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Israel, the West Bank and Gaza

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[Israel, The West Bank and Gaza Travel Warning](#)
December 16, 2015

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Quick Facts

- **PASSPORT VALIDITY:** Must be valid for 6 months beyond date of entry
- **VACCINATIONS:** None
- **BLANK PASSPORT PAGES:** 1 page (although passports are normally not stamped upon entry)
- **CURRENCY RESTRICTIONS FOR ENTRY:** None
- **TOURIST VISA REQUIRED:** Not required for stays of 90 days or less
- **CURRENCY RESTRICTIONS FOR EXIT:** None

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Embassies and Consulates

U.S. Embassy Tel Aviv**71 Hayarkon Street****Tel Aviv Israel 63903****Telephone:** +(972) (3) 519-7575**Emergency After-Hours Telephone:** +(972) (3) 519-7551**Fax:** +(972) (3) 516-4390, or 516-0315Email: amctelaviv@state.gov

Contact the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy for information and assistance in Israel and the Golan Heights, at the ports of entry at Ben Gurion Airport, Haifa Port, the northern (Sheikh Hussein) and southern (Yitzhak Rabin) border crossings connecting Israel and Jordan, and the border crossings between Israel and Egypt.

U.S. Consulate General Jerusalem**14 David Flusser Street,****Jerusalem 93392****Telephone:** +(972) (2) 622-7230 or +(972) (2) 630-4000**Emergency After-Hours Telephone:** +(972) (2) 622-7250**Fax:** +(972) (2) 630-4070Email: jerusalemacs@state.gov

Contact the Consular Section of the U.S. Consulate General in Jerusalem for information and assistance in the following areas: Jerusalem, the West Bank, Gaza (and the crossing points between Israel and Gaza), and the Allenby/King Hussein Bridge border crossing between Jordan and the West Bank.

U.S. Consular Agency - Haifa**26 Ben Gurion Boulevard****Haifa 35023****Telephone:** +(972)(4) 853-1470**Emergency After-Hours Telephone:** Please contact the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv**Fax:** +(972)(4) 853-1476Email: consage@netvision.net.il

Contact the Consular Agency in Haifa for routine and emergency citizen services in the northern part of Israel.

Destination Description

See the Department of State's [Israel Fact Sheet](#) for information on U.S.–Israel relations. Please read the [Israel, West Bank, and Gaza Travel Warning](#) for additional information.

In 1994, negotiations between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization led to the creation of the Palestinian Authority (PA) in the West Bank and Gaza. In the West Bank, there is a division of responsibilities between the Government of Israel and the PA that is complex and subject to change. PA civil administration and security forces provide services to residents in certain areas of the West Bank (Area A), while Israel provides security in others (Areas B and C). Hamas, a U.S.-designated terrorist organization, violently took control of Gaza in 2007 and exercises de facto control there.

Entry, Exit & Visa Requirements

United States citizens traveling to Israel, the West Bank and Gaza should read this section in its entirety to be aware of the complexities regarding entry, exit and permission to stay in Israel and the West Bank and Gaza.

