



China 2014 Crime and Safety Report: Shanghai

Travel Health and Safety

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Overall Crime and Safety Situation

The 98 percent conviction rate enjoyed by the Chinese judicial system, the flexibility of their law, the use of modern technology in law enforcement, and a large police and security service presence throughout the city serves to deter most crimes. The growing income disparity in Chinese society has been a source of social friction and has been identified as a root cause of much of the economic crime experienced in Shanghai.

Crime Threats

Shanghai continues to fair as a very safe city. Petty crime continues to be reported in the same rate as in previous years. This includes pickpocketing, credit card fraud, and various financial scams, often targeting foreigners. The most common criminal incidents are economic. Victims are often targeted because of their perceived wealth. Pickpocketing on public transportation, at shopping areas, and at tourist sites is quite common. At tourist sites, thieves are generally more interested in cash and will abandon credit cards. However, in shopping areas, both cash and credit cards are sought.

Criminal offense like homicides, burglaries, robberies, and others do take place; however, the rate of these crimes is low in comparison to the population. A number of noteworthy violent crimes took place in 2013 but appeared to be isolated. For example, on October 15, a taxi driver was stabbed and subsequently died of his injuries. On December 13, a man entered a local restaurant to find his wife dining with a Western male; the husband produced a cutting weapon and reportedly killed the male. On December 26, the police reported the detention of three individuals suspected of a carjacking at a popular Western supermarket in Pudong.

Lesser developed areas in major cities have a higher rate of crime. Statistically, more crimes of opportunity transpire during early morning hours; for example, individuals who frequent bars, nightclubs, and similar establishments are more likely to be involved in physical altercations after midnight. Violent crime affecting the expatriate community most often occurs in the bars, clubs, and restaurants of Shanghai's vibrant nightlife districts. Bar fights occur due



to misunderstanding, miscommunication, machismo, alcohol, or a combination thereof. The legal age for consuming alcohol is 18; however, most establishments do not require identification. Some bars are overcrowded, and safety standards are not routinely enforced. Prostitutes and drug peddlers are known to be present in some clubs; partaking in these activities is illegal.

Counterfeit products are readily available, but it is illegal to import them into the U.S. U.S. Customs and Border Protection officials have the authority to seize suspect goods and impose fines on travelers caught attempting to enter the U.S. with counterfeit items. Counterfeit Chinese currency continues to be a problem. Merchants often take a close look at a bill or they place it in a money counting machine prior to acceptance to ensure reliability.

Overall Road Safety Situation

Road Safety and Road Conditions

The physical road conditions are generally good to excellent; in contrast, driving conditions in rural areas are usually poor. Traffic jams are a common occurrence.

The greatest road hazard remains the driver; most have little experience operating motor vehicles and are overly cautious or aggressive, resulting in numerous accidents. Traffic laws are rarely adhered to and policing is done remotely by video camera (mainly speed traps). Traffic control devices are often blatantly disregarded. Yielding to oncoming traffic or pedestrians (even in crosswalks) is not done, nor is signaling. Additionally, the large number of motor bikes (both electric and gas) and bicycles generally disregard traffic laws. Pedestrians share the sidewalks not only with motor bikes and bicycles but, at times, also with motor vehicles. Pedestrians should be on the alert for bicycles, motorbikes, and cars operating on the sidewalk.

In 2013, numerous U.S. expatriates reported witnessing accidents, including fatalities. Typically, these accidents described motor bikes and bicycle operators being struck by motor vehicles. Reports of small traffic accidents involving Westerners were common. In traffic accidents involving Consulate vehicles, the official American often is ruled at fault regardless of the actual cause of the accident. RSO discourages arguing with the other party, regardless of who is responsible. Do not react to aggressive driving by local nationals.

