terrorists are very likely to try to carry out attacks in the USA. Attacks could be indiscriminate, including in places visited by foreigners. You should monitor media reports and be vigilant at all times.

The main threat comes from individuals who may have been inspired by terrorist groups, including Daesh (formerly referred to as ISIL) and al Qaeda, to carry out so-called 'lone actor' attacks targeting public events or places, as demonstrated by attacks in Manhattan, New York (11 December, 31 October 2017), New Jersey and Minnesota over the weekend of 17-18 September 2016, Orlando on 12 June 2016 and San Bernardino on 4 December 2015, among others. Attacks could take place with little or no notice.

There's a heightened threat of terrorist attack globally against UK interests and British nationals, from groups or individuals motivated by the conflict in Iraq and Syria. You should be vigilant at this time.

The US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) provides public information about credible threats. Expect an increased presence of law enforcement and tight security at public places and events. This may include a heavy police presence, additional restrictions and searches on bags, and the use of screening technologies. For all current alerts within the United States and its territories, visit the US Department of Homeland Security website <https://www.dhs.gov/national-terrorism-advisory-system>

Find out more about the global threat from terrorism, <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/reduce-your-risk-from-terrorism-while-abroad> and what to do in the event of a terrorist attack.

Don't make flippant remarks about bombs or terrorism, especially when passing through US airports.

Before you travel, check the security measures you're likely to face at the airport on the Transportation Security Administration ([TSA](#) website). The TSA has a helpline number to help passengers with disabilities and medical conditions before they fly. Safety concerns have been raised about INSEL Air. The US and Netherlands authorities have prohibited their staff from using the airline while safety checks are being carried out. UK government officials have been told to do the same as a precaution.

Safety and Security – Crime

Make two copies of your passport's personal details page and leave one with friends at home. Take one copy with you, or upload it onto a secure online data storage site; this will help a speedier turnaround if your passport is lost or stolen.

Violent crime, including gun crime, rarely involves tourists, but you should take care when travelling in unfamiliar areas. Crime associated with the illegal drugs trade is a major issue in Mexican states bordering Arizona, California, New Mexico and Texas. Some foreign nationals have been among the victims of crime in the border regions, but there is no evidence to suggest they have been targeted because of their nationality. Research your destination before travelling, be vigilant, and follow the advice of local authorities.

If staying in a hotel: Do not leave your door open at any time;

Do not leave your handbag or luggage unattended in reception or dining areas as thieves often target tourist hotels; Keep passports, tickets and large sums of cash in a safety deposit box or hotel safe; Avoid leaving luggage on display in cars.

If your passport has been lost or stolen, contact the local police and the nearest British High Commission or Consulate immediately. Use 911 emergency telephone service. If this does not work, simply dial "0" and ask the operator to connect you to the police or medical services. There is no charge for emergency calls placed from a public pay phone. Leave copies of valuables such as your passport, tickets, insurance policy and contact details with your family and friends. Take a second copy of your passport and insurance policy with you, as well as another form of photo identification.

When Driving: Do not leave your door open at any time;

Avoid wearing expensive jewellery and carrying valuable items in run down areas;

Do not sleep in your car by the roadside or in rest areas;

Avoid leaving items on display in cars;

Try to stay on main roads and use well-lit car parks;

If hit from behind while driving, indicate to the other driver to follow you to a public place and call 911 for Police help;

If you're planning to drive in the United States, [check the driving rules in the state\(s\) you'll be visiting](#). Provisional licences aren't accepted. International Driving Permits are generally not required in the US but it is helpful to carry one, and they're only valid in conjunction with a full UK driving licence. The United States doesn't issue International Driving Permits to foreign visitors, so you'll need to obtain this document before you travel. Check requirements with your vehicle rental company.

US traffic laws can vary from state to state. Speed and drink driving limits, as well as information on disabled permits, can be found through the individual state's Department of Motor Vehicles website.

Most car rental companies offer electronic toll fee payment facilities which will allow you to automatically pay for your toll fees. These toll fee payment facilities must be hired for the duration of your rental and will allow you to use the electronic lanes on toll roads. Be sure to discuss with your rental car company their policy on toll fees.

Check the weather conditions before embarking on a long journey, particularly in mountainous and isolated areas where there is increased likelihood of snowfall, or in dry desert areas where you may need extra water and petrol stations could be scarce. Do not sleep in your car by the roadside or in rest areas and avoid leaving any items on display in your car. Try to stay on main roads and use well-lit car parks. If you're hit from behind while driving, indicate to the other driver to follow you to a public place and call 911 for the police.

