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Vietnam

Official Name: *Socialist Republic of Vietnam*

LAST UPDATED: MARCH 27, 2015

Embassy Messages

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Quick Facts

- **PASSPORT VALIDITY:**
Six Months
- **VACCINATIONS:**
None
- **BLANK PASSPORT PAGES:**
One page required for entry stamp
- **CURRENCY RESTRICTIONS FOR ENTRY:**
Yes, Currency in excess of 5,000 U.S. dollars or equivalent.
- **TOURIST VISA REQUIRED:**
Yes
- **CURRENCY RESTRICTIONS FOR EXIT:**
None

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Embassies and Consulates

U.S. Embassy Hanoi**170 Ngoc Khanh****Ba Dinh District****Hanoi, Vietnam****Telephone:** +(84) (4) 3850-5000**Emergency After-Hours Telephone:** +(84) (4) 3850-5000 or (04) 3850-5000/3850-5105**Fax:** +(84) (4) 3850-5010acshanoi@state.gov

CONSULATES

U.S. Consulate General Ho Chi Minh City**4 Le Duan, District 1****Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam****Telephone:** +(84) (8) 3520-4200**Emergency After-Hours Telephone:** +(84) (8) 3520-4200**Fax:** +(84) (8) 3520-4244**Inquiries:** http://hochiminh.usconsulate.gov/contact_acs.html**Destination Description**

Vietnam is a developing, mainly agrarian country that is moving from a centrally-planned economy to a market economy. Vietnam remains a one-party state, however, in which the Government of Vietnam is subordinate to the political control of the Communist Party of Vietnam. Tourist facilities can be basic in rural areas but are increasingly well established in Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, and some beach and mountain resorts. Read the Department of State [Fact Sheet on Vietnam](#) for additional information on U.S.- Vietnam relations.

Entry, Exit & Visa Requirements

To enter Vietnam, you need a valid U.S. passport with at least six months validity remaining beyond the date of your arrival and a Vietnamese visa, a visa exemption document, or a written approval letter for a visa upon arrival. You may obtain a visa, or in limited circumstances, a visa exemption document from a Vietnamese embassy or consulate prior to traveling to Vietnam. To obtain a written approval letter, you must contact a travel agency prior to departure for Vietnam. U.S. citizens have reported unscrupulous travel agencies taking advantage of travelers and charging extremely high fees upon landing. If you arrive without an appropriate Vietnamese visa, exemption document, or written approval for a visa upon arrival, you will be denied entry and subject to immediate deportation. Vietnamese visas are usually valid for a single entry, unless the traveler specifically requests a multiple-entry visa, which may incur additional fees. If you plan to leave Vietnam and re-enter from another country, be sure that your visa is valid for multiple entries into Vietnam. If it is valid for only a single entry, you will have to obtain another visa prior to returning to Vietnam.

Please be aware that Vietnam has two fees: 1) the visa fee and 2) the visa processing fee. The visa fees are sometimes posted on the [Vietnamese Embassy's website](#) , but U.S. Embassy and Consulate officials have received reports of processing fees that vary from one applicant to another and from one issuing entity to another. We have also received reports of additional fees being charged by Vietnamese officials at land borders. We have brought this concern to the attention of Vietnamese officials, but the problem persists.

Even if you have a valid visa, you may be refused entry into Vietnam. Note that Vietnamese immigration regulations require foreigners entering Vietnam to undertake only the activity for which their visas were issued. Travelers who plan to perform volunteer or charitable work should obtain the correct visa classification before traveling to Vietnam. If you change the purpose of your visit after you have received your visa, you must obtain a new visa outside of Vietnam appropriate for your new activities before beginning those activities. Individuals intending to work in Vietnam must first obtain a work permit *before* applying for their work visa. If you plan to travel from Vietnam to Laos by land, you should request that your visa be affixed to your passport. Lao immigration requires proof that travelers have departed Vietnam, something that can only be shown with an adhesive visa. Vietnamese officials remove detachable visas from passports when travelers depart Vietnam, leaving travelers with no proof of their Vietnam departure. This situation can result in Lao officials requiring the traveler to return to Vietnam.