- The Government of Israel administers immigration and security controls at its international land crossings with Jordan into the West Bank and Israel; with Egypt, Lebanon and Syria; and at Israel's airports and seaports. A separate network of security checkpoints and crossings operated by Israeli authorities regulates the movement of people and goods from Israel and Jerusalem into the West Bank and Gaza. Some travelers and residents may be required to obtain a permit from Israeli authorities to travel between the West Bank or Gaza and Israel. Detailed information regarding Government of Israel controlled crossings and borders is available from [Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#). In the West Bank, the Palestinian Authority exercises security and civil control in Area A and civil control in Area B; Israel exercises security control in Area B and security and civil control in Area C. In Gaza, Hamas operates internal checkpoints that may restrict the movement of individuals, including U.S. citizens, and regulate entry and exit from the territory.
- All persons seeking to enter or depart Israel, the West Bank, or Gaza are subject to immigration and security screening, including prolonged questioning and physical searches, and may be denied entry or exit. The U.S. government seeks equal treatment and freedom to travel for all U.S. citizens regardless of national origin or ethnicity. U.S. citizens denied entry into Israel or the West Bank should receive a written explanation from Israeli authorities. Some U.S. citizens of Arab or Muslim heritage have experienced significant difficulties and unequal and hostile treatment at Israel's borders and checkpoints. U.S. citizens should immediately report treatment by border officials that they believe is discriminatory, hostile, or unequal to [the American Citizen Services \(ACS\) unit of the U.S. Consulate General in Jerusalem \(JerusalemACS@state.gov\)](#) or [the ACS unit of the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv \(AMCtelaviv@state.gov\)](#).
- Individuals registered in the Palestinian Authority population registry, who Israeli authorities believe may have a claim to a Palestinian identification card, are prohibited from entering Israel or visiting Jerusalem without advance permission, regardless of other nationality, including U.S. citizenship, or place of residence. These individuals seeking to visit the West Bank are required to enter from Jordan through the Allenby/King Hussein Bridge. Individuals may apply for a permit to enter via Israel prior to travel at an Israeli embassy or consulate abroad, though the traveler may be required to depart the West Bank via the Allenby/King Hussein Bridge into Jordan.
- Individuals with Israeli citizenship, regardless of other nationality, including U.S. citizenship, are prohibited from entering Gaza, entering or departing Jordan via the Allenby/King Hussein Bridge, and are generally prohibited from traveling to parts of the West Bank under PA control (Area A), to include Bethlehem and Jericho.
- Israeli citizens naturalized in the United States retain their Israeli citizenship, and children born in the United States to Israeli parents usually acquire both U.S. and Israeli nationality at birth. Israeli citizens, including dual nationals, are subject to Israeli laws requiring service in Israel's armed forces and must enter and depart Israel on their Israeli passports. Dual U.S.- Israeli citizens of military age who have not completed Israeli military service may be prohibited from departing Israel until service is completed or other arrangements have been made. These individuals may be subject to criminal penalties, including military imprisonment, for failure to serve.

Additional Entry/Exit Requirements:

- The Ministry of Interior continues to bar some foreign nationals, including U.S. citizens, affiliated with certain pro-Palestinian NGOs and solidarity organizations, from entry into the country. Authorities require some foreign nationals to sign declarations stating their understanding that “all relevant legal actions” would be taken against them, “including deportation and denial of entry into Israel for a period of up to 10 years,” if they traveled through the country to Palestinian Authority-controlled areas without appropriate authorization.
- Individuals entering the West Bank with family, professional, or political connections inside the West Bank may be given an entry stamp that permits travel only in the West Bank. This stamp does not permit the bearer to enter Jerusalem or Israel. Travelers who have received such a stamp may file an appeal with the Government of Israel’s Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) at Beit El, Ramallah. The relationship between the stamp and visa extensions is discussed below.
- U.S. citizens whose stay is restricted to the West Bank or Gaza may experience delays in obtaining in-person routine and emergency consular services from the U.S. Consulate General in Jerusalem. Such individuals are required to obtain a permit from COGAT, and in the case of U.S. citizens in Gaza permits for the purpose of obtaining consular services are rarely granted. U.S. consular officials periodically travel to the West Bank and the Erez crossing with Gaza to assist U.S. citizens. Contact the American Citizen Services unit at the U.S. Consulate General for additional information.
- Those wishing to volunteer in the West Bank must apply for a B4 volunteer visa at an Israeli embassy or consulate before arriving in Israel or the West Bank. Once at the embassy or consulate, the applicant must speak with the COGAT office, which coordinates volunteer activities in the West Bank. U.S. citizens who have previously been denied entry to Israel or the West Bank or had other legal issues there are advised to provide this information to the Israeli authorities during their visa application. Volunteers who arrive without the correct visa will be denied entry and returned to their point of origin.
- U.S. citizens with extensive travel to Muslim countries or are of Arab, Middle Eastern, or Muslim origin may face additional questioning by immigration and border authorities. U.S. citizens suspected of wishing to enter areas prohibited to them by the Ministry of Interior (MOI) may be required to sign an agreement stipulating that they will refrain from entering those areas.
- Please consult the [Israel Tax Authority](#) for items that must be declared upon entry into Israel. Carrying audio-visual or data storage/processing equipment may lead to additional security-related delays, and some travelers have had their laptop computers and other electronic equipment searched at Ben Gurion Airport. While most items are returned prior to the traveler’s departure, some equipment has been confiscated and reportedly been damaged, destroyed, lost, or never returned. U.S. citizens who have had personal property damaged due to security procedures at Ben Gurion may contact the [Commissioner for Public Complaints](#). There is no redress for confiscations.
- Israeli security officials have also on occasion requested access to travelers’ personal e-mail accounts or other social media accounts as a condition of entry. In such circumstances, travelers should have no expectation of privacy for any data stored on such devices or in their accounts.