Petrol stations that do not display the price of fuel usually charge considerably more than the national average for a gallon of fuel. They're often found close to tourist destinations and airports, and notoriously near to Orlando International Airport.

Local Laws: When you are in the United States of America, all federal, state and local laws apply to you. If you are arrested or jailed, the British Government will do what it can to help you but they cannot get you out of trouble or out of jail.

If you get into any difficulties with US Authorities, you should explain to them that you are a British national and ask to speak to a UK consular officer. British nationals arrested abroad should contact the relevant British Embassy, High Commission or Consulate.

In the USA, laws vary from State to State. The law you should follow is that of the State in which you are physically present. When you are physically present in a state, even temporarily, you are subject to that State's laws, and, in many cases, to the jurisdiction of its courts.

The US is an extremely diverse society and attitudes towards LGBT people differ hugely across the country. LGBT travellers may be affected by legislation passed recently in the states of North Carolina and Mississippi. Before travelling please read our general [travel advice for the LGBT community](#). You can find more detail on LGBT issues in the US on the website of the [Human Rights Campaign](#).

Possession or trafficking of a controlled substance in the United States can carry a severe prison sentence and/or fine. Check with each state you are intending to visit to make sure you comply with the personal possession and consumption laws of controlled substances within those states. A list of all types of controlled substances, as listed under the Controlled Substances Act, can be found on the [US Department of Justice website](#). The plant Khat (or Qat) is an illegal narcotic in the US. You will be arrested and detained with the possibility of a prison sentence for illicit trafficking of a controlled substance.

US Federal Law requires that all foreign nationals carry immigration documentation - e.g. a passport showing that you have leave to enter or remain – at all times while in the USA. Some States (Arizona, Utah, Indiana, South Carolina, Georgia and Alabama) introduced legislation designed to identify and reduce the number of illegal immigrants in their States. These measures include authorisation for police officers to detain individuals they suspect of being in the United States illegally. Although some of the measures are being contested in the courts, it is important that you have your documents available for scrutiny if you are asked by law enforcement officials to present them wherever you are in the United States.

Natural Disasters

Earthquakes: Alaska, California, Hawaii, Nevada, Oregon, Puerto Rico, and Washington state are prone to earthquakes. To learn more about what to do before, during and after an earthquake, visit the Federal Emergency Management website. <http://www.ready.gov/earthquakes>

Hurricanes: The hurricane season normally runs from June to November and can affect US coastal regions. You should monitor the progress of approaching storms on the US National Hurricane Centre website <http://www.nhc.noaa.gov>

The Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) website <http://www.fema.gov/> contains information about how to prepare for extreme weather conditions and what to do if you are told to evacuate. It also provides a list of disaster supplies that will help if you live in an area affected by storms and hurricanes.

Tornadoes: Tornadoes can occur at any time of the year depending on weather conditions. To learn more about what you should do during, and after a tornado, visit the US National Weather Service website <http://www.noaa.gov/wx.html>

Wild fires: Forest and brush fires (wild fires) are a danger in many dry areas. High winds can cause fires to spread very rapidly. Brush fires are a major threat across the south west United States, especially in Southern California, from August to November. Areas of highest risk are the canyons and hills where dry vegetation and high winds can cause wild fires to move very quickly and threaten property, especially where urban areas abut wild land. Visitors and residents are urged to follow the advice of local law enforcement, especially in respect of orders to evacuate an area under threat. Monitor local media reports and follow the advice of local law enforcement officials. For more information visit the National Interagency Fire Centre website <http://www.geomac.gov/index.shtml>

Snow storms: Snow storms during winter can cause delays and cancellations throughout the major airline hubs in the USA. Contact your travel company or airline before you travel. To monitor airport conditions in the USA, visit the Federal Aviation Administration website <http://www.fly.faa.gov/flyfaa/usmap.jsp>

There are occasional outbreaks of mosquito-borne diseases, including West Nile virus, eastern equine encephalitis, dengue fever and Chikungunya virus. The severity of the virus in individual cases depends on whether it results in meningitis or encephalitis. In terms of geographical scope, West Nile virus hotspots have included the south eastern counties of Louisiana, parts of central and southern California, and areas around Dallas and Houston in Texas. Clients in the US are advised to take precautions against being bitten by mosquitoes, such as using mosquito repellent and wearing long-sleeve shirts. This advisory is particularly pertinent to persons in West Nile virus hotspots. Clients are advised to remain aware of the symptoms of the virus, which include fever, headaches, neck stiffness, chills, confusion, lethargy and flu-like symptoms. If symptoms do occur, a medical practitioner should be consulted immediately. Cases of locally transmitted Zika virus have been confirmed in Florida, Texas (Cameron County only) Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands. You should follow the advice of the [National Travel Health Network and Centre](#) and discuss your travel plans with your healthcare provider, particularly if you're pregnant or planning to become pregnant.

