Overall Crime and Safety Situation

The Department of State's Bureau of Diplomatic Security rates Pretoria, Johannesburg, Durban, and Cape Town as “Critical” crime threat posts. Crime continues to be a key strategic concern for the South African government, as well as for U.S. government employees and visitors. In general, crimes continue to range throughout the full spectrum, from petty muggings to ATM scams to armed residential home invasions. These crimes occur with great frequency and throughout every neighborhood. Although Americans are not specifically targeted, they can become victims of crime when caught in the cross fire of armed attacks, when they do not pay attention to their surroundings, and/or when they make themselves an “easy target.”

Crime Threats

Violent, confrontational crime is a major concern. Such crimes include home invasion robberies, burglaries, carjackings, street muggings, smash-and-grabs, organized attacks on commercial and retail centers (shopping malls and outlets), bombings of ATMs, as well as attacks on cash-in-transit vehicles/personnel (i.e., armored car/personnel).

Of particular concern for American citizens are home invasion robberies. These crimes are often violent in nature and can occur at any time. In many cases, criminals prefer to attack when the occupant is home because: 1) the residential alarm is off and, 2) the occupant can identify where valuables are kept. The recently released South African Police Service (SAPS) 2012 crime statistics indicate that the number of home invasions remains at an alarmingly high rate, with a total of 6,336 reported in Gauteng Province alone (Gauteng Province includes the cities of Johannesburg and Pretoria).
Perhaps the most vulnerable point for any resident in South Africa is the residential driveway. Criminals use the driveway as a choke point, attacking victims when they are waiting for the vehicle gate to open. These types of crimes can result in armed robberies and/or carjackings. According to SAPS, the majority of all carjackings occur as the victim arrives at home and pulls into the driveway, with the carjackers pulling up behind the victim in order to block an escape path. Victims who resist or fail to comply with demands may be killed or injured seriously. In the worst case scenarios, robbers force the victim into the house, rob the house of its valuables, and drive away with the loot and the victim’s car.

Another crime trend is business robberies by bands of well-armed criminals, with restaurants, jewelry shops, grocery stores, and other business establishments being the prime targets. Apart from raiding the till, these take-over style robberies allow robbers to relieve customers of cash, cell phones, and other valuables. Any form of resistance or a hesitation to comply can result in physical harm and, in the most extreme cases, death. Often, the primary target of these criminal syndicates are the cash-in-transit vehicles and personnel (armored cars and personnel), with store patrons being a secondary target.

Pick pocketing is common.

Regardless of the type of crime being committed, what distinguishes the crime in South African is 1) the level of violence associated with these crimes, as criminals are not hesitant to use lethal weapons, and 2) that crimes permeate the entire country, regardless of the socio-economic status of a particular neighborhood.

Foreigners are not specifically targeted, but several have been the victims of rape.

Financial and identity theft crimes are prevalent and include ATM scams, credit card scams, “lonely hearts” scams, and the “419 Scam.” ATM fraud can include the placement of a skimmer device on the ATM machine itself or a “helpful citizen” who offers to assist you. Credit card scams are also popular. Most businesses, to include gas stations and restaurants, have portable credit card machines that they will bring to payers.

There are continuing concerns with “lonely hearts” and “419 scams” originating in South Africa. “Lonely hearts” scams are a common and growing problem, with “engagements” via the Internet used to lure victims into sending money to assist with supported education, health, or job problems. Victims have lost tens of thousands of dollars on these scams. A “419 Scam” is an advance fee fraud scheme where the victim is requested to provide advance money in order to pay up-front costs associated with receiving a substantial monetary windfall. This type of scam can be initiated under the guise of a seemingly legitimate business
proposition. Bogus websites are set up in order to dupe the victim who is seeking a specific business opportunity. Based on the information contained on the bogus website, the victim contacts the scammer and either sends money or agrees to travel to South Africa in order to negotiate a business deal. If travel is involved, the unwary victim can be kidnapped for ransom or bilked out of funds until he/she has no more. When individuals fall victim to the 419 Scam, SAPS will not pursue the case to prosecution unless the victim is willing to file a formal complaint and testify in open South Africa court. For more information on these types of scams, please to the SAPS website at: www.SAPS.GOV.ZA and search “419 Scams.”