- The Israeli Ministry of Health imposes some HIV/AIDS entry restrictions for visitors to and foreign residents of Israel, and the Ministry of Health reserves the right to deny entry to visitors who declare their status. Please verify this information with the [Embassy of Israel](#) before traveling.
- In an effort to facilitate departure procedures at the Ben Gurion Airport, Israeli authorities have installed passport control stations with biometric scanners. The stations are located near the regular passport control booths and are designed for use by travelers (both Israeli and foreign) that hold passports with embedded electronic chips only. Travelers who register their departure at the new biometric stations are not required to approach the manned passport control booths.

Additional Information for Israeli-Americans:

- **Military Service**: Israeli-American dual nationals of military age, including females, who do not wish to serve in the Israeli armed forces, should contact the Israeli Embassy in Washington, DC, to learn more about an exemption or deferment from Israeli military service. They should obtain written confirmation of military service exemption or deferment before traveling to Israel.
- **Volunteering to serve in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF)** is a serious decision. The IDF expects all (including U.S. citizens) who begin voluntary military service to complete their entire commitment. There may be no option to leave service early without permission from the IDF.
- **Travel to PA-controlled Areas**: Israeli citizens, including dual nationals, are not permitted to enter Gaza and are generally restricted from traveling to parts of the West Bank under PA control ("Area A"), to include Bethlehem, Jericho and Hebron.
- **Travel to and from Jordan**: Israeli citizens, including dual U.S.-Israeli citizens, are prohibited from using the Allenby/King Hussein Bridge crossing, unless as part of an official delegation or with special permission from the Israeli and Jordanian authorities. They must cross at the Yitzhak Rabin/Wadi Araba crossing in the south, near Eilat or the Jordan River crossing/Sheikh Hussein Bridge in the north, near Beit She'an.
- Contact the Israeli Ministry of Interior or the nearest Israeli embassy or consulate for more information on dual citizenship, passport requirements, and travel restrictions for Israeli citizens.

Additional Information for Palestinian-Americans:

- As previously indicated, individuals registered in the Palestinian Authority population registry, who Israeli authorities believe may have a claim to a Palestinian identification card, are prohibited from entering Israel (including arriving at Ben Gurion International Airport) or visiting Jerusalem without advance permission from an Israeli embassy or consulate, regardless of other nationality, including U.S. citizenship, or place of residence. This restriction applies even if an individual is not aware of being listed on the Palestinian Authority population registry, does not possess a Palestinian identification card, and does not desire such status. Individuals seeking to be removed from the registry must apply for such removal with the Palestinian Authority. Israeli border officials treat such travelers as Palestinians for purposes of entry and departure, regardless of other nationality, including U.S. citizenship. Some Palestinian-Americans report experiencing hostile

treatment and significant difficulties at Israel's borders and checkpoints.