State	Hazard	Sussex Students at risk?	Risk level low/med /high	Control measures

Alaska	Climate Earthquake & Tsunami coastal areas Wildlife Winter Sports			Monitor Advice will be given in Sussex handbook – exchange university will control procedure Monitor Students do at own risk – extra insurance cover offered
Arizona	Wildlife Forest Fires			Monitor Monitor from May – November Visiting Mexico: See full report below: Violent crime, including gun crime, rarely involves tourists, but you should take care when travelling in unfamiliar areas. Crime associated with the illegal drugs trade is a major issue in Mexican states bordering Arizona, California, New Mexico and Texas. Some foreign nationals have been among the victims of crime in the border regions, but there is no evidence to suggest they have been targeted because of their nationality. Research your destination before travelling, be vigilant, and follow the advice of local authorities.
California	Earthquake & Tsunami-coastal areas Forest Fire High risk Oct/Nov Crime Coastal location – water sports			Advice will be given in Sussex handbook – exchange university will control procedure Monitor - Areas of highest risk are the canyons and hills where dry vegetation and Santa Ana high winds can cause wild fires to move very quickly. Vigilant in cities and take advice from locals Monitor – caution re surfing – follow local advice Visiting Mexico: See full report below: Violent crime, including gun crime, rarely involves tourists, but you should take care when travelling in unfamiliar areas. Crime associated with the illegal drugs trade is a major issue in Mexican states bordering Arizona, California, New Mexico and Texas. Some foreign nationals have been among the victims of crime in the border regions, but there is no evidence to suggest they have been targeted because of their nationality. Research your destination before travelling, be vigilant, and follow the advice of local authorities.

Colorado	Winter sports			Students do at own risk – extra insurance cover offered.
Florida	Hurricane High risk June-Nov Wildlife Crime Water sports			Follow University guidelines Monitor Vigilant in cities and take advice from locals Monitor – caution re surfing – follow local advice
Georgia	crime			Vigilant in cities and take advice from locals
Illinois	crime			Vigilant in cities and take advice from locals
Indiana	Crime			Vigilant in cities and take advice from locals
Louisiana	Hurricane High risk June-Nov crime Water sports in coastal areas Health			Follow University guidelines Vigilant in cities and take advice from locals Monitor – follow local advice West Nile Virus – use mosquito repellent & cover up (see above)
Massachusetts	Winter sports Crime			Students do at own risk – extra insurance cover offered. Vigilant in cities and take advice from locals
Michigan	Winter sports Crime			Students do at own risk – extra insurance cover offered. Vigilant in cities and take advice from locals
Missouri	crime			Vigilant in cities and take advice from locals
New York	Terrorism Crime			There is a general threat from terrorism in the United States. Attacks could be indiscriminate, including in places frequented by expatriates and foreign travellers. The US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has designated the terror alert status of "orange", or high, for all international and domestic flights in the USA. Definitions of the US terror alert system can be found on the US Department of Homeland Security website. See the Terrorism section of this advice Vigilant in cities and take advice from locals

New Jersey	Crime			Vigilant in cities and take advice from locals
New Mexico	Wildlife Forest Fires			Monitor Monitor from May – November Visiting Mexico: See full report below: Violent crime, including gun crime, rarely involves tourists, but you should take care when travelling in unfamiliar areas. Crime associated with the illegal drugs trade is a major issue in Mexican states bordering Arizona, California, New Mexico and Texas. Some foreign nationals have been among the victims of crime in the border regions, but there is no evidence to suggest they have been targeted because of their nationality. Research your destination before travelling, be vigilant, and follow the advice of local authorities.
North Carolina	Crime			Vigilant in cities and take advice from locals
Oregon	Winter sports Earthquake & Coastal areas tsunamis possible Wildlife			Students do at own risk – extra insurance cover offered. Advice will be given in Sussex handbook – exchange university will control procedure Monitor
Pennsylvania	Crime			Vigilant in cities and take advice from locals
Pittsburgh	Crime			Vigilant in cities and take advice from locals
Texas	Climate: Hurricane High risk June-Nov Crime Health			Follow University guidelines Vigilant in cities and take advice from locals West Nile Virus – use mosquito repellent & cover up (see above) Visiting Mexico: See full report below: Violent crime, including gun crime, rarely involves tourists, but you should take care when travelling in unfamiliar areas. Crime associated with the illegal drugs trade is a major issue in Mexican states bordering Arizona, California, New Mexico and Texas. Some foreign nationals have been among the victims of crime in