If your U.S. passport is lost or stolen in Vietnam, you must obtain both a replacement passport and a replacement Vietnamese visa. In the event of an emergency, the U.S. Embassy and Consulate General can issue you a limited validity replacement passport in as little as one day; however, the Vietnamese government requires three to five working days to issue a replacement visa. Unfortunately, neither the U.S. Embassy nor the Consulate General can assist you in expediting the replacement of your Vietnamese visa.

Note: The Government of Vietnam treats the use of falsified travel documents very seriously. Travelers attempting to enter Vietnam for any purpose with an altered or otherwise fraudulent travel document are likely to face criminal prosecution and possible imprisonment.

Visit the [Embassy of Vietnam](#) website for the most current visa information. The Vietnamese Embassy's website also releases [warnings](#) about websites suspected of being fraudulent and strongly recommends U.S. citizens not

make online visa applications to these websites.

[Vietnam Embassy](#)

1233 20th Street NW, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20036
Phone: (202) 861-0737
Fax: (202) 861-0917
info@vietnamembassy.us
vnconsular@vietnamembassy.us

[Consulate General of Vietnam in San Francisco, California](#)

1700 California Street, Suite 430
San Francisco, CA 94109
tel. 415-922-1577, fax 415-922-1848
info@vietnamconsulate-sf.org
<http://www.vietnamconsulate-sf.org>

[Consulate General of Vietnam in Houston, Texas](#)

5251 Westheimer Rd, Suite 1100
Houston, Texas 77056
Tel: 713-850-1233; Fax: 713-810-0159
<http://vietnamconsulateinhouston.org/>

Permanent Representative Mission to the UN, New York and the Consulate General of Vietnam in New York

[Consulate of Vietnam in New York](#)

866 United Nations Plaza, Suite 435
New York, NY 10017
Telephone: 212-644-0594/212-644-0831/212-644-2535
Fax: 212-644-5732
info@vietnamconsulate-ny.org

The U.S. Department of State is unaware of any HIV/AIDS entry restrictions for visitors to or foreign residents of Vietnam. Immunization information for travelers can be found on the [Centers for Disease and Control's website](#) .

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

While the Department of State recommends that U.S. citizens overseas maintain a high level of vigilance and take appropriate steps to increase their security awareness, the potential threat of terrorist attacks in Vietnam is low.

The Government of Vietnam may not allow or authorize travel to certain areas of Vietnam that are deemed sensitive. These travel limitations may hinder the ability of the U.S. government to provide assistance to you in such areas. Check with local authorities before visiting border areas to see if you need to obtain a travel permit issued by local authorities. U.S. citizens have been detained after traveling in areas close to the Vietnamese borders with China, Cambodia, and Laos. These areas are not always marked, and there are no warnings about prohibited travel. You should avoid such areas unless you obtain written permission in advance from local authorities.

Safety regulations and standards in Vietnam are not at the same level as those in the United States, and they vary greatly from company to company and province to province. In January 2014, a popular ferry between Ho Chi Minh City and Vung Tau caught fire and sank in the Saigon River. According to press reports, the crew was slow to notify passengers to abandon ship, which may have contributed to the number of persons injured, including dozens of foreign tourists. Tourists who visit Ha Long Bay, Quang Ninh, and want to spend the night on a boat should verify the reputation of the boat's operator. In February 2011, a boat sinking accident resulted in the deaths of 12 people, including two U.S. citizens, and revealed weaknesses in the management of some boat companies. Please research any touring company or cruise line that you select and ask questions about safety records prior to booking. While many companies may advertise endorsements from local and regional authorities, it is currently unclear if there is a reliable inspection mechanism in place. In addition, travelers should compare pricing among companies and be wary of prices for tour packages that appear either much higher or lower than those of competitors.

