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## Switzerland

*Official Name: Swiss Confederation*

LAST UPDATED: MAY 2, 2016

### Embassy Messages

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### Quick Facts

- **PASSPORT VALIDITY**  
6 months required
- **VACCINATIONS:**  
None required
- **BLANK PASSPORT PAGES:**  
1 page
- **CURRENCY RESTRICTIONS FOR ENTRY:**  
No min/10,000 Swiss Francs (CHF) max
- **TOURIST VISA REQUIRED:**  
Not required for stays of less than 90 days
- **CURRENCY RESTRICTIONS FOR EXIT:**  
No min/10,000 Swiss Francs (CHF) max

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### Embassies and Consulates

**U.S. Embassy Bern****Sulgeneckstrasse 19****3007 Bern, Switzerland****Telephone:** +(41) (31) 357-7011 (2p.m. - 4 p.m.)**Emergency After-Hours Telephone:** +(41) (31) 357-7777**Fax:** +(41) (31) 357-7280[bernacs@state.gov](mailto:bernacs@state.gov)

Routine and emergency services for U.S. citizens are provided by the American Citizens Services section of the Consular Section at the U.S. Embassy. Appointments are required for routine consular services. Additional information is available through the U.S. citizen Services page on the Embassy's website. To make an appointment, please visit the U.S. Embassy's online appointment system for U.S. Citizen Services.

**CONSULATES**

There are two part-time consular agencies in Switzerland. They provide limited services to U.S. citizens. Passport applications may be submitted at the agencies. However, the agencies are not authorized to issue passports and will forward the applications to U.S. Embassy in Bern for processing. Anyone requesting service at one of the consular agencies should email ahead to verify that the service requested will be available on the day to expect to visit the agency.

**U.S. Consular Agency - Geneva****Geneva America Center, Rue François-Versonnex 7, 1207 Geneva****Mailing address: P.O. Box 5266, 3001 Bern Switzerland****Telephone:** +(41) (22) 840-5160 (10 a.m. - 1 p.m.)**Fax:** +(41) (22) 840-5162[geneva-ca@state.gov](mailto:geneva-ca@state.gov)**U.S. Consular Agent - Zurich****Zurich America Center****Dufourstrasse 101****8008 Zurich, Switzerland****Telephone:** +(41) (43) 499-2960 (10 a.m. - 1 p.m.)**Fax:** +(41) (43) 499-2961[zurich-ca@state.gov](mailto:zurich-ca@state.gov)**Destination Description**

See the Department of State's [Fact Sheet on Switzerland](#) for information on U.S. – Switzerland relations.

**Entry, Exit & Visa Requirements**

Switzerland is a party to the Schengen Agreement. For additional details about travel into and within Schengen countries, please see our [Schengen fact sheet](#).

- Your passport should be valid for at least six months beyond your stay
- You may enter Switzerland for up to 90 days for tourism or business without a visa
- You will need a visa for stays over the 90-day limit.
- Contact the Embassy of Switzerland for most current visa and entry requirement information.

**HIV/AIDS Restrictions:** The U.S. Department of State is unaware of any HIV/AIDS entry restrictions for visitors or foreign residents of Switzerland.

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**

Credible information indicates terrorist groups continue plotting possible attacks in Europe. European governments are taking action to guard against terrorist attacks; however, all European countries remain potentially vulnerable to attacks from transnational terrorist organizations.

Demonstrations occur in Switzerland. Some demonstrations have turned violent in the past. Typical violence involves property damage and clashes between anti-globalization, anti-Semitic, and anti-establishment (anarchist) groups. You should avoid them and remain vigilant about your personal security at all times.

**Crime:** Pick-pocketing and purse snatching are common types of crime.

- Be especially vigilant in the airports, railway stations, bus stations, public parks, and when conferences, shows, or exhibits are scheduled in major cities.
- Use common sense and the same personal security measures you would use normally
- **Do not leave bags unattended.** Avoid placing passports, cash or other valuables in the outer pockets of backpacks or purses
- See the [Department of State](#) and the [FBI](#) pages for information on scams.