The use of unregistered, "black" taxi cabs continues to be of concern. In a limited number of cases, foreigners have reported being sexually assaulted, have had their luggage stolen, or have been charged exorbitant fares. Luggage theft typically involves a taxi transporting



individuals to or from the airport and the driver intentionally leaving the scene before bags have been unloaded. Other examples of problems with taxis include rigged taxi meters that can charge up to double the going rate. The Regional Security Officer (RSO) recommends travelers research the likeness of an official taxi and use only official taxis (two-tone sedans in Shanghai) that employ meters. If a driver refuses to use a meter, use another taxi. Since the majority of taxi drivers have limited proficiency in English, travelers are encouraged to obtain the address in Chinese characters prior to entering a taxi.

Political, Economic, Religious, and Ethnic Violence

Local, Regional, and International Terrorism Threats/Concerns

China's domestic counterterrorism efforts remain primarily focused against the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) (aka East Turkestan Islamic Party, ETIP), a Pakistan-based terrorist group that seeks independence for the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR) of northwest China. In public statements, government officials singled out the "Three Evils" -- extremism, separatism, and terrorism -- in Xinjiang as the main terrorist threat to the nation and characterized Uighur discontent as terrorist activity. Human rights organizations maintain that China used counterterrorism as a pretext to suppress Uighurs, a predominantly Muslim ethnic group that comprises a large percentage of the population of the XUAR. In 2013, the Chinese government characterized several incidents in Xinjiang as terrorist attacks; a large number of police and civilians were killed in the violence. Shanghai experienced no such disturbances in 2013.

A growing concern is Chinese private citizens, not associated with a government or terror organizations, using methods that maximize death or injuries against the public as an expression of their discontent with the Chinese authorities. For example, On June 7, local authorities in Xiamen described as "a serious criminal case" an incident in which 47 people were killed in a bus fire set by an unhappy suicidal person. On July 20, a wheelchair-bound person detonated a device at the Beijing international airport to show his dissatisfaction with the handling of his grievances by the Chinese government. On November 6, several explosions rocked the Communist Party office in Taiyuan. An angry Chinese person was responsible for the explosions, in which eight people were injured and one killed.

Civil Unrest

Protests outside of official U.S. facilities were rare in 2013, generally involving one or two persons. They were relatively peaceful and generally focused against the Chinese



government's perceived corruption and/or perceived wrong-doings to which they were victims. These individuals were quickly removed by Chinese security.

Post-specific Concerns

Environmental Hazards

Natural disasters are not uncommon. On April 2013, a 7.0 magnitude earthquake struck Lushan county, Chengdu Province, reportedly killing 179 people and leaving thousands injured. On July 22, 2013, a series of earthquake occurred in Gansu, reportedly killing 95 persons and leaving more than 1,000 injured.

Severe weather, such as large snowstorms, can bring parts of the country to a standstill. Even smaller-scale storms often lead to multiple traffic accidents; snow removal is typically slow and is accomplished by employing thousands of laborers with shovels and brooms.

China's southern coast is subject to heavy rainfall, flooding, and monsoons by typhoons during key times of the year. On August 2013, Typhoon Utor killed about 105 people and left 115 people missing after making landfall in southern China. Likewise, Typhoon Usagi killed 25 people on September 2013. Typhoon Fitow struck southern China in early September 2013, bringing torrential rain and flooding to Shanghai when it made landfall across China's southeastern seaboard. Although no major incidents were reported in Shanghai, as a coastal city, it has the potential to experience catastrophic incidents.

Industrial and Transportation Accidents

Accidents and fatalities plague China's heavy industries. China struggles with worker safety and quality assurance issues. On June 2, 2013, one of the worst industrial accidents in recent memory took place in Jilin. A poultry factory fire killed 119 workers. In December 2013, a series of explosions were registered in Luzhou shopping center, Sichuan. Five people were reportedly killed and 35 injured due to natural gas explosions. On August 21, 2013, liquid ammonia leaked from a refrigeration unit at a cold storage facility, killing 15 people and injuring 26 others.