				the border regions, but there is no evidence to suggest they have been targeted because of their nationality. Research your destination before travelling, be vigilant, and follow the advice of local authorities.
Vermont	Winter sports			Students do at own risk – extra insurance cover offered.
Washington State	Crime Earthquake & Tsunami coastal areas Coastal location – Water sports			Vigilant in cities and take advice from locals Advice will be given in Sussex handbook – exchange university will control procedure Monitor – caution re surfing – follow local advice
Wisconsin	Winter sports			Students do at own risk – extra insurance cover offered.

CANADA general information

Canada can experience severe weather conditions. Severe snow storms are a regular occurrence during winter and you should monitor local news and weather reports.

There is an underlying threat from terrorism. Attacks could be indiscriminate, including in places frequented by expatriates and foreign travellers. You should monitor media reports and remain vigilant.

If you intend to travel on to the United States you should check the entry requirements of the US authorities.

Safety and Security – Crime

If staying in a hotel, do not leave your door open at any time;

Do not leave your handbag or luggage unattended in reception or dining areas as thieves often target tourist hotels;

Keep passports, tickets and large sums of cash in a safety deposit box or hotel safe;

Avoid leaving luggage on display in cars.

If your passport has been lost or stolen, contact the local police and the nearest British High Commission or Consulate immediately. Canadian cities have a "911" emergency telephone service. If this does not work, simply dial "0" and ask the operator to connect you to the police or medical services. There is no charge for emergency calls placed from a public pay phone.

Leave copies of valuables such as your passport, tickets, insurance policy and contact details with your family and friends. Take a second copy of your passport and insurance policy with you, as well as another form of photo identification.

Safety and Security - Road Travel

All forms of public transport are generally excellent. Be aware that each province and territory has the authority to establish its own traffic and safety laws.

Seat belts are compulsory. Right turns on red lights are generally permitted, however, at some intersections in main cities and towns, right turns are only permitted on green lights. In some parts of Quebec right turns on red lights are not permitted.

You do not need an International Driving Permit as a full UK driving licence will allow you to hire and drive a car in Canada. Carry both the plastic photo card and the paper licence that contains essential information with you whilst driving as being stopped without these documents may result in a fine. Distances and speed limits are posted in metric (usually 100 km/h or 60 mph on highways and 50 km/h or 30 mph in towns and cities). Obey speed limits and take extra care when travelling on country roads and be aware of possible encounters with wild animals. Winter driving conditions in Canada can be extreme. Monitor local news and weather broadcasts and take advice before driving in heavy winter conditions. Snow tyres are required in some provinces.

You should be aware of wildlife along the roads; larger animals can pose a danger to motorists.

Local laws and customs

Do not attempt to carry meat, animal or dairy products into Canada at any time without declaring these products to Canada Customs. Banned food products will be confiscated and you could be subjected to severe penalties. Canada Customs require you to declare if you intend to visit a farm within 14 days of arrival.

The plant Qhat (Khat), although legal in the UK, is illegal in Canada. Do not attempt to bring this plant into Canada. Penalties for possession of Qhat include imprisonment for up to 10 years.

It is your responsibility to know and obey local laws, which can vary depending on the province or territory you are visiting so you should make yourself aware of them.

Entry Requirements - Travelling to the United States

If you intend to travel on to the United States you should check the entry requirements of the US authorities (see the [US section of the FCO's Travel Advice](#)).

The British Consulate General in Toronto has reported some cases of British nationals being denied re-entry into the USA under the VWP after a previous stay in the US. Travellers who have been admitted to the USA under the Visa Waiver Programme and who make a short trip to Canada generally can be readmitted to the United States under the VWP as long as they still meet the requirements of the VWP. Granting entry under the VWP is a matter for the US authorities and travellers are advised to check they meet the entry requirements at <http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel>.