At all times, you should avoid large gatherings, such as those forming at the scene of traffic accidents, as they can become violent with little or no warning. In May 2014, some initially peaceful demonstrations against Chinese actions in the South China Sea became violent and resulted in injuries, some fatal, to foreign workers and damage to property at firms perceived to be Chinese in industrial zones.

To stay connected:

- Enroll in the [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#) so we can keep you up to date with important safety and security announcements.
- Follow the Bureau of Consular Affairs on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).
- Bookmark the [Bureau of Consular Affairs website](#), which contains the current [Travel Warnings and Travel Alerts](#) as well as the [Worldwide Caution](#).
- Follow the U.S. Embassy in Vietnam on [Facebook](#) and visiting the [Embassy's website](#).
- In the event of an emergency, contact us at 1-888-407-4747 toll-free within the United States and Canada, or via a regular toll line, 1-202-501-4444, from other countries.
- Take some time before traveling to consider your personal security and checking for useful tips for [traveling safely abroad](#).

CRIME: Pick-pocketing and other petty crimes occur regularly. Although violent crimes such as armed robbery are still relatively rare in Vietnam, perpetrators have grown increasingly bold, and both the U.S. Consulate General and the U.S. Embassy have recently received reports of pipes,

knives, and razors being used in attempted robberies in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi. Thieves congregate around hotels frequented by foreign tourists and business people and areas such as Hanoi's Old Quarter and Ho Chi Minh City's Ben Thanh Market, and assaults have been reported in outlying areas at night. Do not resist theft attempts, and report them immediately to local police and to the U.S. Embassy in Hanoi or the U.S. Consulate General in Ho Chi Minh City.

Motorcyclists are known to snatch bags, cameras, cell phones, and other valuables from pedestrians or passengers riding in "cyclos" (pedicabs) or on the back of motorcycles. Serious injuries have resulted when thieves snatched purses or bags that were strapped across the victim's body, resulting in the victim being dragged along the ground by the thief's motorcycle.

Passengers riding in cyclos (pedicabs) may be especially prone to theft of personal possessions by snatch-and-grab thieves, because they ride in a semi-reclining position that readily exposes their belongings and does not allow good visibility or movement. Some cyclo drivers have reportedly kidnapped passengers and extorted money; it may be risky to hire cyclos not associated with reputable hotels or restaurants.

The use of motorcycle taxis (known as "xe oms") is strongly discouraged. Motorcycle taxis are unregulated and unsafe, and the helmets provided to riders offer little to no protection against injury in the case of an accident. In one instance, a U.S. citizen was sexually assaulted after hiring what she believed to be a legitimate motorcycle taxi near Ho Chi Minh City.

Keep your passport and other important valuables in your hotel in a safe or another secured location at all times. You should carry at least two photocopies of your U.S. passport. Hotels are required to obtain a copy of your passport (please refer to "Special Circumstances" below). You should immediately report the loss or theft of your U.S. passport to the local police and the U.S. Embassy or the U.S. Consulate General. You must obtain a police report from the local police office in order to apply for a replacement passport and a Vietnamese exit visa.

Exercise caution in choosing ground transportation upon arrival at the airport in Hanoi or Ho Chi Minh City. Some travelers have reported being robbed by drivers who greeted them upon arrival with a placard showing the traveler's name. If you are expecting to be picked up, ask the company for the driver's name, phone number, and license plate number before you travel. Use only established airport taxi companies or vehicles provided by hotels. Several times in the past year in Hanoi, taxi drivers detoured travelers en route from the airport to flophouses masquerading as hotels. You should be familiar with the basics of the hotel you have chosen, such as address and neighboring landmarks. This information can be found on the Internet. We have received complaints about taxi drivers overcharging fares by using rigged meters. You should try to write down the name of the taxi company, plate number, and any other identifying information in any incident so that it can be reported to the local authorities.

Some scams target tourists. Specifically, tourists have been victims of gambling scams in the Pham Ngu Lao neighborhood of Ho Chi Minh City. This scam usually starts with a friendly invitation to someone's home to meet a relative interested in visiting or studying in the U.S. While waiting for this individual, a casual game of cards will start. Victims have reported starting the game with only a small wager but losing thousands of dollars over the course of an evening. Be aware that gambling outside of licensed casinos is illegal in Vietnam.

