

# The Bahamas - OVERVIEW

Updated: June 11, 2014

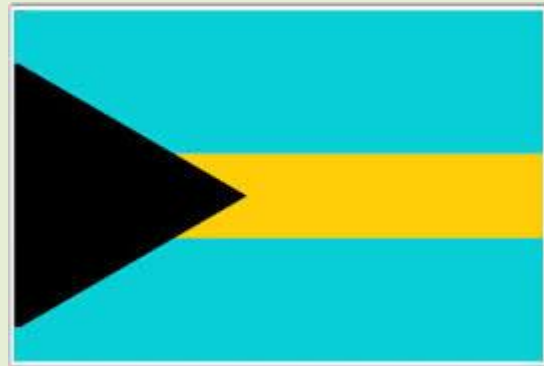


**Country Name Long Form:** Commonwealth of the Bahamas

**Government Type:** Constitutional Parliamentary Democracy / Commonwealth Realm

**Languages Spoken:** English, Creole

**National Flag**



The Bahamas is a Tier II Country. Significant security measures are necessary.

	Overall Assessment	Political Violence	Crime	Terrorism	Travel Safety
The Bahamas					
Key: (L) Low – (M) Medium – (H) High – (C)Critical					

## POLITICAL CONDITIONS

**Political Violence is rated at LOW in The Bahamas**

The Bahamas is a stable democracy that shares democratic principles, personal freedoms and rule of law with the United States. There is little to no threat facing Americans from domestic terrorism, war or civil unrest.

Public protests and demonstrations are rare and do not tend to be violent. However, limited law enforcement resources make rapid response to public disorder difficult, particularly on islands other than New Providence. Visitors should avoid demonstrations of any kind. Strikes are generally limited to “industrial actions” or work-to-rule actions and slowdowns. The airports have also seen instances of “Go Slow” actions resulting in considerable delays by incoming and outgoing flights.

## TERRORISM

**Terrorism is assessed as LOW**

# The Bahamas - OVERVIEW

---

The risk from terrorism in the Bahamas is low. There are no known terrorist groups operations in the country and there are no recognized threats stemming from any regional or international terrorist groups. Terrorist groups native to the Western Hemisphere do not typically operate in the northeastern Caribbean.

## RULE OF LAW / CORRUPTION

The Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) for 2013 gave The Bahamas a score of 71, indicating that the country has low levels 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 **CRITICAL**

The Bahamas continues to have a high crime rate, particularly on New Providence Island, which has continued to experience escalated levels of violent crime. Home break-ins theft and robbery are not confined to any specific part of the island. Generally, most reported crimes were perpetrated against local Bahamians in areas of saturated criminality not typically frequented by tourists.

The Bahamas has experienced a wave of armed robberies at gas stations, convenience stores, fast food restaurants, banks and residences. Perpetrators of these types of crimes typically conduct pre-attack surveillance.

Armed robberies, property theft, purse snatching and general theft of personal property remain the most common crimes perpetrated against tourists. Many criminals carry firearms, machetes, or knives. Unless provoked, criminals engaged in property crimes do not generally engage in gratuitous violence. Many of these armed robberies were snatch-and-grabs involving purses, jewelry, and gold necklaces.

Residential security also remains a great concern, with the police reporting a large number of home burglaries and break-ins. A number of armed home invasions that occurred in both New Providence and Grand Bahama in 2013 occurred very close to U.S. Embassy residential housing.

Criminal activity in the Family Islands occurs less frequently. The Embassy has received reports of burglaries and thefts, especially thefts of boats and other watercraft. Grand Bahama is somewhat of an exception, in the criminality has increased on that island, notably crimes involving the use of machetes.

## KIDNAPPING

There have been very few reports of kidnappings. The U.S. Embassy has received several reports of home invasion robberies at residences and hotels in Nassau. Historically, kidnappings have involved wealthy local residents and their dependents; foreign travelers are not generally targeted.

# The Bahamas - OVERVIEW

---

## SEXUAL ASSAULT

The U.S. Embassy has received an increase of reports of assaults, including sexual assaults at residences, hotel rooms, casinos, outside hotels, and on cruise ships. In some sexual assault incidents, the victim had reportedly been drugged. Because the islands are a popular cruise destination, criminals often prey on visitors, assuming they will not report crimes or those crimes will not be investigated. Many of these attacks are crimes of opportunity, and often occur when the victim is alone or in an isolated area.

## NATURAL DISASTERS

Like all countries in the Caribbean Basin, The Bahamas is vulnerable to hurricanes and other tropical storms, which have the propensity to cause extensive flooding and wind damage. The North Atlantic hurricane season officially runs from June to November, although hurricanes have been known to occur outside the time period.

The Bahamian archipelago is also located in a seismic zone and therefore experiences earthquakes. There is also a threat from tsunamis as a result of seismic activity in the region.

## 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 or driving in The Bahamas
- 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 do 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 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.

# The Bahamas - OVERVIEW

---

- 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:** +1 242

**International dialing prefix:** 011

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

**POLICE:** The local equivalent to the “911” emergency line in is 911/919

**FIRE DEPARTMENT:** 348 3444

**AMBULANCE:** 911/919

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

## TRAVEL & ROAD SAFETY

- Pedestrians should remember to look right before crossing streets.
- Incidents of crime and assault on buses have been previously reported by foreign tourist.
- In order to avoid falling victim to a scam, it is advisable to settle on a fare before you get into the taxi, as many are unmetered.

## RECOMMENDED TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS

- No road travel after dark.
- No use of ATMs after dark.
- No use of jet-skis or other water sports equipment unless you are an experienced user.

## HEALTH

Medical treatment is of a good standard but can be expensive. Generally, adequate medical care is available on New Providence and Grand Bahama islands. Medical care is more limited elsewhere. Some private clinics offer basic primary care. Medical facilities are generally limited and not equipped to handle many emergencies, especially those requiring surgery.

The following vaccinations are recommended or required if travelling to The Bahamas:

- Hepatitis A (recommended)

# The Bahamas - OVERVIEW

---

- Hepatitis B (recommended)
- Typhoid (recommended)
- Yellow Fever (required for travelers arriving from a country where yellow fever is present)

It is also important to ensure that routine vaccinations are up to date for diseases including influenza, chickenpox (or varicella), polio, measles, mumps, rubella, diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus.

## **HOSPITALS –**

Doctors Hospital  
1 Collins Avenue & Shirley Street  
Nassau, New Providence  
Bahamas  
Tel: +1 24 23 02 4600

## **US EMBASSY – CONSULATE LOCATIONS**

### **United States Embassy Nassau**

42 Queen Street  
Nassau, Bahamas  
P.O. Box N-8197  
Tel: +242 322 181  
Emergency Tel: (0043-1) 313 390  
Fax: (+43-1) 310 06 82  
Email: [embassy@state.gov](mailto:embassy@state.gov)

## **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.