Natural Disasters - Hurricanes

From July to November Canadian Maritime Provinces are occasionally affected by Hurricanes which originate in the Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico and in the Caribbean. For current weather conditions and to monitor hurricane activity please check the [National Hurricane Centre](#), [Environment Canada](#) and [The Weather Network](#) websites.

Natural Disasters - Winter Conditions

During the winter, highways are often closed in Alberta, British Columbia and other Provinces because of snow storms and avalanches. You can access current local weather conditions anywhere in Canada and related weather alerts from [The Weather Network](#).

Even when roads remain open during a winter storm, driving conditions may still be treacherous. Please exercise caution, follow any locally issued restrictions or guidelines, and ensure that your vehicle is properly equipped with snow tyres and proper emergency supplies.

Natural Disasters - Avalanches

Avalanches can occur in mountainous regions, especially in Alberta and British Columbia. If participating in alpine sports such as skiing or snowboarding, make sure to comply with any avalanche advisories and always remain away from closed trails. Follow the directions of any local nature guides or instructors diligently. For more information and updated avalanche bulletins please visit [Canadian Avalanche Foundation](#).

Natural Disasters - Earthquakes

There is an earthquake risk on the west coast. The province of British Columbia in western Canada is in an active earthquake zone. Further information on earthquakes is available from Earthquakes Canada.

Natural Disasters - Thunderstorms

Summer thunderstorms are fairly frequent in most parts of Canada. Unfortunately, a small number of these intensify becoming severe and causing property damage, and threaten lives.

Natural Disasters - Tornadoes

Tornadoes can occur almost anywhere in Canada. May to September are the main tornado months with the peak season in June and early July in southern Ontario, Alberta, south eastern Quebec, and a band stretching from southern Saskatchewan and Manitoba through to Thunder Bay. The interior of British Columbia and western New Brunswick may also experience tornadoes. Monitor local and international weather updates on local television and radio and follow any instructions from Canadian officials or law enforcement personnel. You can also access the [National Hurricane Centre](#) for updates.

Natural Disasters - Forest Fires

Forest fires can break out at anytime, regardless of the season. In the grasslands and forests of western Canada the fire hazard is frequently higher. Generally Canada has cold dry winters and warm dry summers and you should heed local warnings and monitor news bulletins for latest details on local outbreaks.

Wildlife

If hiking or camping, be considerate and cautious of local wildlife. It is important to remove all items you brought with you, and treat any food items with great care to avoid attracting animals to your site. Animals with nearby young or nests will be particularly aggressive when protecting their territory. Before embarking on outdoor activities, you should research the region and learn how best to deal with the local wildlife you might encounter. Particular caution is suggested if touring an area where bears have been sighted. Always maintain a safe and legal distance when observing wildlife including marine animals and birds and closely follow park regulations.

For additional tips, please see: General Travellers' Tips (<http://ukincanada.fco.gov.uk/en/help-for-british-nationals/living-in-canada/general-travellers-tips>) and How to stay safe abroad (<http://ukincanada.fco.gov.uk/en/help-for-british-nationals/how-stay-safe-abroad/>).

State	Hazard			Control measures
British Columbia	Winter sports Crime Coastal location- Water sports			Students do at own risk – extra insurance cover offered. Vigilant in cities and take advice from locals Monitor-caution when sailing – follow local advice
Ontario	Winter sports Crime			Students do at own risk – extra insurance cover offered. Vigilant in cities and take advice from locals

MEXICO

Please read this risk assessment and check the gov.uk website before travelling to Mexico

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/mexico/>

Safety and security

Violence Drug-related violence in Mexico has increased over recent years. The violence is concentrated in specific areas, and some regions are almost completely spared. Make sure you research your destination thoroughly.

Outbursts of politically-motivated violence can occur across the country, with a recent increase in the states of Guerrero and Mexico City.

North and west Many fatalities are suspected gang members killed in turf wars between the different organisations that compete for control of trafficking routes into the US. Drug-related violence is a particular problem in the northern states of Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo Leon, Tamaulipas, Sinaloa and Durango. Armed clashes between security forces and drug groups can occur at any time without warning. You should take extreme care outside tourist areas in all of these states.

You should take precautions in the state of Baja California, including Tijuana. There has been a rise in drug-related crime in Baja California Sur, including Los Cabos. You should take extra care when travelling to these areas.