Additional 2012 crime statistics are available at:

**Overall Road Safety Situation**

South Africa’s highway system and toll roads are generally in good condition. Toll roads have call boxes for emergencies as in the United States, but many of them are inoperable due to poor maintenance. Secondary roads are often in poor condition and are frequently marked by pot holes. Roadway policing mainly consists of speed traps and checkpoints where officers check for mechanical malfunctions, operator compliance with license restrictions, and alcohol check points. When stopped at one of these checkpoints, individuals may be required to provide a valid driver’s license and a passport with a current visa or visitor’s permit. If stopped by the police without valid identification or a current visa, individuals of any nationality can be subject to arrest, detention, and deportation.

Road construction may also be poorly marked, and many construction zones outside metropolitan areas use a “Stop-and-Go” approach where one lane is completely closed down and the adjacent lane is used as a one-way, alternating between directions. Highway lighting is also non-existent outside major cities and towns. Motorists need to use caution when driving.

South Africa has many fatal traffic accidents, to include 1,207 road fatalities during the 2012 festive season. Many of these fatalities are due to motorists striking pedestrians. Unsafe driving, vehicles in disrepair, excessive speeding, unlicensed drivers, and drivers under the influence of alcohol or drugs cause many of the traffic accidents.

Other common crimes include smash-and-grab robberies at major intersections and highway off-ramps.
Incidents involving police impersonators in the vicinity of OR Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg have been reported in the past. KwaZulu-Natal province reported five cases in 2012. These impersonators use normal vehicles with a police light in the dash board and attempt to pull over other vehicles. If a vehicle stops, the occupants are robbed of their belongings. Officers in legitimate, unmarked police vehicles will also be in uniform and will present identification.

Criminals have also been known to target vehicles on the highways. Gangs will place debris in the road and wait for a vehicle to stop after hitting the object, at which point the passengers are robbed of their belongings. Other tactics employed on the highways include dropping rocks or paint from bridges onto vehicles passing underneath. In another scenario, an individual (or several working together) may be pulled over on the side of the road with an apparent mechanical problem and waiting for the driver to pull over and exit the car before grabbing exposed valuables.

Unlike the United States where traffic moves on the right hand side of the road, traffic in South Africa moves on the left, but the steering wheel is on the right hand side of the road. Texting or talking without a hands free unit while driving is a violation of South African law. Highway signage can be inconsistent; this is especially true when traveling on secondary roads. Motorists should always travel with a fully charged cell phone and be aware of their general geographic location at all times. Motorist should travel with, at the very least, a South African road atlas and consider using a GPS navigation system if unfamiliar with the South African highway system. Motorists should have numbers for the South African Automobile Association (AA), which recognizes U.S. AAA membership or other roadside assistance service phone numbers. AA and other roadside assistance companies can provide armed response units that will wait with motorists until the vehicle is repaired or towed to a service center. South Africa’s AA website link is: http://www.aa.co.za/.

The Gautrain railway serves as a rapid rail link between Johannesburg’s international airport, the commercial centers of Johannesburg, and Pretoria. In 2012, the route was extended to provide service between the Johannesburg Central Business District and Pretoria. The Gautrain is a safe and efficient alternative to travel between the various locations. More information on the Gautrain can be obtained at: http://www.gautrain.co.za/.

Political, Economic, Religious, and Ethnic Violence

Celebrating 19 years of democratic rule since the end of apartheid, the government maintains a vibrant free society and a market-based economy. Despite inequality in income and educational opportunity, persistent poverty, a severe HIV/AIDS pandemic, and violent crime,
South Africa remains a successful multiparty democratic society; it boasts a robust civil society, and a dynamic free press. South Africa has a stable, democratic government under the leadership of the African National Congress (ANC). The threat of political violence is relatively low.