The U.S. Embassy has also received occasional reports of incidents in which an unknown substance was used to taint drinks, leaving the victim unconscious or at least unable to make appropriate decisions. To date, most incidents resulted in theft, but the threat of sexual assaults is real. Do not leave drinks or food unattended, and do not go to unfamiliar venues alone. You should also avoid purchasing liquor from street vendors, as the authenticity of the contents cannot be assured.

Recreational drugs available in Vietnam can be extremely dangerous. Three U.S. citizens died in 2010 from accidental overdoses of drugs. Drug suppliers will often misrepresent the substances they are selling, such as heroin for cocaine and vice versa. Penalties for possession or use of drugs of any kind are severe (please refer to the Criminal Penalties section below).

Some U.S. citizens have reported threats of death or physical injury related to personal business disputes. You should report such threats to local authorities. The U.S. Embassy and the U.S. Consulate General cannot provide personal protection services.

Do not buy counterfeit and pirated goods, even if they are widely available. Bootleg copies are illegal in the United States and could also violate local law.

VICTIMS OF CRIME: If you or someone you know becomes the victim of a crime abroad, you should contact the local police and the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate. The local equivalent to the "911" emergency line in Vietnam is 113. Local police will issue a report of a crime, but generally will only initiate investigations for serious crimes, and investigations can take several months to complete. We can:

- Replace a stolen passport.
- Help you find appropriate medical care if you are the victim of violent crimes such as assault or rape.
- Put you in contact with the appropriate police authorities, and if you want us to, contact family members or friends.
- Help you understand the local criminal justice process and direct you to local attorneys, although it is important to remember that local authorities are responsible for investigating and prosecuting the crime.

Please see our [information for victims of crime](#), including possible victim compensation programs in the United States.

Local Laws & Special Circumstances

CRIMINAL PENALTIES: While you are traveling in Vietnam, you are subject to its laws. Foreign laws and legal systems can be vastly different from our own. Persons violating Vietnamese laws, even unknowingly, may be expelled, arrested, or imprisoned. Penalties for possessing, using, or trafficking in illegal drugs in Vietnam are severe, and convicted offenders can expect long jail sentences and heavy fines, or even death. In Vietnam, you may be taken in for questioning if you do not have proper ID, such as a passport, with you or if you take photographs of sensitive buildings. In Vietnam, driving under the influence of alcohol could land you immediately in jail. If you break local laws in Vietnam, your U.S. passport won't help you avoid arrest or prosecution.

There are also some things that might be legal in the country you visit, but still illegal in the United States. You can be [prosecuted in the United States](#) for engaging in sexual conduct with children or for using or disseminating child pornography in a foreign country regardless of the legality of these activities under that country's laws. Counterfeit and pirated goods are illegal in the United States and if you purchase them in a foreign country, you may be breaking local law as well.

Arrest notifications in host country: While some countries will automatically notify the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate if a U.S. citizen is detained or arrested in that country, others may not. To ensure that the United States is aware of your circumstances, request that the police and prison officials notify the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate *as soon as* you are arrested or detained overseas.

U.S. citizens should note that consular access by a U.S. officer may not be permitted if the Vietnamese government considers the U.S. national to be a Vietnamese citizen, irrespective of U.S. citizenship.

If detained or arrested, U.S. citizens should insist upon contact with the U.S. Embassy or the U.S. Consulate General. We encourage you to carry photocopies of your U.S. passport data and photo pages at all times so that, if questioned by Vietnamese officials, you have evidence of your U.S. citizenship readily available.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES:

Work Authorization: The Government of Vietnam maintains strict laws with respect to foreign workers. In general, employers are responsible for obtaining work authorization for their employees. While some agencies offer assistance in obtaining work authorization, their quality and competence can vary greatly. We advise U.S. citizens to fully comply with Vietnamese regulations regarding employment. Penalties can be severe and include deportation.