- Palestinians, including Palestinian-Americans, are required to enter and depart the West Bank via the Allenby/King Hussein Bridge crossing between Jordan and the West Bank using either a Palestinian Authority (PA) passport with no exit permit or a PA ID card together with an exit permit. Such individuals may also re-enter from Jordan using a PA ID card and a valid U.S. passport, if that is how they departed. If they departed using a PA passport they are expected to return using a PA passport.
- Upon arrival at any of the ports of entry, Palestinians, including Palestinian-Americans, may wish to confirm with Israeli immigration authorities from where they will be required to depart. Some have been allowed to enter Israel or visit Jerusalem but told they cannot depart Israel via Ben Gurion without special permission, which is rarely granted. Some families have been separated as a result, and other travelers have forfeited airline tickets.
- Palestinian-American residents of Jerusalem are normally required to use laissez-passers (travel documents issued by the Israeli government) that contain re-entry permits approved by the Israeli Ministry of Interior for travel via any border crossing except the Allenby Bridge. U.S. citizen residents of Jerusalem who hold blue Jerusalem ID cards may have the Ministry of Interior re-entry stamp placed in their U.S. passports for travel in and out of Israel. Jerusalem ID holders who hold residency or citizenship elsewhere may encounter problems retaining their Jerusalem residence status.

Additional Information for Non-Dual Nationals:

- For non-dual nationals, an onward or return ticket and proof of sufficient funds are required for entry. Although the Israeli government does not require that a passport be valid for six months from the date of entry, airlines routinely do and may decline boarding if a traveler has less than six months validity on his or her passport. Travelers normally receive a free, three-month tourist visa upon arrival in Israel, which may be extended. Israel does not stamp passports with an entry stamp, but instead provides all travelers with an entry card, although they reserve the right to stamp the passport. All travelers should retain this entry card throughout the duration of their stay in Israel as it is their proof of lawful entry and is often requested at hotels and car rental companies. Although not required for exit, travelers are advised to keep their entry card with them to avoid delays when departing Israel. Travelers carrying official or diplomatic U.S. passports must obtain visas from an Israeli embassy or consulate prior to arrival.
- Anyone who has previously been refused entry, has experienced difficulties with his/her status during a previous visit, has overstayed the authorized duration of a previous visit, or otherwise has violated the terms of a previous admission to Israel should consult the nearest Israeli embassy or consulate before attempting to return. Such immigration violations may incur a 10 year bar to re-enter Israel.
- Jerusalem ID holders seeking returning resident status must obtain permission from Israeli authorities before traveling. The Government of Israel at times has declined to admit U.S. citizens wishing to visit, work, or travel to the West Bank or Gaza whom they suspect of being intending immigrants there. Persons denied entry have the right to an immigration court hearing to contest the denials, but they may be detained for the duration of the proceedings.

Minors: Israel does not require minors traveling with one parent to have written consent from the other parent to either enter or depart Israel.

Golan Heights: See the [Travel Warning for Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza](#) for information concerning travel to the Golan Heights.

Entering the Gaza Strip: The Department of State warns U.S. citizens against travel to the Gaza Strip and urges those in Gaza to leave immediately when border crossings are open. Should a U.S. citizen enter Gaza, the U.S. government's ability to assist him/her in departing Gaza is extremely limited as U.S. government officials are not allowed to travel to Gaza. See the [Travel Warning for Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza](#) for information on the threats to safety in the Gaza Strip.

Entering the West Bank: The Department of State urges U.S. citizens to exercise caution when traveling in the West Bank. U.S. government personnel are restricted from personal travel to most areas of the West Bank. See the [Travel Warning for Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza](#) for information concerning travel to the West Bank.

Additional Information on Extending Israeli Visas for Residents of the West Bank:

- Single-nationality U.S. citizens living and working in the West Bank may face difficulties renewing their visas, even if they received unrestricted visas upon arrival in Israel or the West Bank.
- Those who do not have family connections to Palestinian nationals may apply for a visa extension without travel restrictions by applying directly to the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) office at Beit El, Ramallah.
- Dual-nationality derivative Palestinian nationals and spouses of Palestinian nationals receive visa extensions/stamps bearing the restriction limiting their travel to within the West Bank. U.S. citizens who receive this restriction must obtain permits from the Israeli authorities to enter Israel and Jerusalem. These travelers should apply for visa extensions through the Palestinian Authority's District Coordination Office in Ramallah, which coordinates with the Israeli government on their behalf.
- U.S. citizens (and their dependents) who are employed in the West Bank by organizations registered inside Israel may apply for unrestricted visa extensions via their Israeli employer through the Ministry of Interior.