**Victims of Crime:** You should report crimes to the local police at 117 and contact the U.S. Embassy at (41) (31) 357-7011 or the emergency after-hours telephone:(41) (31) 357-7777. Remember the local authorities are responsible for investigating and prosecuting crimes in Switzerland.

See our webpage on [help for U.S. victims of crime overseas](#).

We can:

- 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 an emergency loan for repatriation to the United States
- support in cases of destitution
- help you find accommodation and arrange flights home
- replace a stolen or lost passport

**Domestic Violence:** Victims of domestic violence should contact the Embassy for assistance.

**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. If you violate local laws, even unknowingly, you may be expelled, arrested, or imprisoned.

For examples see our website on [crimes against minors abroad](#) and the [Department of Justice](#) website.

**Arrest Notification:** If you are arrested or detained, ask police or prison officials to notify the U.S. Embassy immediately. See our [webpage](#) for further information.

Switzerland is a signatory to the European Convention on Human Rights, which requires:

- Arrestees to be immediately heard before an independent magistrate to determine if they will be held for investigative detention.
- Individuals “highly suspected” of a crime are generally placed under police detention until such time that their case can be heard by the magistrate.

**Mountain Search and Rescue Insurance:** Alpine hazards such as avalanches and snowdrifts, landslides and flooding, glacial crevasses, falling rocks, sun exposure, and sudden weather changes are common year round. You should:

- stay on designated paths,
- follow the advice given by local authorities and guides,
- take note of weather forecasts and conditions,
- be in a team of two when participating in mountain activities, and
- inform someone of your plans.

You should buy (summer and winter) **mountain search and rescue insurance**. You can buy inexpensive search and rescue insurance at Swiss post offices. More information is available from the [Swiss National Tourist Office](#) and with [the Swiss Air Rescue Organization](#) .

**Swiss Banking:** You should be aware that numerous banking institutions do not accept U.S. citizens as clients. The U.S. Embassy can provide more information on banking in Switzerland. ATMs are widely available and operate with U.S. debit cards.

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

**LGBTI Travelers:** There are no legal restrictions on same-sex sexual relations or the organization of LGBTI events in Switzerland.

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:** You will find some provisions for persons with disabilities, however there is not a country-wide standard. Local experts estimate that only 30 percent of public buildings are wheelchair accessible.

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

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

## Health

**We do not pay medical bills.** Be aware that U.S. Medicare does not apply overseas.

- Obtain [supplemental insurance](#) to cover medical evacuation
- Make sure your health insurance plan provides coverage overseas. Most care providers overseas only accept cash payments. See our webpage for more [information on insurance providers for overseas coverage](#).
- Carry prescription medication in original packaging, along with your doctor's prescription.
- 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:** Roads in Switzerland are mountainous and winding. Snow chains are required in some mountain areas during winter. Road travel is more dangerous during summer, winter holidays, Easter break, and Whit Sunday weekend (late spring) due to increased traffic.

- Travel on expressways requires purchase of a sticker ("vignette") which must be affixed to the car's windshield. "
- Vignettes" can be purchased at most border crossing points, gas stations and Swiss post offices.
- Drivers using the highway system without a "vignette" are subject to hefty fines. Please consult with the Federal Office of Transport for the latest information  
<https://www.bav.admin.ch/bav/en/home.html> .

**Public Transportation:** Public transportation is excellent and punctual. The Swiss tourist office and train stations are the best places to obtain information about special fares for tourists.

Please refer to our [Road Safety page](#) for more information.

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

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

## Assistance for U.S. Citizens

U.S. Embassy Bern  
**Sulgeneckstrasse 19**  
**3007 Bern, Switzerland**

- Telephone  
 +(41) (31) 357-7011 (2 p.m. - 4 p.m.)
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[bernacs@state.gov](mailto:bernacs@state.gov)
- [U.S. Embassy Bern](#)

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