Economic Espionage/Intellectual Property Thefts

Security personnel carefully watch foreign visitors and may place them under surveillance. Hotel rooms (including meeting rooms), offices, cars, taxis, telephones, Internet usage, and fax machines may be monitored onsite or remotely, and personal possessions in hotel rooms,



including computers, may be searched without your consent or knowledge. Business travelers should be particularly mindful that trade secrets, negotiating positions, and other business sensitive information may be taken and shared with competitors, counterparts, and/or Chinese regulatory and legal entities.

In 2013, U.S. Consulate Shanghai's American Citizen Services received numerous reported incidents of business disputes involving American companies where violence occurred or there was a threat of violence or intimidation. These incidents ran the gamut from contract disputes to disgruntled employees and labor strikes. Local police were unwilling to become involved in what they viewed as business disputes that must be settled by the parties involved. Business disputes can result in exit bans until the dispute is resolved.

Privacy Concerns

All visitors should be aware that they have no expectation of privacy in public or private locations. The Embassy regularly receives reports of human and technical monitoring of U.S. private businessmen and visiting U.S. citizens. The areas around U.S. and other foreign diplomatic facilities and residences are under overt physical and video surveillance; dozens of security personnel are posted outside of facilities and around residences, while video cameras are visible throughout diplomatic quarters (offices and residential neighborhoods) of Beijing. Overt microphones and video cameras are common in Chinese taxis.

All hotel rooms and offices are considered to be subject to on-site or remote technical monitoring at all times. Hotel rooms, residences, and offices may be accessed at any time without the occupants' consent or knowledge. Elevators and public areas of housing compounds are also under continuous surveillance.

Embassy employees are warned not to discuss sensitive information in their homes, vehicles, or offices. The Embassy strongly encourages members of the private sector to take similar precautions to safeguard sensitive, personal, and/or proprietary information.

All means of communication -- telephones, mobile phones, faxes, e-mails, text messages, etc., -- are likely monitored. The government has access to the infrastructure operated by the limited number of internet service providers (ISPs) and wireless providers in China. Wireless access to the Internet in major metropolitan areas is becoming more common. As such, the Chinese can more easily access official and personal computers. The government has publicly declared that it regularly monitors private e-mail and Internet browsing through cooperation with local ISPs. Some bloggers are subject to particular scrutiny in China where such activity is often carefully monitored and in some cases, depending upon the subject



matter, blocked. Common Western social media websites, including You Tube, Facebook, and Twitter, are blocked in China.

Drug-related Crimes

Narco-terrorism has not been an issue. The government is concerned about domestic drug use, and enforcement efforts are widespread. However, illicit drugs are available.

Kidnapping Threats

Kidnappings are not common. However, rumors are plentiful and readily available claiming that a businessman was held against his will in a hotel room while being forced to pay a debt. Or, a cab driver drove a client to an unknown location and forced him/her to pay some fee under threat of injury. However, these events have never been officially reported to RSO.

Police Response

Police response for foreign victims of crime depends upon the type of infraction, where it transpired, and the social status of the victim. Urban forces in Shanghai and other first-tier cities are better trained and equipped than in other locales because authorities spend millions of dollars on security-related infrastructure. Local police are semi-effective at deterring crime; most responses to alarms/emergency calls are sufficiently prompt if the police are informed that the victim is a Westerner or person of importance. In some cases, local police authorities will serve as a mediator between the victim and criminal to agree upon financial compensation (sometimes in lieu of jail time).

How to Handle Incidents of Police Detention or Harassment

Investigative training and forensic equipment are improving but remain substandard in comparison with those of Western countries. Despite repeated formal requests, reports of investigations are never provided to RSO; however, cooperation between Chinese security officials and post continues to improve.

Where to Turn to for Assistance if you Become a Victim of Crime

If private U.S. citizens become the victim of a crime anywhere in China, they should contact the police by dialing 110, regardless of location (English-language capabilities will vary significantly). They may also contact American Citizen Services (ACS) at the Embassy or nearest Consulate for assistance. ACS officers can recommend appropriate medical facilities,



provide contact information for local attorneys, notify family members, and explain how to transfer funds to China.