U.S.-South African relations are strong, and there is high level dialogue through the Strategic Dialogue instituted by former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Minister of International Relations and Cooperation Maite Knoana-Mashabane. The governments share common objectives and work closely on many of them.

Local, Regional, and International Terrorism Threats/Concerns

South Africa has served as an important transit and facilitation point for global extremists. Though there has been no indication that operational cells are present, a nexus for recruiting, funding, and safe haven for international terrorists does exist.

The last significant domestic terror campaign occurred in the Western Cape. The Western Cape-based group PAGAD (People against Gangsters and Drugs) conducted an urban terror campaign of bombings, assassinations, and vigilante murders from 1997 to November 2001. These activities targeted government facilities and personnel, moderate Muslims identified as threats to the radical Islamic movement, and Western-themed businesses (Planet Hollywood, Hard Rock Cafe) seen by PAGAD as symbols of the anti-Islamic West. The government's successful investigation and subsequent prosecution of PAGAD members has been credited with the suspension of further violence. No significant anti-Western attacks have occurred since 2001.

Large, well organized criminal syndicates operate freely. These gangs are known to target businesses and retail stores in coordinated, armed attacks.

South Africa has a large and diverse mix of religions and some communities are sensitive to U.S. government involvement in the Middle East. There have been recent small, peaceful demonstrations in Gauteng protesting these policies.

Civil Unrest

 Strikes are considered the most frequent, violent, and disruptive in the world. Gauteng Province (home of Johannesburg and Pretoria) remains the political and economic capital of the country and typically experiences more labor unrest than other provinces (although unrest can, and does, occur in any area). Labor unions carry substantial political clout and can
mobilize thousands of people to a protest or demonstration. Typical protests have included blocking major thoroughfares between Johannesburg and Pretoria (termed a “go slow”) by vehicles, or grid-locking Johannesburg’s Central Business District with sheer numbers of protestors. Sectors most often affected by labor unrest include mining, farming, retail, civil service, public transportation and private trucking, and manufacturing.

Although not connected to industrial action, another form of protest that should be carefully monitored are “service delivery protests,” which often flare up in neighborhoods when water, electricity, or other utilities are not received for a period of time. These protests often result in burning tires and road blockages.

Although protests are generally peaceful, they can involve some level of violence, which SAPS generally meet with non-lethal crowd control measures. Protests by the military, private security, and the minibus taxi industry have typically been judged by the local media to have the most potential for violence. In 2012, there was an unusually high level of unannounced large-scale wildcat strike activity in the mining sector throughout the country and on fruit farms in the Western Cape. These wildcat strikes involved thousands of protestors and led to numerous deaths, injuries, and extensive property damage.

In addition to being a premier tourist destination, Cape Town is the legislative capital of South Africa, where the National Parliament and many government offices are located. While protests are permitted and tolerated, the police are generally quick to deter demonstrations that do not have appropriate municipal approval. Between SAPS and the various Metropolitan Police Departments, security resources are usually adequate to maintain order during demonstrations.

KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) hosts southern Africa’s largest port (Durban), making it one of the prime commercial centers on the continent. KZN is also the home province of President Jacob Zuma and a quarter of the nation’s ANC members, making it a frequent host to ANC political rallies and large gatherings that sometimes disrupt the city. However, most protests, marches, and rallies will end in front of Durban’s City Hall, which is across the street from the building housing the U.S. Consulate offices, preventing staff from moving in and out of the building. Violent demonstrations are rare, although strikes by taxi operators (which did turn violent) and metro police in 2012 stopped city operations. SAPS are usually called in to control traffic and demonstrators.

An increasing trend of politically-motivated killings plagued KZN in 2012. KZN press reported that 38 members of the ANC and at least 13 members of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and National Freedom Party (NFP) have been killed in politically-linked violence since 2011.
Although a fluctuating level of violence is not new in KZN--and usually occurs in the run up to elections--the killings result primarily from intra-party conflict. The only inter-party violence is between the IFP and its NFP splinter. Competition for power and economic gain in KZN is at the root cause of political violence. The violence is not targeted toward Americans but rather against ward leaders, usually in townships and in Durban.

