

Sweden - OVERVIEW

Updated: March 20, 2014



Country Name Long Form: Kingdom of Sweden

Government Type: Constitutional Monarchy

Languages Spoken: Swedish, Small Sami – and Finnish-speaking minorities

National Flag



Sweden is a Tier III Country. Significant security measures are necessary.

	Overall Assessment	Political Violence	Crime	Terrorism	Travel Safety
Sweden	L	L	L	M	L

Key: (L) Low – (M) Medium – (H) High – (C) Critical

POLITICAL CONDITIONS

Political Violence is rated at LOW

Demonstrations take place throughout the year. Most demonstrations are planned and receive approval from police. On occasion, unscheduled demonstrations occur. These are usually small and do not last long.

TERRORISM

Terrorism is assessed as MEDIUM

There is a moderate risk from terrorism in Sweden, stemming mainly from international, regional and grassroots Islamist terrorist elements. These groups have issued threats to Sweden following the publication of anti-Islamic cartoons published in Swedish newspapers and the country's ongoing involvement in the war in Afghanistan as part of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).

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RULE OF LAW / CORRUPTION

The Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) for 2013 gave Sweden a score of 89, indicating that the country has very low level of corruption. The CPI rates countries by the perceived levels of corruption in their public sector, with the least corrupt country receiving a maximum score of 100.

CRIME

Crime is assessed as LOW

Sweden enjoys a reputation as a country with a low crime rate. The notion that foreign travelers are immune to crime is a common misconception, and, in fact the prevalent rate of crime in major urban areas of Sweden makes travelers more susceptible to certain kinds of crime, such as mugging, vehicle theft and credit card fraud, than national criminal statistics would indicate. Sweden's geographic locale and climate both affect crime rates, as crime tends to increase acutely in summer months when police, vacations, tourism, and increased outdoor activity contribute to a spike in reported crime.

Robberies occur infrequently or are at least rarely reported. Traditionally, the summer months have shown a peak in the number of burglaries.

Much organized criminal activity is driven by low-level organized criminal groups, many associated with larger motorcycle gangs. Small businesses have reported instances of extortion and harassment from gangs is not uncommon; however larger international companies and franchises have not reported being targeted by such activity.

KIDNAPPING

Kidnappings are rare in Sweden.

SEXUAL ASSAULT

Sexual assaults do occur but are not reported as much.

NATURAL DISASTERS

Sweden, especially the northern parts of the country, is affected by severe weather during the winter months. Temperatures can be extremely low; travelers visiting in winter should be prepared for harsh conditions. In addition, landslides, floods and strong winds, especially during winter and early spring can make driving hazardous.

STANDING TRAVEL ADVICE

- Prepare and dress accordingly if traveling during winter season.

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- Stay in groups, travel in a caravan consisting of two or more vehicles, and stay on the main roads.
- Ensure that someone not traveling with you is aware of your itinerary.
- Avoid hotels that do not have adequate security.
- Intercity travel after dark anywhere in should be avoided.
- It is preferable to stay in the main tourist destinations.
- Pay close attention to your surroundings, especially when walking.
- Official taxis are a suitable means of travel in daylight hours in urban areas. It is highly recommended that taxis be arrange through your hotel, or program office. Negotiate the price in advance.
- Women should be especially careful when traveling alone and avoid staying out late without a trusted male escort.
- Make sensible security precautions to mitigate the risk of petty crime, particularly pick pocketing and bag snatching.
- Carry a photocopy of your passport when traveling to avoid losing it in a robbery.
- Do not resist if you are being robbed and avoid eye contact and to not make any sudden movements. Victims have been killed when they resisted attack or refused to give up their money or other valuables.
- Be aware of your surroundings at all times and keep a low profile.
- Never leave your food, drinks or belongings unattended.
- Carry bags close to your body and make sure the fasteners are secure.
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash or wearing expensive jewelry or valuables.
- Leave all important documents in a safe or safe deposit box at your hotel and only carry certified copies.
- Trust your instincts. If someone or something makes you uneasy, avoid the situation.

Important Contact Details:

International Dialing Code: +46

International Dialing Prefix: 00

Victims of crime in should contact the following phone numbers for assistance:

POLICE: The local equivalent to the “911” emergency line in is 112

FIRE DEPARTMENT: 112

AMBULANCE: 112

Note: Police, ambulance or fire department response may be unreliable in some parts of the country.

TRAVEL & ROAD SAFETY

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- Sweden has well-developed infrastructure.
- Access to fuel, water and electricity is reliable across the country.
- Telecommunication services, including mobile and internet coverage, are available in urban centers but limited in rural areas, particularly in the northern regions.

RECOMMENDED TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS

- No ATM use after dark.
- No traveling alone after dark.

HEALTH

State-run and private medical facilities and care in Sweden are generally excellent. Travelers can make use of local medical centers or hospitals, where duty doctors are available and emergency prescriptions can be obtained when pharmacies are closed. However, it should be noted that facilities and available treatment are more limited in remote areas, especially in the far north of the country. Emergency treatment is free for travelers, but doctors and hospitals sometimes require immediate payment for other medical services, which tend to be expensive.

- Tap water is safe to drink throughout Sweden.
- Unpasteurized dairy products should be avoided if possible; unpasteurized milk should be boiled before consumption, or powdered or tinned milk should be as an alternative.

The following vaccinations are recommended or required if traveling to Sweden:

- Hepatitis B (recommended)
- Tick-borne encephalitis (recommended for travelers visiting southern coastal and forested parts of the country)

Significant Diseases –

- **Tick-borne encephalitis** – A viral infection of the central nervous system spread by ticks. Most cases are not serious, but occasionally the bite from an infected tick can lead to inflammation of the brain and the membrane that surrounds the brain and spinal cord. This infection is a risk between March and November each year in some rural areas, particularly along the southern coastline from Uppsala to Karlshamm. Most cases occur in the counties of Stockholm, Södermanland, and Uppsala.

US EMBASSY – CONSULATE LOCATIONS

United States Embassy Sweden

Dag Hammarskjölds Väg 31

Stockholm

Tel: +46 (0)8 783 5300

Fax: +46 (0)8 783 5480

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Email: StockholmWeb@state.gov

Website: <http://www.usemb.se/>

USF INTERNATIONAL HOTLINE

USF 24/7 EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE LINE: 813-317-5815

AXA Assistance 24/7 EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE LINE: 1-877-577-9504 / +1-203-399-5130 (Call collect from abroad)

ASSIST ID #: GLMN 04983932. <http://www.culturalinsurance.com/resources/>

* Information derived from CIA World Fact Book, US Department of State, OSAC, and Travel Guard. This travel overview summarizes some of the most important concerns; however, it does not negate the need for detailed trip planning.