You should take care when travelling to Ciudad Juarez or other cities in Northern States. Travel during daylight hours when possible, inform relatives or friends of your travel plans and use reputable hotels only.

East There have been reports of increased security incidents in the states of Tabasco and Veracruz. You should take extra care.

West and south Illegal roadblocks have been reported more frequently, particularly in the states of Guerrero and Chiapas. If you're driving in these states, travel during daylight hours and use toll roads where possible, although you may still encounter disruptions.

Drug-related violence is also a problem in Michoacán, Guerrero, Jalisco and Nayarit. See the main tourist destinations section below for further details.

Main tourist destinations The Mexican government makes efforts to protect major tourist destinations like Cancun, Playa del Carmen, Cozumel, Los Cabos, Puerto Vallarta and Nuevo Vallarta and these areas have mostly not seen the levels of drug-related violence and crime experienced elsewhere. However, there were shooting incidents at a nightclub in Playa del Carmen on 16 January 2017; at the state prosecutor's office in downtown Cancun on 17 January 2017; and two shootings in downtown Cancun

on 14 March 2017. There was also a shooting on Palmilla Beach in Los Cabos on 6 August 2017. There is currently an increased police presence in the Cancun area, including in the hotel zone.

On 21 February 2018, an explosive device detonated on a tourist ferry operating between Playa del Carmen and Cozumel, Quintana Roo. The explosion injured 20 people, including tourists. On 1 March, local authorities found an undetonated device on another ferry operating on the same route. The Mexican authorities are continuing to investigate the incident.

If you're visiting any of these areas, you should monitor local advice, remain vigilant and follow the advice of the local authorities and your tour operator.

There have been several instances of armed crime both within and outside tourist areas in Acapulco. If possible, travel by air if you're visiting a major tourist destination in Guerrero. Due to an increase in violent crime in recent months, you should be extra vigilant in Acapulco and surrounding areas.

Crime Crime and violence are serious problems in Mexico and the security situation can pose a risk for foreigners. Many Mexican and foreign businesses choose to hire private security. You should research your destination thoroughly and only travel during daylight hours when possible. Monitor local media and inform trusted contacts of your travel plans.

When driving, avoid isolated roads and use toll roads ('cuotas') whenever possible. Keep car doors locked and windows closed, especially at traffic lights. There have been a number of violent car-jackings and robberies along the Pacific Highway and you should be careful when travelling on this route. Those travelling in large camper vans or sports utility vehicles (SUVs) have been targeted in the past. If you suspect you're being followed or watched, drive to a police station or other safe place.

Be particularly alert on public transport, at airports and in bus stations. Theft on buses is common so keep an eye on your belongings at all times. Buses have also been hijacked in conflict areas. Where possible, travel on first-class buses using toll roads, which have a lower rate of incidents than second and third class buses travelling on the less secure free ('libre') roads. Most first-class bus companies perform security checks when passengers board the bus.

Passengers have been robbed and assaulted by unlicensed taxi drivers including in Mexico City. In Mexico City, use the better regulated 'sitio' taxis from authorised cab ranks or ask your hotel concierge to order you a taxi. At airports, use only authorised pre-paid airport taxi services.

Women travelling on their own should be particularly alert when travelling on public transport. There have been incidents of rape on urban buses ('micros') on routes in the south of Mexico City. Most attacks have occurred early in the morning or late at night. Several serious sexual offences have also occurred in tourist areas outside of Mexico City. Take care even in areas close to hotels, and especially after dark.

Don't leave food and drinks unattended in bars and restaurants. Travellers have been robbed or assaulted after being drugged. There have also been reports of tainted alcohol causing illness or blackouts. If you have any concerns, seek advice from your tour operator or the local authorities.

Street crime is a serious problem in major cities and tourist resort areas. Pick-pocketing is common on the Mexico City Metro. Dress down and avoid wearing expensive jewellery or watches. Limit the amount of cash or credit/debit cards you carry with you. Keep a close watch on briefcases and luggage, even in apparently secure places like the lobby of your hotel.

Take care when withdrawing money from ATMs or exchanging money at Bureau de Change. It's generally safer to use ATMs during daylight hours and inside shops or malls.

Be wary of people presenting themselves as police officers trying to fine or arrest you for no apparent reason. If in doubt, ask for identification and if possible note the officer's name, badge number, and patrol car number.