Religious or Ethnic Violence

South Africa has been free of the religious and ethnic violence. There is an increase in xenophobia, largely targeted at poorer migrants from other African countries who are perceived to be competing for jobs with South Africans. The official unemployment rate is over 24 percent and in some poor and rural areas is believed to top 40 percent.

Post-specific Concerns

Environmental Hazards

Although South Africa’s infrastructure is relatively stable, it is not without challenges. Consumer demand, insufficient power generation, and the theft of electrical wire and other needed equipment interfere with the government-owned utilities’ ability to deliver an uninterrupted power supply.

During the rainy season, thunderstorms and lightning strikes or water damage often disrupt power to alarm systems, traffic lights, and other electronic equipment. Adequate surge protectors should be used to protect computers and office and other electrical equipment.

Industrial and Transportation Accidents

Road hazards are another danger affecting the entire population.

Economic Espionage/Intellectual Property Thefts

The government, both on the local and national level, remains committed to combating the production and importation of counterfeit products and to enforcing intellectual property rights as per WTO commitments. However, the demand for name brand items at all socio-economic levels sustains the demand for counterfeit products including music, clothing, accessories, etc. South Africa has made the most progress on digital media through close cooperation between authorities and industry. Importation of manufactured counterfeit products has been more difficult to stem. One manufacturer of a U.S. clothing brand in Durban is working with
local authorities to remove Chinese-made products from the streets and to halt importation of these items by sea and land. The government’s inability to find the source of the counterfeit products has hampered investigations. The Embassy is in close contact with South Africa Companies and Intellectual Properties Commission (CIPC) in combating counterfeiting.

Privacy Concerns

Identify Theft remains a concern due to several contributing factors: a strong infrastructure of money wire services, readily available Internet, prepaid cell phones, high levels of corruption in many companies, and lack of police resources/expertise to combat this type of crime. The Consulate General has dealt with U.S. citizens who have reported their mail has been opened, re-routed, or tampered with at the local post office, and the perpetrators assumed their identity (one victim had $130,000 transferred out of her retirement account). Others have reported that their U.S. passport biographical page was photocopied at hotels during their travels in Africa (standard opening procedure), was altered (photo shopped), and used in romance or standard traveler or tax scams against South African and U.S. citizens.

Drug-related Crimes

South Africa is both an importer and an exporter of drugs. It is the origin, transit point, and/or destination of many drug trafficking routes. International drug trafficking organizations are found in South Africa. Factors that attract legitimate businesses, such as a relatively stable regime and first-world infrastructure, also appeal to organized crime. There are pockets of corruption within the government, but as a policy, law enforcement frequently collaborates with U.S. counterparts to target drug trafficking.

The United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) recently reported that South Africa was the world’s third-leading country for cannabis seizures. While much of the cannabis is cultivated domestically, significant quantities are also grown in neighboring countries. Large seizures of compressed marijuana are frequently made at the O.R. Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg and are generally destined for the United Kingdom.

Cocaine, frequently originating from Brazil as well as other parts of South America, is regularly seized at the O.R. Tambo International Airport. Cocaine trafficking is mostly controlled by Nigerian syndicates that have recruiters placed in South Africa and facilitators throughout South America. Recent trends indicate that Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTOs) from China and the Balkans have developed a significant presence in South Africa. In addition to importing narcotics directly into South Africa, DTOs ship drugs into Maputo, Mozambique, and
then truck them into South Africa.

Heroin is also a drug of abuse in South Africa. The DEA Pretoria Country Office has investigated a number of cases in which heroin is smuggled from Pakistan into South Africa, and then onward into the U.S. According to a UN study, most of the heroin trafficked into South Africa is intended for domestic consumption.

The SAPS has observed an increase in the number of clandestine drug manufacturing laboratories. These labs produce synthetic drugs largely for the domestic market.