Additional Information on Israel-Jordan Crossings: The information below does not apply to dual Palestinian-U.S. nationals registered in the Palestinian Authority population registry. See information above for entry and exit restrictions for Palestinian-Americans.

- The international crossing points between Israel and Jordan include the Yitzhak Rabin/Wadi Araba crossing in the south, near Eilat; and the Jordan River crossing/Sheikh Hussein Bridge in the north, near Beit She'an. U.S. citizens using these two crossing points do not need to obtain visas before arriving at the crossings to enter either Israel or Jordan, but they will be required to pay entry fees, which are subject to change.
- U.S. passport holders must obtain Jordanian visas in advance to enter Jordan

via the Allenby/King Hussein Bridge near Jericho; the Israeli authorities issue visas on arrival.

- Individuals who receive the rare approval from the Israeli government to exit Gaza from Erez can only depart Israel via the Allenby Bridge/King Hussein crossing into Jordan and will need advance approval from Jordanian immigration authorities in order to do so. These individuals will not be permitted to depart Israel via Ben Gurion Airport.
- Procedures for all three crossings into Jordan are subject to frequent changes. Visit the websites of the [Embassy of Israel](#) and the [Jordan Tourism Board](#) for the most current visa requirements.

Information about [dual nationality](#) or the [prevention of international child abduction](#) can be found on our website. For further information about customs regulations, please read our [Customs Information page](#).

Safety and Security

The current [Travel Warning for Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza](#) advises U.S. citizens to be aware of the continuing risks of travel to Israel, the West Bank and Gaza due to the security situation and heightened tensions there, and warns against travel to Gaza. A rise in political tensions and violence in Jerusalem and the West Bank has resulted in injuries and deaths to U.S. citizens. U.S. citizens who visit or reside in these areas should consult the [Travel Warning](#) to ensure that they are aware of the security concerns. Please enroll in the [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#) so that you can receive the most up-to-date messages from the Department of State regarding safety and security developments.

Jerusalem: Demonstrations and violent clashes between activists and Israeli authorities are a regular occurrence throughout East and West Jerusalem and surrounding areas. Acts of terrorism have resulted in the death and injury to bystanders, including to U.S. citizens. The Department of State advises U.S. citizens to exercise caution in the Old City and particularly around Damascus, Lion's and Herod's gates, as these locations have been the scene of recent attacks. Travelers are reminded to exercise caution at Islamic religious sites on Fridays and on holy days, particularly during the holy month of Ramadan. Many orthodox Jewish communities in and around Jerusalem restrict vehicle traffic on Shabbat, and entering these neighborhoods with a vehicle may result in protests and violence. See the [Travel Warning for Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza](#) for a complete description of security and safety issues in Jerusalem.

The West Bank: U.S. citizens should exercise caution when traveling to the West Bank, including to Bethlehem, Jericho and Hebron, due to the complex security situation there. Increasingly frequent and violent clashes between Israeli security forces, Israeli settlers and Palestinian residents of the West Bank have resulted in the death, injury and kidnapping of U.S. citizens and others. During periods of unrest, the Government of Israel may restrict access to and within the West Bank, and some areas may be placed under curfew. U.S. government employees are restricted from personal travel in the West Bank except to the towns of Jericho, Bethlehem and on routes 1, 443, and 90. See the [Travel Warning for Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza](#) for a complete description of security and safety issues in the West Bank.

The Gaza Strip: The Department of State warns U.S. citizens against travel to the Gaza Strip, which is under the control of Hamas, a foreign terrorist organization. The Department urges those in Gaza to leave immediately when border crossings are open. The security environment within Gaza, including its border with Egypt and its seacoast, is dangerous and volatile. Exchanges of gunfire between the Israel Defense Forces and militant groups in Gaza take place intermittently, and civilians have been caught in the crossfire. U.S. government employees may not travel to Gaza for personal or official purposes. See the [Travel Warning for Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza](#) for additional information.

Crime: The crime rate is moderate in Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza. Break-ins of parked vehicles are common at public beach areas, national parks, and other areas frequented by tourists. Vehicle theft also remains a problem. U.S. citizens should not leave their valuables (including passports) unattended in parked vehicles, on the beach, or unsecured in hotels.