Foreign visitors and residents may be targeted by scam artists. Be wary of strangers approaching you or contacting you by phone asking for personal information or financial help. If you or your relatives or friends are asked to transfer money to Mexico make absolutely sure that it is not part of a scam and that you have properly checked with the person receiving the money that they are requesting it.

Kidnapping Short-term opportunistic kidnapping - called 'express kidnapping' - can occur, particularly in urban areas. Victims are forced to withdraw funds from credit or debit cards at a cash point to secure their release. Where victims have friends or relatives living locally, a ransom may be demanded from them. You should comply with requests and not attempt to resist such attacks.

Longer-term kidnapping for financial gain also occurs, and there have been allegations of police officers being involved. Be discreet about discussing your financial or business affairs in places where you may be overheard by others.

Road travel You can drive in Mexico using a UK licence or an International Driving Permit. Driving standards are very different from the UK. Roads can be pot-holed. Be prepared to stop unexpectedly and beware of vehicles moving slowly, changing lane without indicating and going through red lights. Many local drivers don't have any form of car insurance.

To reduce air pollution, Mexico City and some other parts of the country have introduced restrictions on driving. Cars may be forbidden from entering certain areas on particular days, based on their number plates. These regulations are strictly enforced and offenders face heavy fines and temporary confiscation of their vehicle. This only applies to older vehicles and not to newer models which are often used for car hire. Please double check with your car hire company directly.

There is an additional driving restriction in Mexico City, where vehicles without registration plates from the State of Mexico (Estado de Mexico) or Mexico City are not allowed to enter Mexico City from Monday to Friday between 5:00am and 11:00am.

In remote areas, you may come across unofficial roadblocks, including on main roads, manned by local groups seeking money for an unofficial local toll.

Adventure activities If you take part in adventurous sports (including paragliding, skydiving, scuba diving and jet-skiing), make sure adequate safety precautions are in place. Equipment may not meet UK safety and insurance standards. Only use reputable operators, and satisfy yourself that the company is using the most up-to-date equipment and safety features, and that they are fully licensed and insured. Check that you're covered by your travel insurance for all the activities you want to undertake. British nationals have been injured and in some cases killed participating in extreme sports.

Swimming and water sports Shark attacks are relatively rare in Mexico, but you should take care particularly when surfing, research the local area and follow the advice of the local authorities.

Crocodiles Around many lagoons in tourist areas (eg Cancun) you'll see signs warning about crocodiles. Respect these warnings and don't walk too close to the water. Tourists have been seriously injured in crocodile attacks.

Hotel safety In some hotels, balcony balustrades may not be as high as you expect and there could be a risk of falling.

Political situation Mexico has an established multiparty democracy. Political demonstrations are common in Mexico City and can occur across the country. These can be tense and confrontational and could potentially turn violent. Onlookers can be quickly drawn in. You should monitor local media and avoid all demonstrations.

The Mexican constitution prohibits political activities by foreigners. Participation in demonstrations may result in detention and deportation.

The Mexico City Command and Control Centre <http://c5.cdmx.gob.mx/> (Centro de Atención a Emergencias y Protección Ciudadana de la Ciudad de México) has information and advice on safety in Mexico City.

Terrorism Although there's no recent history of terrorism in Mexico, attacks can't be ruled out. There's a heightened threat of terrorist attack globally against UK interests and British nationals, from groups or individuals motivated by the conflict in Iraq and Syria. You should be vigilant at this time.

Local laws and customs The Mexican Police have the authority to ask for proof of legal status in Mexico and, on occasion, have detained British nationals without documents. You should carry photocopies of the relevant pages of your passport and of the

stamped 'Forma Migratoria Múltiple' (FMM) given to you on arrival in Mexico at all times. If you're a resident you may be asked to provide your residency card issued by the Mexican government.

If you're travelling between states or near international borders, you may be stopped by Mexican immigration authorities for immigration checks. You'll need to be able to provide your passport and FMM slip. Copies are not accepted. If you're unable to produce these documents, you may be detained, held at an immigration holding centre, and ultimately deported.

Don't become involved with drugs of any kind. Penalties for drug offences are severe. Convictions carry sentences of up to 25 years.

Although civil unions between same-sex partners are now legal in Mexico City and the state of Coahuila, homosexuality in Mexico is generally tolerated, rather than accepted. Public displays of affection between same sex couples may be frowned upon. See our information and advice page <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/lesbian-gay-bisexual-and-transgender-foreign-travel-advice> for the LGBT community before you travel.