U.S. citizens who also hold Vietnamese citizenship, and who are currently residing in Vietnam, may wish to contact local authorities and/or seek competent legal advice on how local laws may affect their status. For detailed information on Vietnamese nationality law and other legal issues visit the [Vietnamese Embassy's website](#) .

Teaching English: We periodically receive complaints from English teachers at private language schools or companies that the employment agencies they used in obtaining their employment misrepresented salaries, contract terms, working conditions, living arrangements, and other benefits, even when they had a written contract. We advise anyone considering accepting an English teaching job in Vietnam to carefully review the terms of the contract

regarding working and living conditions and to ask for references from persons familiar with the institution, especially U.S. citizen former employees.

Hotels: Hotels in Vietnam require you to present your passport (and visas, if issued separately) upon check-in so that your stay can be registered with local police. Therefore, carry these documents with you if you change hotels. Every guest in a hotel room must be registered, and it is illegal for a foreigner to share accommodations with a Vietnamese national. If you stay at a private residence, (i.e. at the residence of family or friends) you must comply with registration requirements by visiting the local police station and registering your stay within 24 hours.

Currency: Upon entering Vietnam, you must report currency in excess of 5,000 U.S. dollars or equivalent. For up-to-date information about the amount of U.S. dollars or other foreign currency you can import into Vietnam or export from Vietnam, you should contact the [Vietnamese Embassy](#).

Exports: Vietnamese law prohibits the export of antiques. However, these laws are vague and unevenly enforced. Customs authorities may inspect and seize your antiques without compensating you. The determination of what is an "antique" can be arbitrary. If you purchase non-antique items of value, you should retain receipts and confirmation from shop owners and/or the Ministry of Culture and the Customs Department to prevent seizure when you leave the country.

Imports: Vietnamese government authorities have seized documents, audio and video tapes, compact discs, literature, personal letters they deem to be pornographic or political in nature, or intended for religious or political proselytizing. Individuals arriving at airports with videotapes or materials considered to be pornographic have been detained and heavily fined (up to U.S. \$2,000 for one videotape). It is illegal to import weapons, ammunition, explosives, military equipment and tools (including uniforms), narcotics, drugs, toxic chemicals, pornographic and subversive materials, firecrackers, or children's toys that have "negative effects on personality development, social order, and security."

For up to date information on Vietnam Customs information, please visit the [Vietnam Customs website](#).

Speech: The Government of Vietnam maintains strict control over all forms of political speech, particularly dissent. Persons -- both Vietnamese and foreign citizens -- engaging in public actions that the Government of Vietnam determines to be political in nature are subject to arrest and detention. Even your private conversations can lead to legal actions. U.S. citizens have been detained and arrested for political activities (including criticizing the government or its domestic/foreign policies or advocating alternatives to Communist Party rule), possession of political material, and non-sanctioned religious activities (including proselytizing). U.S. citizens whose stated purpose of travel was tourism but who engaged in religious proselytizing have had religious materials confiscated and have been expelled from Vietnam. Sponsors of small, informal religious gatherings, such as Bible-study groups in hotel rooms, have been detained, fined, and expelled, although these outcomes have become less common because of improvements to religious freedom.

Blogging about the Vietnamese government and discussions in on-line chat rooms have also incurred scrutiny from authorities. The distribution of anti-Vietnamese propaganda and/or advocacy for a multiparty system is considered by Vietnamese authorities to be "a terrorist offense" and/or

"propaganda against the state." In most cases individuals are detained, questioned, and then released. In the past few years, many U.S. citizens were arrested, prevented from leaving Vietnam, and/or deported.

Association with Groups: Persons whom the Government of Vietnam perceives to be associated with dissident political groups may be denied entry to Vietnam or prevented from departing Vietnam after a visit. In a number of cases, Vietnamese officials have confiscated the plane tickets and personal property of such individuals, who were then forced to spend extended periods in Vietnam at their own expense while they underwent extensive police interrogation. In addition, Vietnamese security personnel may place foreign visitors under surveillance. Vietnamese officials may monitor your hotel room, telephone conversations, fax and email transmissions, and may search your personal possessions in your hotel room.