Don't buy counterfeit and pirated goods, even if they are widely available. Not only are the bootlegs illegal in the United States, but if you purchase them, you may also be violating local law.

U.S. citizens have occasionally been subject to high-pressure sales tactics in

Jerusalem's Old City and other tourist areas. In some cases, vendors have not disclosed the true cost of an item and convinced the buyer -- who is unfamiliar with the exchange rate -- to unwittingly sign a credit card sales receipt worth thousands of dollars.

See the [Department of State](#) and the [FBI](#) pages for information on scams.

Victims of Crime: If you or someone you know becomes the victim of a crime abroad, you should contact the local police and the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate (see the [Department of State's list of embassies and consulates](#)).

The local equivalent to the "911" emergency line in Israel, Jerusalem, and the West Bank is 100 for police, 101 for an ambulance, and 102 for the fire department.

In the event you are a victim of crime, the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv and the Consulate General in Jerusalem can do the following:

- help you find appropriate medical care
- assist you in reporting a crime to the police
- contact relatives or friends with your written consent
- explain the local criminal justice process in general terms
- provide a list of local attorneys
- provide our information on [victim's compensation programs in the U.S.](#)
- provide information on possible Government of Israel assistance to victims of crime:
 - [Israel National Police](#)
 - [Ministry of Justice](#)
 - [Ministry of Public Security](#)
- provide information on Government of Israel assistance to victims of terrorist acts. Please contact the [National Insurance Institute](#) for more information
- provide an emergency loan for repatriation to the United States and/or limited medical support in cases of destitution
- help you find accommodation and arrange flights home
- replace a stolen or lost passport

Remember that local authorities are responsible for investigating and prosecuting crime here.

U.S. citizens should carry a copy of their passport or some form of photo identification with them at all times when traveling. U.S. citizens have reported being stopped and questioned by police and immigration officials regarding their immigration status. The U.S. Embassy has received some confirmed reports of U.S. African-American and Asian-American citizens being stopped by police conducting sweeps for illegal immigrants in Tel Aviv.

Domestic Violence: U.S. citizen victims of domestic violence should contact local police but may also contact the Embassy or Consulate General to report it.

For further information:

- Enroll in the [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#) to receive security messages and make it easier to locate you in an emergency.
- Call us in Washington at 1-888-407-4747 toll-free in the United States and Canada or 1-202-501-4444 from other countries from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Eastern Standard Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays).

- See the [State Department's travel website](#) for [Worldwide Caution](#), Travel Warnings, and Travel Alerts.
- Follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) .
- See [traveling safely abroad](#) for useful travel tips.

Local Laws & Special Circumstances

Criminal Penalties: You are subject to local laws and legal systems, which can be vastly different from our own. If you violate Israeli or Palestinian laws, even unknowingly, being a U.S. citizen will not help you to avoid arrest or prosecution. Penalties for possession, use, or trafficking illegal drugs in Israel and PA-administered areas are severe, and convicted offenders can expect long jail sentences and heavy fines. Individuals expressing views, including on social media, which the Government of Israel considers incitement to violence or hate speech may face criminal penalties. Palestinian Authority security officials also arrested and abused Palestinians who posted criticism of the PA online, including on their Facebook pages. In Gaza, individuals publicly criticizing authorities risked reprisal by Hamas, including arrest, interrogation, seizure of property, and harassment.

Furthermore, some laws are also prosecutable in the United States, regardless of local law. For examples, see our website on [crimes against minors abroad](#) and the [Department of Justice](#) website.

Arrests and Arrest Notification: If you are arrested or detained, ask police or prison officials to notify the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv or U.S. Consulate General in Jerusalem immediately. See our [webpage](#) for further information.