Medical Emergencies

Medical care continues to improve in many urban areas. Shanghai has several acceptable Western-style medical centers. Some conditions that led to a medical evacuation can now be safely treated in-country.

Both municipal and private ambulance service remain substandard. Response time is typically very slow, and transport to the nearest hospital can take a considerable amount of time due to congested traffic conditions. Most ambulances are poorly equipped and staffed by individuals lacking EMT training akin to that found in the U.S. or Western Europe.

Medical evacuation by air is expensive, depending upon the patient's condition and final medevac destination. Visitors are strongly encouraged to purchase medical evacuation insurance prior to traveling to China.

Contact Information for Recommended Local Hospitals and Clinics

U.S. citizens should use Western medical centers whenever possible or, when necessary, seek out the VIP section ("gao gan bing fang") of the hospital where there are more likely to be Western-trained physicians and more modern medical equipment.

International SOS maintains a 24-hour alarm center for visitors to China. SOS representatives will advise on the availability of care in most urban areas. Collect calls are accepted. Contact information is:

Beijing: 86-10-6462-9000

Hong Kong: 852-2528-9900

USA: 215-942-8226

Recommended Air Ambulance Services

Air ambulance service varies by city. International SOS (<https://www.internationalsos.com>) is the main Western air ambulance provider along China's east coast. MEDEX also provides regional air ambulance services; its representatives can be contacted via the internet at <http://www.medexassist.com/>.



CDC Country-specific Vaccination and Health Guidance

For vaccine and health guidance, please visit the CDC at:
<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/china>.

Tips on How to Avoid Becoming a Victim

Crimes/Scams

Scams are growing in sophistication. In 2013, the Consulate learned of a reportedly new and worrisome scam. A victim described the scam as follows: a parent is called at home or on their mobile device and told that his/her child became ill at school and was taken to a hospital. The parent then rushes to that hospital. Once there, the parent is met at the entrance area by a false medical professional who informs the parent of the child's sensitive but dangerous condition and asks for payment of money in order to carry out needed procedures. The parent complies; the "doctor" asks the parent to wait in the hospital waiting area, and the scammer disappears.

An SMS and/or email message is sent with fraudulent bills and traffic tickets to trick people into paying money. The newest text messaging scam is from an individual claiming to be the landlord. Since the landlord is traveling overseas, the monthly rent should be deposited into a bank account.

Individual(s) posing as police officer(s) and levying fake criminal charges against their victims and then extorting money from them is also common.

Foreigners are approached and asked if they are interested in Chinese culture. The scammers offer to help buy tea at a local tea shop or to partake in a tea ceremony. The tea is of low quality and overpriced (sometimes in excess of 1,000 RMB). Foreigners are threatened that the local police will arrest them if the bill is not settled.

Foreigners are approached by two or more Chinese (attractive females). The two ask the foreigners to take a picture of them. The conversation develops where the foreigners are invited to practice English over a drink at either a tea shop or bar. The bill ends up being overpriced, and foreigners are threatened that the local police will arrest them if the bill is not settled.

Foreigners are often approached by beggars with young children or a disabled person. Sometimes these beggars will kneel down before you asking for money. They may approach



their victims while singing Chinese songs out of sound amplifiers strapped to their upper bodies appealing to the victim's sympathy. It has been reported that some of these beggars are part of a larger network of criminals using children and handicapped persons in their criminal enterprise.

Best Situational Awareness Practices

Travelers are strongly encouraged to be aware of their surroundings. Vigilance is necessary to reduce the likelihood of becoming a victim of crime.

Visitors should disperse money on their person, taking care to separate small and large denominations. Men should place their wallets in front pockets, while women should drape the shoulder straps of purses across their body, keeping them in view and under positive control. If you use a backpack, do not place items of worth inside. Hotel safes should be used but are not a failsafe method to safeguard belongings.

Travelers are encouraged to make copies of their passport photo page and visa and credit card numbers (to include telephone contact information in the event the card is stolen); these copies should be stored in their hotel or residence in the event the actual items are stolen. Travelers should not flash large amounts of money, jewelry, or electronics, all of which can be an indicator of wealth.