U.S. citizen travelers have been summoned by immigration or local security officials for reasons that are unclear or not explicitly related to any suspected or alleged violation of law. These travelers have sometimes been prevented from departing Vietnam for several days. We recommend that U.S. citizens finding themselves in this situation contact the U.S. Embassy or Consulate General for further information and/or assistance.

Photography: Taking photographs of anything that could be perceived as being of military or security interest may result in problems such as being questioned by authorities, being assessed a fine, and/or your travel being delayed for several days. You should be cautious when traveling near military bases and avoid photography in these areas.

Property: As of July, 2015, foreign nationals resident in Vietnam may purchase real estate in Vietnam, but subject to special approval from local authorities. Vietnamese laws governing real estate differ substantially from those in the United States. Therefore, you may wish to seek competent legal advice before entering into any real estate transaction. You should also exercise extreme caution if entering into any transaction through a third party.

Disputes: The Vietnamese government has occasionally seized the passports and blocked the departure of foreigners involved in commercial disputes. U.S. citizens whose passports have been seized by Vietnamese authorities should contact the Embassy or Consulate General for assistance.

Civil Procedures: Civil procedures in Vietnam, such as marriage, divorce, documenting the birth of a child, and issuance of death certificates, are highly bureaucratic and painstakingly slow. Documentation of these procedures often requires authentication in the country in which they were produced or for which they are intended and in Vietnam. Please contact the Vietnamese Embassy in Washington, D.C., or the Vietnamese Consulate General in San Francisco or Houston concerning documentary requirements for these services.

WOMEN TRAVELER INFORMATION: If you are a woman traveling abroad, please review our travel tips for [Women Travelers](#).

LGBT RIGHTS: There are no legal restrictions on same-sex sexual relations or the organization of LGBT events in Vietnam. For more detailed information about LGBT rights in Vietnam, you may review the State Department's annual [Country Reports on Human Rights Practices](#). For further information on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) travel, please read our [LGBT Travel Information](#) page.

ACCESSIBILITY: While in Vietnam, individuals with disabilities may find accessibility and accommodation very different from in the United States. Currently, except for buildings and hotels that have been built under international standards, most public places and public transportation are not accessible to persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities will face difficulties in Vietnam because foot paths, rest rooms, road crossings, and tourist areas are not equipped to assist them. A 2010 law requires construction and major renovations of new government and large public buildings to include access for persons with disabilities, but enforcement is sporadic. New, modern buildings and facilities in larger urban cities are regularly being built with ramps and accessible entries.

Health

Medical facilities in Vietnam frequently do not meet international standards and may lack medicines and supplies. Medical personnel in Vietnam, particularly outside Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, generally speak little or no English. Doctors and hospitals expect immediate cash payment for health services. International health clinics in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City can provide acceptable care for minor illnesses and injuries, but more serious problems often require medical evacuation to Bangkok or Singapore. Although you can purchase many prescription and non-prescription medications at pharmacies, some common U.S. medications are not available in Vietnam. You should bring adequate supplies of medications for the duration of your stay in Vietnam. You may obtain lists of local English-speaking physicians from the U.S. Embassy in Hanoi or the U. S. Consulate General in Ho Chi Minh City. Neither the Embassy nor the Consulate General may recommend specific medical practitioners or hospitals. Emergency medical response services are generally unresponsive, unreliable, or completely unavailable.

Be cautious about drinking non-bottled water and about using ice cubes in drinks. You may wish to drink only bottled or canned beverages or beverages that have been boiled (such as hot tea and coffee).

In July 2012, the Government of Vietnam reported outbreaks of rabies in the northern mountainous provinces of Son La, Lai Chau, Dien Bien, Lao Cai (Sapa) and Yen Bai. Rabies is a preventable viral disease of mammals most often transmitted through the bite of a rabid animal. The most important global source of rabies in humans is from uncontrolled rabies in dogs. In Vietnam, monkeys also pose a risk. Children are often at greatest risk from rabies. They are more likely to be bitten by rabid animals, and are also more likely to be severely exposed through multiple bites in high-risk sites on the body. Travelers in Vietnam should exercise caution around unfamiliar animals and seek immediate medical attention if bitten. For more information on rabies, please visit [CDC's website](#) .