Arrests and Arrest Notification by Israel:

- The Government of Israel is required by a bilateral treaty and customary international law to notify promptly the U.S. Embassy or Consulate General when a U.S. citizen is arrested, at the request of the U.S. citizen. In practice, however, Israeli authorities often fail to provide notification, particularly in the case of resident Israeli-Americans and Palestinian-Americans, which limits the ability of the U.S. government to provide timely consular assistance. In case of arrest or detention, U.S. citizens should promptly identify themselves as such to the arresting authorities and should request that the U.S. Embassy or Consulate General be notified immediately. There are credible reports that U.S. citizens have been mistreated by Israeli security forces during their arrest and interrogation, including suffering injuries that required hospitalization.
- Some youths over the age of 14 have been detained and tried as adults. Arrestees have reported pressure to sign documents in Hebrew that they do not understand.
- U.S. citizens arrested in Israel for criminal or security offenses are entitled to legal representation provided by the Israeli government. U.S. citizens arrested by Israeli authorities for security offenses may be prevented from communicating with lawyers, family members, or consular officers for lengthy periods. Even after notification, consular access to the arrested individual may be delayed. Under local law, individuals detained for security offenses may be held for up to six months without charges.

Arrests and Arrest Notification by the Palestinian Authority (PA):

- Individuals arrested by PA security forces in the West Bank for security offenses may be prohibited from communicating with lawyers, family members, or consular officers for lengthy periods. In addition, they may be held in custody for long periods without formal charges or before being brought before a judge for an arrest extension. The PA often does not notify the U.S. Consulate General of such arrests, and consular access to arrestees is often delayed or denied. In case of arrest or detention, U.S. citizens should promptly identify themselves as such to the arresting authorities and should

request that the U.S. Consulate General be notified immediately.

Gaza: Since Hamas seized control of the Gaza Strip in June 2007, the Hamas Executive Forces (EF) have dominated security matters in Gaza. The U.S. government has no contact with the EF and cannot assist those arrested in Gaza.

Court Jurisdiction: Civil and religious courts in Israel actively exercise their authority to bar certain individuals, including nonresidents, from leaving the country until debts or other legal claims against them are resolved. Israel's religious courts exercise jurisdiction over all citizens and residents of Israel in cases of marriage, divorce, child custody, and child support. U.S. citizens should be aware that they might be subject to involuntary and prolonged stays in Israel if a case is filed against them in a religious court, even if their marriage took place in the United States and regardless of whether their spouse is present in Israel.

Purchases of Property: U.S. citizens who buy or lease property in the West Bank and Gaza may find their ownership challenged by people earlier displaced from those lands. Prospective property buyers should always seek legal advice before buying in these areas. The possible establishment of a Palestinian state may have legal consequences for property owners in Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Jerusalem.

Faith-Based Travelers: See the [Department of State's International Religious Freedom Report](#).

LGBTI Rights: There are no legal restrictions on same-sex sexual relations or the organization of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBTI) events in Israel. Israel has anti-discrimination laws protecting LGBTI individuals. Acceptance and tolerance of LGBTI people varies throughout the country and even from neighborhood to neighborhood. As of August 2014, the Law of Return allows for same-sex spouses of Jews making Aliyah to be eligible to make Aliyah with their spouses and receive Israeli citizenship.

The legal systems in the West Bank and Gaza Strip are based on the 1960 Jordanian penal code which prohibits consensual same-sex sexual activity. However, the Palestinian Authority (PA) has not prosecuted individuals suspected of such activity. Societal discrimination based on cultural and religious traditions was commonplace, making the West Bank and Gaza challenging environments for LGBTI persons. Some Palestinians have claimed PA security officers harassed, abused, and sometimes arrested LGBTI individuals because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. NGOs reported Hamas also harassed and detained persons in Gaza due to their sexual orientation or gender identity.

LGBTI travelers are encouraged to remain vigilant and aware of their surroundings, especially when entering religious or socially conservative areas.

Israel's [Aguda](#) organization provides useful information on LGBTI issues in Israel. See our [LGBTI Travel Information](#) page and section 6 of the [Department of State's Human Rights report](#) for further details.