While DEA has limited knowledge of narcotics trafficking financing terrorist activities, the Pretoria Country Office has no corroborated intelligence indicating widespread narco-terrorism in South Africa.

Kidnapping Threats

Americans have not been targeted specifically for kidnapping. Nevertheless, there have been a few reported cases of American citizens seeking business opportunities in South Africa who were abducted by criminals misrepresenting themselves as legitimate businessmen. Scam artists who purported to be engaged in legitimate business enterprises lured unsuspecting entrepreneurs with promises of lucrative business deals. Once the victim arrived in South Africa and met his "business contact," he was abducted and ransomed for safe return. These abductions are motivated purely by greed and do not target American citizens specifically. American citizens have not been the target of kidnap for political gain.

Police Response

For residential and commercial properties in the more affluent neighborhoods, the use of private security companies has become the norm for first response to a crime in progress, as the police have proven incapable of providing this service. These private companies generally have one to two armed officers in response vehicles and can be seen patrolling the neighborhoods throughout the day.

How to Handle Incidents of Police Detention or Harassment

While corruption exists within the SAPS, complaints of street level shakedowns for money or similar forms of harassment are uncommon among the American community. On occasion, motorists have been informed they can pay a fine directly to the officer after being caught in a
speed trap or at a road-worthy checkpoint. If this occurs, the best course of action is to advise the officer to provide a citation and the fine will be paid at a police station.

Where to Turn to for Assistance if you Become a Victim of Crime

American citizens who are arrested or detained by SAPS or feel they are being harassed can contact American Citizen’s Services.

Johannesburg:
1 Sandton Drive, Sandton, 2146
Telephone: 011-290-3000
Fax: 011-884-0396
After hours emergency assistance: 079-111-1684
E mail: consularjohannesburg@state.gov

Durban
Old Mutual Building 31st floor
303 Dr. Pixley KaSeme street, Durban 4001
Telephone: 031-305-7600
Fax: 031-305-7691
After hours emergency assistance: 079-111-1445
E mail: consulardurban@state.gov

Cape Town
2 Reddam Avenue, Westlake 7945
Telephone: 021-702-7300
Fax: 021-702-7493
After hours emergency assistance: 079-111-0391
E mail: americanscapetown@state.gov

Various Police/Security Agencies

There are two police agencies in South Africa. Metropolitan Police departments deal with traffic control, while South African Police Service (SAPS) deals with regular law enforcement duties.

The SAPS and Metropolitan Police departments are well intentioned but suffer from a lack of equipment, resources, training, and personnel to respond to calls for assistance or other emergencies. In addition, law enforcement agencies have lost many experienced officers and
personnel to attrition and reorganization of command and administrative structures. Nevertheless, SAPS continues to address poor response time and officer indifference with an effort to improve their sector policing capabilities in many neighborhoods, especially affluent ones. While some of these areas are now covered by a roving reaction unit with the responsibility of responding to the more violent crimes (home invasions, business robberies, etc), communities have experienced little to no success in this effort. Secondarily, while SAPS says it will attempt to respond to calls of prowlers and other potential crimes in the developmental stage, it has yet to show any real improvement in this effort. Far down on their list of priorities is response to property crime after the fact; it is not uncommon for the police to arrive two to three days after the break-in to take a police report.

In addition, community policing such as that found in the United States or western Europe has taken hold slowly and have complimented SAPS efforts to detect and deter crime, as well as providing improved response to calls of a serious nature. Though there has been an improvement in community policing, the police are still mistrusted as one in three South Africans reports having to pay a bribe to police officers once they engage them for assistance.

The national police emergency number is: 10-111.

**Medical Emergencies**

The private health care sector ranks amongst the best in the world. American government employees working in Africa are often evacuated to South Africa for medical treatment The Embassies and Consulates in the area where individuals will be traveling can provide information regarding medical services specific to that location. Travelers are encouraged to purchase traveler/medical evacuation insurance policies.