Since December of 2007, Hanoi and provinces in northern Vietnam have seen an episodic resurgence of severe acute diarrhea known to be cholera. For more information on cholera, please visit [CDC's website](#) .

Avian influenza (H5N1) continues to be a concern in Vietnam. In Vietnam and other Southeast Asian countries affected by avian influenza, you should avoid poultry farms, contact with animals in live food markets, and any surfaces that appear to be contaminated with feces from poultry or other animals. Read more information about [Avian Flu](#).

Vietnam has an HIV epidemic that is concentrated in certain groups. Thus, although the estimated adult HIV prevalence is only 0.45 percent in the general Vietnamese population, HIV prevalence among people who inject drugs, female sex workers, and men who have sex with men remains high at 13.4 percent, 3 percent, and 16.7 percent, respectively. We recommend that visitors to Vietnam take adequate preventative measures (e.g., avoid injecting drug use and practice sex safe) to minimize their risk of exposure.”

Air pollution is also a significant problem in Vietnam’s major cities, and you should consult your doctor prior to travel and consider the impact seasonal smog and heavy particulate pollution may have on you.

You can find detailed information on vaccinations and other health precautions on the [CDC website](#) . For information about outbreaks of infectious diseases abroad, consult the [World Health Organization \(WHO\) website](#) , which contains additional health information for travelers,

including [detailed country-specific health information](#) .

Tuberculosis continues to be a serious health concern in Vietnam. For further information, please [consult the CDC's information on TB](#) .

Chikungunya and Dengue are mosquito-borne illnesses that are becoming more frequent in tropical and equatorial climates around the world. Symptoms can include fever, rash, severe headache, joint pain, and muscle or bone pain. There are no specific treatments for Chikungunya or Dengue and vaccines are still in the developmental phase. Preventing mosquito bites is the most important way to prevent these illnesses. Avoidance and prevention techniques include: reducing mosquito exposure by using repellents, covering exposed skin, treating clothing and tents with permethrin and sleeping in screened or air conditioned rooms. You can also reduce exposure through mosquito control measures, including emptying water from outdoor containers and spraying to reduce mosquito populations. The *Aedes* mosquitos that carry these illnesses are primarily day biting and often live in homes and hotel rooms especially under beds, in bathrooms and closets. Travelers should carry and use [CDC- recommended insect repellents](#) containing either 20 percent DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus or IR3535, which will help diminish bites from mosquitoes as well as ticks, fleas, chiggers, etc., some of which may also carry infectious diseases. For further information, please consult the [CDC's Chikungunya Virus Website](#) and [Dengue Virus Website](#)).

Travel & Transportation

TRAFFIC SAFETY AND ROAD CONDITIONS: While in Vietnam, you may encounter road conditions that differ significantly from those in the United States. Traffic accident injuries are the leading cause of death, severe injury, and emergency evacuation of foreigners in Vietnam. Traffic accidents, including those involving a pedestrian and a motorized vehicle, are the single greatest health and safety risk you will face in Vietnam. Traffic in Vietnam is chaotic, and traffic accidents occur frequently. The most common victims are motorbike riders and pedestrians. At least 30 people die each day from transportation-related injuries and many more are injured, often with traumatic head injuries. The information below concerning Vietnam is provided for general reference only, as conditions will vary depending on location and particular circumstances.

Emergency roadside help is available nationwide by dialing 113 for police, 114 for fire brigade, and 115 for an ambulance. The efficiency of these services is well below U.S. standards, and public telephones are generally not available. Passers-by at an accident may contact police or offer transport to health facilities by private vehicle. Trauma care is not widely available and of generally low quality, particularly outside major cities.

