

Estonia OVERVIEW

Updated: April 3, 2014



Country Name Long Form: Republic of Estonia

Government Type: Parliamentary Republic

Languages Spoken: Estonian, Russian, Ukrainian

National Flag



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

	Overall Assessment	Political Violence	Crime	Terrorism	Travel Safety
Estonia	L	L	L	L	L

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

POLITICAL CONDITIONS

Political Violence is rated at LOW

Civil unrest has been rare, and seldom targets the U.S. interests. There have been no recent significant events that have occurred. Demonstrations and acts of civil disobedience are generally limited and peaceful. Demonstrations over the past year were identified in advance via the government's permit process and were closely monitored by law enforcement authorities. These demonstrations are generally held near government buildings, significant landmarks, or areas of significance to the ethnic Russian minority. There have been no major demonstrations at the U.S. Embassy since 2008. In 2013, the Embassy was the site of two demonstrations which consisted of fewer than 20 people each.

TERRORISM

Terrorism is assessed as LOW

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There are no known indigenous terrorist organizations in Estonia, and Estonia is not a known base of support/sympathy for terrorists.

Estonia faces the same threat of international terrorism as other European countries. Estonia's participation in the EU's Schengen "visa-free travel" area, its border with Russia, its political alignment with U.S. foreign policy and its military presence in Afghanistan increase its vulnerability as a target of international terrorism.

RULE OF LAW / CORRUPTION

The Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) for 2013 gave Estonia a score of 68, indicating that the country has moderate 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

Estonia is a reasonably safe country with little anti-American sentiment. Crimes against persons mainly occur in congested areas such as malls, seaports, tourist areas, on public transportation (and in stations), bars/nightclubs and restaurants. The three highest crime areas in Tallinn include: Lasnamäe, Väike-Õismäe and Kopli.

Criminal elements exploit soft targets, especially in areas with a high volume of tourist traffic, with petty crimes such as pickpocketing. The threat of thefts from vehicles, personal robberies and residential break-ins are generally in the classification of "crimes of convenience."

Most successful criminal acts occur against people who are unaware of their surroundings or who are not exercising the proper level of alertness. Pickpocketing, theft, and other petty street crimes do occur, particularly in areas where tourist and foreigners congregate. In the summer season, pickpockets are very common often working in teams in crowded areas. Pickpockets use various diversionary tactics to distract victims; one method involves bumping the victim in an effort to draw his attention to one individual, while another take their wallet.

KIDNAPPING

Kidnappings are rare or not reported as much in Estonia.

SEXUAL ASSAULT

Sexual Assault cases are rare or not reported as much in Estonia.

NATURAL DISASTERS

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Flooding can be an issue in low-lying areas near rivers during the spring thaw. Falling ice from buildings can also be a substantial problem in the winter and spring and has resulted in deaths, in addition to slippery roads and sidewalks.

STANDING TRAVEL ADVICE

- 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 arranged 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: +372

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

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AMBULANCE: 112

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

TRAVEL & ROAD SAFETY

- Estonia has a well-developed infrastructure.
- Estonia has a poor road safety record and the road traffic rules are not strictly adhered to.
- Public transportation is adequate in the capital, Tallinn and other major cities, but limited elsewhere.
- The provision of electricity, water and fuel is reliable across the country and shortages are rarely reported.
- Telecommunication services, including mobile phone and internet coverage, are widely available in urban centers; these services may be limited in rural areas.

RECOMMENDED TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS

- No ATM use after dark.

HEALTH

Medical facilities are of variable quality, but have improved in recent years. The best care is available in Tallinn, where larger facilities employ English-speaking staff and private clinics are also available. Despite improvements, some severe medical problems may require air evacuation to a country with more advanced facilities.

- Tap water is generally safe to drink in Estonian cities, but bottled water is readily available and recommended for travelers, especially those visiting rural areas.
- Unpasteurized dairy products should be avoided if possible; unpasteurized milk should be boiled before consumption, or powdered or tinned milk should be used as an alternative.
- Alcoholic drinks should only be bought from reputable outlets, as illicit supplies in Estonia have been found to contain methanol, which is highly toxic.

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

- Hepatitis A (recommended)
- Hepatitis B (recommended)
- Rabies (recommended for travelers planning activities that put them at high risk of animal bites)
- Tick-borne encephalitis (recommended for travelers visiting forested areas)
- Typhoid (recommended)

It is also important to ensure that routine vaccinations are up to date for disease including influenza, polio, measles, mumps, rubella, diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus.

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Significant Disease(s) –

- **Diarrhea** – A common issue among travelers and can be caused by bacteria, viruses or parasites. One of the most common causes is a bacterium known as E. coli, which is transmitted by ingesting contaminated food and liquids.
- **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 reported in forested areas between March and November each year.
- **Tuberculosis** – A contagious bacterial infection that involves the lungs. It may spread to other organs. This infection has reportedly risen in recent years.

HOSPITALS –

East Tallinn Central Hospital
AS Ida-Tallinna Keskhaigla
Ravi tn 18
Tallinn 10138
Tel: +372 620 7000
Fax: +372 620 7002
Website: <http://itk.ee/>

Karell Medical Center
Narva Street 7
Tallinn 10117
Tel: +372 610 9444
Fax: +372 660 1285
Website: <http://karell.ee/>

US EMBASSY – CONSULATE LOCATIONS

United States Embassy Tallinn
20 Kentmanni
Tallinn
Tel: +372 6688 100
Fax: +372 6688 134
Email: ACSTallinn@state.gov
Website: <http://estonia.usembassy.gov/>

USF INTERNATIONAL HOTLINE

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

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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.