Persons with Mobility Issues. Individuals with mobility issues may find accessibility and accommodation very different from that in the United States. Israeli law prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities in employment, education, access to health care, and the provision of other state services. Legislation mandates access to buildings and transportation,

as well as accommodations for persons with disabilities in services and the work place. The government enforces the laws with only limited success. Societal discrimination and lack of accessibility persist in employment and housing. The law mandates accessibility to urban public transportation but not inter-urban buses. Most train stations maintain access for persons with disabilities; however, many buses still do not have such access. Television stations include subtitles or sign language, and the courts accommodate testimony from persons with intellectual disabilities or mental illness. Tourists will find restaurants, foot paths, and public transportation less accessible than in the United States.

PA law prohibits discrimination based on disability. The Palestinian Disability Law was ratified in 1999, implementation has been slow. It does not mandate access to buildings, information, or communications. Palestinians with disabilities continued to receive uneven and poor quality services and care. Familial and societal discrimination against persons with disabilities existed in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

Students: See our [Students Abroad](#) page and [FBI travel tips](#) .

Women Travelers: See our travel tips for [Women Travelers](#).

Health

Modern medical care and medicines are available in Israel. A few hospitals in Israel and most hospitals in the West Bank and Gaza, however, fall below Western standards. Travelers can find information in English about emergency medical facilities and after-hours pharmacies in the Jerusalem Post and the English-language edition of the Ha'aretz newspaper, or refer to the [Embassy's](#) or [Consulate General's](#) medical lists.

The U.S. government does not pay private medical bills incurred by U.S. citizens abroad. Be aware that U.S. Medicare does not apply overseas.

Make sure your health insurance plan provides coverage overseas. Most health care providers overseas only accept cash payments. See our webpage for more [information on insurance providers for overseas coverage](#).

We strongly recommend [supplemental insurance](#) (see our webpage) to cover medical evacuation.

Carry prescription medication in original packaging, along with your doctor's prescription.

Polio is an increasingly serious health concern in Israel.

Be up-to-date on all [vaccinations](#) recommended by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

For further health information, go to:

- [World Health Organization](#)
- [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC)

Travel & Transportation

Road Conditions and Safety: While in Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza, U.S. citizens may encounter road conditions that differ significantly from those in the United States. The information below is provided for general reference only and may not be totally accurate in a particular location or circumstance.

- **Israel:** Israeli roads and highways tend to be crowded, especially in urban areas. The Government of Israel requires that all passenger car occupants use their seat belts at all times and that headlights be used during all intercity travel, both day and night, and during winter. All drivers are required to carry fluorescent vests and safety triangles in the car with them at all times, and they are required to wear the vests whenever they get out of their cars to make repairs or change tires. If a vehicle is stopped for a traffic violation and it does not contain a fluorescent vest, the driver will be fined. These vests can be purchased for a nominal price in all local gas stations. While cellular handset phone use is prohibited while driving, hands-free units are authorized.
- **West Bank and Gaza:** Crowded roads and herds of animals on the roads are common in the West Bank and Gaza. During periods of heightened tension in the West Bank, cars and buses have been targeted with stone throwing, improvised incendiary devices, small arms fire, barricades, and burning tires. Emergency services may be delayed by the need for Palestinian authorities to coordinate with Israeli officials. Seat belt use is required and drivers may not drink alcohol. Individuals involved in accidents resulting in death or injury may be detained by police pending an investigation.

Traffic Laws: Aggressive driving is commonplace, and many drivers fail to maintain safe following distances or signal before changing lanes or making turns. Overtaking on high-speed, undivided two-lane roads is common and may result in an accident. Drivers are also prone to stop suddenly on roads without warning, especially in the right lane. Drivers should use caution, as Israel has a high rate of fatalities from automobile accidents.

Public Transportation: U.S. government employees and their families are prohibited from using public and inter-city buses (and associated bus terminals) throughout Israel and the West Bank due to security concerns.

Please refer to our [Road Safety page](#) for more information. We suggest that you visit the website of the country's [national tourist office](#) and Israel's [Bureau of Motor Vehicles](#) for road safety.

Aviation Safety Oversight: The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has assessed the Government of Israel's Civil Aviation Authority as being in compliance with International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) aviation safety standards for oversight of Israel's air carrier operations. Further information may be found on the [FAA's safety assessment page](#).

[Please see Fact Sheet for this country.](#)

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