Traffic moves on the right, although drivers frequently cross to the left to pass or turn, and motorcycles and bicycles often travel (illegally) against the flow of traffic. Streets in major cities are choked with motorcycles, cars, buses, trucks, bicycles, pedestrians, and cyclos (pedicabs). Outside the cities, livestock compete with vehicles for road space. Sudden stops and merges by vehicles, motorcycles, and bicycles make driving particularly hazardous. Nationwide, drivers do not follow basic traffic principles, vehicles do not yield right of way, and there is little adherence to traffic laws or enforcement by traffic police. The number of traffic lights in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City is increasing, but the existing traffic signals are often not obeyed. Most Vietnamese ride motorcycles; often an entire family rides on one motorcycle. The urban speed limit ranges from 30 to 40 km/h (or 19-25 miles/h). The rural speed limit ranges from 40 to 60 km/h (or 25 – 37 miles/h). Both speed limits are routinely ignored.

Be careful when you are walking, as sidewalks are extremely uneven and congested, and drivers of bicycles, motorcycles and other vehicles routinely ignore traffic signals and traffic flows, drive on sidewalks for shortcuts, and pass on both the right and left of vehicles. For safety, you should always look carefully *in both directions* before crossing streets, even when using a marked crosswalk with a green "walk" light illuminated. When you are boarding or disembarking any type of vehicle you should be *extremely careful* to always look both ways because motorcycles and other vehicles routinely quickly pass stationary vehicles on the left and on the right.

Road conditions are poor nationwide. Numerous accidents occur due to poor road conditions. U.S. citizen have been killed in vehicle accidents while traveling in northern provinces during the rainy season due to landslides. You should exercise extra caution in the countryside, as road conditions are particularly poor in rural areas.

Driving at night is especially dangerous, and you should exercise extreme caution. Roads are poorly lit, and there are few road signs. Buses and trucks often travel at high speed with bright lights that they rarely dim. Some motor vehicles do not use any lights, and vehicles of all types often stop in areas of the road that have no illumination. Livestock are often in the road.

A law mandating the use of motorcycle helmets on all roads is strictly enforced, at least for adult riders. We strongly urge you to wear a U.S. DOT

standard helmet when you ride a motorcycle or a bicycle. Vietnamese vehicles often are not equipped with working seatbelts; however, when a seatbelt is available, you should always use it, including in taxis. Child car seats are rarely available in Vietnam.

Penalties for driving under the influence of alcohol or causing an accident resulting in injury or death can include fines, confiscation of driving permits, and imprisonment. U.S. citizens involved in traffic accidents have been barred from leaving Vietnam until they have paid compensation (often determined arbitrarily) for property damage or injuries.

International driving permits and U.S. drivers' licenses are not valid in Vietnam. Foreigners renting vehicles risk fines, prosecution, and/or imprisonment for driving without a Vietnamese license endorsed for the appropriate vehicle. If you wish to drive in Vietnam, contact the Provincial Public Transportation Service of the Vietnamese Department of Communications and Transport to obtain a Vietnamese driver's license. The U.S. Embassy in Hanoi and Consulate General in Ho Chi Minh City cannot assist you in obtaining Vietnamese driver's permits or notarize U.S. drivers' licenses for use in Vietnam.

Most Vietnamese travel within Vietnam by long-distance bus or train. Both are slow, and safety conditions fall below U.S. standards. Local buses and taxis are available in some areas, particularly in the larger cities. Safety standards vary widely depending on the individual company operating the service, but are generally much lower than what you would find in the United States.

Please refer to our [Road Safety page](#) for more information. Also, we suggest that you visit the website of the country's [national tourist office](#) .

AVIATION SAFETY OVERSIGHT: As there is no direct commercial air service to the United States by carriers registered in Vietnam, and the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has not assessed the government of Vietnam's Civil Aviation Authority for compliance with International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) aviation safety standards. Further information may be found on the [FAA's safety assessment page](#) .

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

Assistance for U.S. Citizens

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Hanoi, Vietnam

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- Emergency After-Hours Telephone
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