

**Information for Travelers**  
**Warden Message**  
**U.S. Embassy Belmopan, Belize**  
**May 12, 2009**

Recent violent crimes involving visitors to the islands of Ambergris Caye and Caye Caulker serve as a reminder that everyone should take an active role in their own personal security. U.S. citizens residing and traveling in Belize should exercise caution when in unfamiliar areas and be aware of their surroundings at all times.

Many parts of the country, including both urban and rural areas, have seen an increase in violent crime. In some instances, criminals have used physical force and intimidation or utilized weapons in the commission of crimes, especially in Belize City and Cayo District. While other areas of the country have lower levels of overall crime, the potential employment of violence is still a concern.

There is no evidence that U.S. citizens are specifically targeted because of their citizenship. The United States Government does not have any information about specific threats to American citizens but would like to share a self-assessment guideline used by government employees to help you increase your own personal security.

**Daily Security Habits and Practices**

If you are driving, in a restaurant, or other public places and notice suspicious individuals, armed personnel or protective security details, immediately depart the area.

Vary your times and routes to and from work.

Keep your doors locked and windows closed (residence and vehicle).

Check the interior and exterior of your vehicle prior to getting into your vehicle.

Look for things that are irregular or abnormal.

Maintain a low personal profile by not doing anything that draws attention to yourself.

Report to the police any vehicles or persons possibly involved, i.e., following or watching you or asking detailed questions that seem inappropriate or make you feel uncomfortable in surveillance of your activities.

Be alert to what is going on around you.

Inform your colleagues and family of your daily plans and how they can reach you.

Be unpredictable when possible in both your work and social schedules. Schedules that are the most predictable leave you the most vulnerable.

Always be aware of your surroundings. Report all suspicious activity to local police officials.

In traffic, always attempt to leave space in which to maneuver. Always leave yourself an exit (escape route). Be prepared to take evasive action at any time.

If you are being followed or harassed by another driver, try to find the nearest police station, hotel, or other public facility to call the police. Never lead the person back to your home or stop and get out.

Whenever possible, do not have a set day for personal errands (e.g., shopping). Be unpredictable.

Never give out your personal information such as family member and household staff names, addresses and telephone numbers, in an open setting.

Don't travel alone if it can be avoided.

Travel during the day may be safer.

Consider carefully whether you really want to hike or pick up hitch hikers.

Carry a copy of your passport with you while in country.

Carry money in multiple places (on your person and in bags) not all in one place

Make sure friends, colleagues and/or travel companions (as well as the U.S. Embassy) have an emergency contact to call on your behalf, if needed.

Brief all of your family members on security measures.

Inform your family, supervisor or colleagues of your whereabouts if you are traveling overnight.

## **Stay in Touch**

U.S. citizens living or traveling abroad are encouraged to register with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate through the State Department's travel registration web site at <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/> so that they can obtain updated information on travel and security. Americans without Internet access may register in person with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate. By registering, American citizens make it easier for the Embassy or Consulate to contact them in case of emergency.

U.S. citizens are strongly encouraged to maintain a high level of vigilance, be aware of local events, and take the appropriate steps to bolster their personal security. For additional information, please refer to "A Safe Trip Abroad" found at <http://travel.state.gov>.

Americans are urged to monitor the local news and maintain contact with the U.S. Embassy in Belmopan.

As the Department continues to develop information on any potential security threats to U.S. citizens overseas, it shares credible threat information through its Consular Information Program documents, available on the Internet at <http://travel.state.gov>. In addition to information on the Internet, travelers may obtain up-to-date information on security conditions by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll-free in the U.S. and Canada or, outside the U.S. and Canada on a regular toll line at 1- 202-501-4444.

For any emergencies involving American citizens in Belize, please contact the U.S. Embassy Belmopan. The U.S. Embassy is located in Belmopan City on Floral Park Road, telephone from the United States: 011-501-822-4011; telephone within Belize: 822-4011 or after working hours at 610-5030. You may also contact the Embassy by e-mail at [consulbelize@state.gov](mailto:consulbelize@state.gov). The Embassy's Internet address is <http://www.belize.usembassy.gov/>.