**Contact Information for Recommended Local Hospitals and Clinics**

**Johannesburg**

Milpark Hospital, 9 Guild Rd, Partown West, Johannesburg 2193
011-480-5600, Emergency: 011-480-5917

Morningside Medi-Clinic, Cnr Rivonia and Hills Rd, Morningside, Johannesburg 2057
011-282-5000, Emergency: 011-282-5126/5127

Sandton Medi-Clinic, Cnr Main Rd and Peter Place, Bryanston, Johannesburg 2021
011-709-2000, Emergency 011-706-7710/7711

Pretoria
Life Wilgers Hospital, Denneboom Rd, Wilgers Ext14, Pretoria 0040
012-807-8100

Jakaranda Hospital, 213 Middleberg St, Muckleneuk, Pretoria 0002
012-421-6700

Kloof Hospital, 511 Jochemus St, Erasmuskloof X3, Pretoria 0083
012-367-4000, Emergency: 012-367-4076

Cape Town
Life Vincent Palloti Hospital, Alexandra Road, Pinelands, Cape Town 7405
021-506-5111

Durban
St Augustine’s Hospital, 107 Chelmsford Rd, Berea, Durban 4001
031-268-5000, Emergency: 031-268-5030,

Umhlanga Rocks Hospital
323 Umhlanga Rocks Drive, Umhlanga Rocks, Durban 4320
031-560-5500, Emergency 031-560-5607 or 5612

Etanbeni Hospital
148 South Ridge Rd, Berea, Durban 4000
031-204-1300, Emergency: 031-204-1377

Recommended Air Ambulance Services

International SOS - 011-541-1100 or 011-541-1300
Netcare - 011-254-1127
MRI - 011-242-0112
Africa Assist - 083-300-3927

The nationwide emergency number to call for an ambulance is: 10-177.
The police emergency number (10-111) may also be used.
CDC Country-specific Vaccination and Health Guidance

HIV and AIDS remain major public health concerns in South Africa, which receives more PEPFAR resources than any other nation. With approximately 5.7 million South Africans believed to be living with HIV and AIDS, South Africa has benefitted from PEPFAR support since 2004 through partnerships among the government and non-governmental and private organizations. By 2010, South Africa had received approximately $3.1 billion (R27 billion) through PEPFAR. PEPFAR is moving from its initial emergency focus to an emphasis on developing sustainability of its programs and seeks to build a platform for an integrated response to a broad range of global health needs. The focus will be on maternal, newborn, and child health.

Due to South Africa's high HIV infection rate, the embassy medical unit advises all personnel and visitors to seek immediate medical assistance in the event of a sexual assault or blood-borne injury.

Travelers entering South Africa from WHO-designated yellow fever countries are required to present their current and valid “International Certificate of Vaccination as approved by the World Health Organization (WHO)” (commonly called a “yellow card”) or statement of medical exemption (also located on the same yellow card). This requirement is imposed on travelers flying to South Africa via yellow fever countries, even when transiting passengers are required to stay on board the plane (e.g., flights stopping in Dakar, Senegal or Accra, Ghana or Nairobi, Kenya), or if the plane makes an unscheduled landing in a yellow fever country. South Africa treats Zambia and Tanzania as yellow fever countries. South Africa may apply these requirements to people traveling from or through both high-risk yellow fever countries and low-risk yellow fever countries. As a precaution, all travelers should carry their original yellow card. Immigration inspectors do not generally accept letters, scans, copies, or faxes regarding prior yellow fever vaccination. While this requirement may not be consistently applied, travelers who cannot present an original, valid yellow card risk being refused entry. Yellow fever vaccinations are not administered at South African ports of entry. Travelers are reminded that they are required to obtain a yellow fever vaccination at least 10 days prior to their arrival in accordance with WHO regulations.