Visas If you're visiting Mexico as a tourist you don't need a visa, but you'll need to complete an immigration form and have this with you when you enter and leave Mexico. You can get one either when you arrive (forms are available at border crossings or on-board flights to Mexico) or online in advance from the National Institute of Immigration website.
<https://www.inm.gob.mx/fmme/publico/en/solicitud.html#>

Please note that due to the requirements of the online system, the advance option is only possible if your passport is valid for at least 6 months from your intended date of entry to Mexico. Immigration officials at the port of entry may ask to see proof of your departure plans from Mexico before allowing you entry to the country.

If you're crossing the border into Mexico from the US, there won't be an immigration officer at the port of entry, but you'll need to identify the nearest immigration office and clear your immigration status before you continue your journey into Mexico. The immigration office can usually be found close to the border area, and customs officials at the border should be able to tell you where to find it. If you fail to clear immigration at this point, it is often more complicated to do so once you have left the border area.

You need an immigration form to leave the country. If you lose your immigration form you can get it replaced at the immigration office at any international airport in Mexico. The cost of a replacement is \$295 Mexican Pesos, which is payable at a bank.

There have been reports of bogus immigration officers operating within international airports. You should always refuse offers of help and head directly to the immigration office.

Tourists are not allowed to undertake voluntary (including human rights) work, or activity, or any form of paid employment. If you wish to carry out this type of work you must get the correct visa from the Mexican Embassy before you travel.

You may need a visa to undertake certain adventure or eco-tourism activities like caving, potholing or entomology, especially if they involve any scientific or technological research. The Mexican authorities may define scientific or technological research activities far more broadly than other countries. If you're in any doubt, check with the Mexican Embassy in London <https://embamex.sre.gob.mx/reinounido/index.php/en/#popup> well in advance of your visit and ask for written confirmation if necessary.

It is no longer possible to switch immigration status in-country. You can't enter Mexico on a tourist visa and then change it for a work visa. You must apply at the Mexican Consulate of your normal place of residence in plenty of time before you are due to travel.

Health Visit your health professional at least 4 to 6 weeks before your trip to check whether you need any vaccinations or other preventive measures. Country specific information and advice is published by the National Travel Health Network and Centre on the TravelHealthPro website. <https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries> Useful information and advice about healthcare abroad is also available on the NHS Choices website.

<https://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Healthcareabroad/Pages/Healthcareabroad.aspx>

Not all hospitals will agree to deal directly with medical insurance companies. You should be prepared to pay for treatment yourself up front and then seek a refund. Make sure you have adequate travel health insurance and accessible funds to cover the cost of any medical treatment abroad and repatriation.

UK health authorities have classified Mexico as having a risk of Zika virus transmission. For more information and advice, visit the National Travel Health Network and Centre website. https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/country/147/mexico%20-%20Other_risks

On arrival in Mexico City and other high altitude areas, you may feel a lack of energy, shortness of breath or headaches. This NaTHNaC factsheet <https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/disease/12/altitude-illness> includes advice on how to reduce the risk of altitude sickness and what to do if you develop symptoms.

Drink only boiled or bottled water and avoid ice in drinks.

In the last 3 years there has been an increase in reported cases of a food and water bug, cyclospora, affecting travellers returning from Mexico, particularly from the Riviera Maya region between the months of May and June. There have been cases of cholera in Quintana Roo.

Cases of Chikungunya virus have been confirmed in Mexico. For more details about this outbreak, see the website of the National Health Network and Centre. https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/country/147/mexico#Other_risks

You should take steps to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes.

If you need emergency medical assistance during your trip, dial 060, 065, 066 or 068 and ask for an ambulance. In Mexico City, you can also use the emergency buttons on CCTV cameras visible across the city which will immediately connect you to the emergency services. You should contact your insurance/medical assistance company promptly if you are referred to a medical facility for treatment.

State	Hazard	Control measures
MEXICO		<p>Violent crime related to the drugs trade is a major issue in the Mexican states along the border with California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas. British Citizens should remain extremely vigilant at all times.</p> <p>Though some foreign nationals have been among the victims in the border region, there is no evidence to suggest that they have been targeted because of their nationality. Visitors to border areas should exercise caution and follow the advice of local authorities.</p> <p>Violent crime, including gun crime, is not limited to the border areas. Incidents rarely involve tourists, but visitors should exercise caution when travelling in unfamiliar areas. Research your destination before travelling and seek local advice about areas with high levels of criminal activity.</p>