Public payphones are becoming less common in urban areas. Long-term visitors should purchase cellular telephones, and short-term travelers should contact their cellular phone provider to determine if it provides coverage in both mainland China and Hong Kong. Chinese SIM cards with pay per minute plans are inexpensive.

Westerners should not be exchanging currency from individuals in the streets. Scammers often offer unbelievable currency exchange rates with counterfeit money. Beware, a deal that is too good to believe probably is.

U.S. Embassy/Consulate Location and Contact Information

U.S. Consulate Shanghai

Main Address: 1469 Huihai Zhonglu, Shanghai 2000031

Telephone: 86-21-6433-6880

Post One: 86-21-6433-2270

Consular Section Address: 8th floor of the Westgate Mall, 1038 Nanjing Xi Lu, Shanghai



200041

Telephone: 86-21-3217-4650; after hours 86-21-6433-3936

Consular Section Fax: 86-21-6217-2071

Email: Shanghaiacs@state.gov

Normal hours of operation are 8:00am -5:00pm, Monday-Friday. Mission facilities are normally closed for U.S. federal and Chinese holidays.

The addresses and contact information for other U.S. Embassy and Consulates in China are listed below.

U.S. Embassy Beijing

Address: No. 55 An Jia Lou Lu, Chaoyang District, Beijing 100600

Telephone: 86-10-8531-4000 (24 hours)

Post One: 86-10-8531-4444

Fax: 86-10-8531-4000 (American Citizen Services)

Email: amcitbeijing@state.gov.

Internet: <http://beijing.usembassy-china.org.cn/service.html>

Medical Unit: 86-10-8531-4777

Consular Affairs: 86-10-8531-3333

U.S. Consulate Chengdu

Address: 4 Lingshiguan Road, Section 4, Renmin Nan lu, Chengdu 610041

Telephone: 86-28-8558-3992, 8558-9642; after hours: 86-0-137-0800-1442

Fax: 86-28-8558-3520

Consular Section Fax: 8558-6229

E-mail: consularchengdu@state.gov

U.S. Consulate Guangzhou

Address: 43 Hua Jiu Lu, Zhujiang New Town, Guangzhou 510623

Telephone: (86 20) 3814-5000; for afterhours emergencies, please call: (86 20) 3814-5444.

Fax: (86 20) 3814-5001

Email: GuangzhouACS@state.gov

U.S. Consulate Shenyang

Address: #52, 14 Wei Road, Heping District, Shenyang 110003

Telephone: 86-24-2322-1198; after hours 86-24-137-0988-9307

Fax: 86-24-2323-1465



Email: ShenyangACS@state.gov

U.S. Consulate Wuhan

Address: New World International Trade Tower I, N. 568 Jianshe Avenue, Hankou, Wuhan 430022

Telephone: 86-027-8555-7791

Fax: 86-027-8555-7761

Email: chenz@state.gov (Consul General's assistant)

For the latest security and other information, Americans living and traveling abroad should regularly monitor the Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs at <http://travel.state.gov>, where the current Worldwide Caution, Travel Alerts, and Travel Warnings can be found, as well as important information for Americans who face emergencies abroad. U.S. citizens residing or traveling in China are reminded to register in the Department's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program by entering their travel itinerary and contact information at: <https://step.state.gov/step/>. In case of difficulties registering online, please contact the closest U.S. embassy or consulate for assistance.

OSAC Country Council Information

Beijing, Guangzhou, and Shanghai all have active OSAC Country Councils. The initial point of contact for each Council is the Regional Security Officer, who can be reached via the numbers listed above or:

RSO Gregory Levin (Beijing): LevinGJ@state.gov

RSO James Reynolds (Guangzhou) ReynoldsJM@state.gov

RSO Kevin Wynes (Chengdu) WynesKA@state.gov

RSO Miguel Eversley (Shanghai): EversleyMA@state.gov

RSO Dax Landry (Shenyang): LandryDL@state.gov