For more information on CDC recommendations, visit:

Tips on How to Avoid Becoming a Victim
Crimes/Scams

The most prevalent scams are the “419 Scams” and ATM fraudsters. The Consulate General advises that individuals should always thoroughly inspect any ATM for suspicious attachments or devices and ensure you use a machine in a controlled area, such as a mall. Also, never allow anyone to provide assistance and never give out PIN codes. Residents and travelers should ensure that credit cards are not taken to a “back room” for processing. Always complete your credit card transaction(s) with the employee in your presence. If OSAC members receive such a solicitation, please visit the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s website before providing any personal/financial details or making a financial commitment at: www.fbi.gov/majcases/fraud/fraudschemes.htm. Additional financial scam information is available at: http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/financial_scams/financial_scams_3155.html.

Areas to be Avoided

There are no designated “off-limit” areas, although it is strongly recommend that “township” neighborhoods (poorer neighborhoods) be avoided, particularly after dark, and unless traveling with an organized tour group or someone who knows the area. Visitors should increase their level of awareness in these areas during daylight, due to high crime rates and spontaneous protests often involving road blocks, burning tires, and demonstrators throwing rocks and other projectiles. Questions or concerns regarding a specific destination can be referred to the RSOs.

Best Security Practices

First and foremost, be aware of your surroundings. Your vigilance may convince a would-be attacker to find an easier target. In urban areas, walk in “controlled areasm” such as shopping malls or other areas with a security presence. Do not travel to an area you are not familiar with. Travel in groups, whenever possible, and minimize your movements after dark. If you believe you are in danger, leave the area immediately.

Maintain a low profile. Do not flash cash or wear expensive jewelry. Travelers should safeguard their passport, wallet, and other valuables and know where these possessions are all times. Pilferage of luggage at OR Tambo airport in Johannesburg is also common, and the airline check in staff reminds travelers not to place valuables in their luggage. Travelers should use a safe and or reception desk lock boxes at hotels for all valuables. Keep photocopies of your passport and other identity documents on your person or separate from
the originals and keep the originals locked up in the hotel safe.

If you are in a vehicle, doors should be locked, no valuables should be left in plain view (to avoid smash-and-grabs), and car windows should be kept up. When stopped at a red light, leave room between the car you are in and the car in front of you in case you need to take evasive action. Stay on main roads and keep to well-lit public areas. If you think you’re being followed, drive to the nearest safe area (police station, hospital, etc.). It is recommended that vehicles not stop for an unmarked police vehicle on the highways in the vicinity of the Johannesburg international airport but, instead, drive to a well-lit area such as a mall, gas station, or police station. If a vehicle is pulled over to the side of the road, do not stop, but rather call the police to report the vehicle’s location so that authorities can render assistance. If forced to pull over for any reason, drive to an area that is well lighted, such as a gas station or police station.

Public transportation should be avoided, as accidents involving multiple fatalities, both on urban and rural roadways, are common. Avoid use of unlicensed mini-bus “taxis.” They are frequently in disrepair, and the drivers are often unlicensed and lack proper driving skills and etiquette. Rental cars are available or hire a private taxi through the hotel concierge. Taxi recommendations should be obtained from your hotel and reputable companies telephoned. They should never be hailed on the street. Pick up and drop off at either Johannesburg’s O.R. Tambo International Airport or Cape Town International Airport should be done with a reputable transfer/shuttle service.

Avoid confrontations with local residents. Many are armed, especially taxi drivers who carry weapons to ward off criminals and to battle with rival taxi gang members.

Before entering an establishment, scan the area for any suspicious activity. This will reduce the chances of walking into a “robbery in progress.” Once inside the establishment, take note of the nearest fire exits or other avenues of escape.

It is recommended that armored cars (and their uniformed personnel) be avoided, especially when they are making deposits or picking up cash receipts. They are frequently targeted by well-armed gangs who are not afraid to open fire, even in crowded public areas. If you hear shots fired, get down on the ground! Do not try to investigate or intervene.

If you need to use an ATM, do so from inside a controlled area such as a shopping mall or hotel. Avoid ATMs on the street since these are often targeted by criminals who will attempt to “assist” you during your transaction. Criminals also blow up ATMs on a regular basis although
this usually only occurs during in the early morning hours in remote locations.

Credit card fraud is not uncommon. Only use credit cards in reputable establishments. In order to prevent “card skimming,” physically watch your card being swiped. Check your credit card account for any unauthorized purchases.

Drink responsibly. The South African BAL is only .05 percent and is strictly enforced. Drinking alcohol in public is an offence, and you may be arrested and detailed.

Measures to combat home invasions should include several layers of residential security, such as perimeter walls, electric fencing, loops on the electric fencing, alarms, motion detectors, and grills on windows and doors. Vehicle gates should also be equipped with anti-lift brackets, as criminals have been known to use crowbars and pneumatic jacks to lift gates off their tracks. The Consulate General advises official and private Americans to be aware of their surroundings and take note of anyone who may be following when approaching the residence or who may be parked in or around your arrival point. It is also recommended that vehicles wait in the street until the vehicle gate is open, before pulling into the residence; this may afford you with an escape route.

Travelers should be careful to avoid areas where political influence is contested. It is strongly recommended that visitors pay attention to local media reports on the location(s) of proposed demonstrations. Protests and demonstrations are not a spectator event, and they should be avoided at all costs.

Victims of violent crime, especially rape, are strongly encouraged to seek immediate medical attention, including anti-retroviral therapy against HIV/AIDS.

Residents may wish to consider backup generators.

One should always use caution when traveling and be properly prepared with cell phones, water and other supplies when traveling in the “bush” country.

Finally, should you be confronted by an armed individual, DO NOT RESIST. Resistance or hesitation on the part of the victim can result in death or serious injury. Common practice throughout South Africa is never to resist if confronted by an armed individual. Keep your hands visible and follow instructions carefully. Do not make any furtive movements that might startle your attacker. Give up your money and valuables and live to see another day.
U.S. Embassy/Consulate Location and Contact Information

Embassy and Consulate General hours of operation are 0830 to 1600

U.S. Embassy Pretoria
PO Box 9536, Pretoria 0001
877 Pretorius St, Arcadia, Pretoria
Tel: (27-12) 431-4000
Fax: (27-12) 342-2299
MSG Post 1(27-12) 431-4169/4620 (After Hours)
Senior SRSO Daniel J. Weber 012-431-4099
Email: DS_RSO_Pretoria@state.gov
Regional Medical Officer 012-431-4015

U.S. Consulate General, Cape Town
PostNet Suite 50, Private Bag x26, Tokai 7966
2 Reddam Ave, Westlake 7945
Tel: (27 21) 702-7300
Fax: (27 21) 702-7493
MSG Post 1 021-702-7411
RSO Thomas Green 021-702-7438
Email: GreenTA2@state.gov

U.S. Consulate General, Durban
303 Dr. Pixley KaSeme Street
31st Floor, Old Mutual Center
Durban 4001
Tel: (27 31) 305-7600
Fax: (27 31 305-7691)
Post Security Officer Pete Campolongo 031-305-7600
Email: Please email RSO Johannesburg

U.S. Consulate General, Johannesburg
P.O. Box 787197, Sandton, 2146
1 Sandton Drive, Sandhurst (opposite Sandton City Mall)
Tel: (27 11) 290-3000
Fax: (27 11) (011) 884-0396
RSO Mario A. Reta 011-290-3426
Email: Johannesburg_DL-RSO@state.gov

The Consular Information Sheet for South Africa (http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1008.html) provides additional information. It is also recommended that any traveler register with the U.S. Department of State: https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/.

OSAC Country Council Information

South Africa’s OSAC Country Council is based in Johannesburg, and the U.S. Consulate General Johannesburg manages (in close coordination with the American Chamber of Commerce) an extremely vibrant and proactive OSAC Country Council with over 65 members, to include major U.S. companies in a variety of industries. The Council meets monthly at various venues throughout Johannesburg. The RSO Johannesburg attends all Council meetings to engage in roundtable discussions. The Council takes an active role on all issues of crime and security in South Africa, to include outreach to public officials for speaking engagements and training seminars.