



***Embassy of the United States of America
Athens, Greece***

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Embassy's phone number: +30 (210) 7212-951
American Citizen Services: +30 (210) 7202-414
After-hours emergency number: +30 (210) 7294-444
ACS Unit E-mail address: AthensAmericanCitizenServices@state.gov
Website: <http://athens.usembassy.gov>

Help for American Victims of Crime in Greece

[Please click on this link to read the Department of State's brochure for victims of crime.](#)

http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/emergencies/victims_crime_overseas/victims_crime_overs_eas_1748.html

Being the victim of a crime in a foreign country can be a traumatic experience. While no one can undo the emotional stress, physical injury, or financial loss you may have experienced, the U.S. Embassy in Athens, is ready to help. We are very concerned about violent crimes committed against U.S. citizens in Greece. We will assist you in managing the practical consequences of being a crime victim and provide you with information about accessing the local criminal justice system, as well as other resources for crime victims abroad and the United States. This office can also assist you to find appropriate medical care, contact family or friends on your behalf and explain how funds can be transferred. We can also help you to better understand the criminal justice system in Greece, which is very different from the system in the United States.

The information included in this guide relating to the legal requirements in Greece is provided for general information purposes only. The information may not be accurate or relevant to a particular case. Questions involving interpretation of Greek laws should be addressed to legal counsel licensed to practice law in Greece. The investigation and prosecution of the crime is solely the responsibility of local authorities. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) may assist local authorities in certain cases of kidnapping, hostage-taking and terrorism.

REPORTING CRIMES: Victims of crime should file police reports or register complaints with the local police or the Public Prosecutor. Crimes should be reported either in the police station of the jurisdiction where the crime occurred or to the closest police station. There are no police officers in Greece that specialize in dealing solely with victims of crime. Crimes can be reported to the police or to the prosecutor's office, by the victim or by another interested party. If the crime is reported immediately the police may apprehend the perpetrator and place him under custody without the need of an arrest warrant. If the perpetrator is not arrested

within 24 hours of the crime, then an arrest warrant must be issued by the investigating judge. A crime may be reported by the victim or any interested individual locally or from the United States through a local police precinct to the Athens Interpol Office, at 2-6 Antigonis St. and Leoforos Athinon, 10442 Athens, tel. 210-6448888, fax 210-6427300. E-mail, athens.intepol@astynomia.gr. The police will provide a copy of the duty-log entry concerning the report of the crime; however, a copy of the preliminary investigation conducted by the police will be provided to the victim or his/her legal advisor only after the investigation has been completed. The police are required to appoint an interpreter during the reporting and the investigation of the crime. If a victim leaves Greece before reporting the crime, he or she may report it to the local police precinct in the U.S. and request that it be forwarded it to a Greek diplomatic mission or directly to the Athens Interpol Office. According to information provided by the Greek Ministry of Justice, a diplomatic mission may file a complaint on the victim's behalf based on detailed written information provided by the victim.

If you have difficulties filing your police report with an official, please contact the U.S. Embassy or Consulate immediately. You may need a police report to file for crime victim compensation or insurance reimbursement as may be applicable in your particular case. If you decide to file a report, please send a copy to us, along with your address and phone number in the event we need to communicate with you. While we are not authorized to act as your legal representative, prosecutor or investigator, our office can help you track the progress of your case and advise you of any developments.

INVESTIGATIONS: The police are responsible for the investigation of a crime and collection of evidence, such as fingerprints, photographs, and refer the victim to the examining coroner who will provide a report describing the victim's injuries, based on the District Attorney's (D.A.) orders. In the event the victim has suffered bodily injuries, a medical report is required and is included in the legal file. The victim may receive information about the progress of the investigation either through his/her attorney, or through the Greek diplomatic mission providing consular service in the area of the victim's place of residence in the U.S. In the event that a victim is being threatened or intimidated by the defendant or his/her family or friends, a report should be made to the police or the Public Prosecutor's office. If there is not enough evidence concerning the guilt of the accused, or the victim withdraws the testimony, then the D.A. may decide to refer the case to the archives. The statute of limitations for felonies under Greek law is twenty years. The D.A. can refer the case to the archive if there is not enough evidence to prove guilt or in the victim withdraws her testimony.

ARRESTS: The Greek authorities can initiate prosecution for most crimes, whether or not the victim makes a complaint, for certain crimes the State will initiate prosecution only after the interested party files a complaint. Depending on the crime committed, the maximum duration of detention pending trial is 18 months. Greek penal law applies to all crimes committed, within Greece or aboard Greek ships or aircraft, by Greek citizens or foreign nationals unless they are subject to the law of another state in accordance with International Law. According to local law, the Greek authorities are not obligated to notify the victim about the arrest of the accused. The victim may be requested to recognize the perpetrator in a police lineup.

PRETRIAL PERIOD: Felony crimes can carry a sentence of 5 years to life in prison. Misdemeanor crimes can be punishable by incarceration, fine or one day up to one month of confinement. After the police complete the investigation, the file is sent to the public prosecutor, who may either refer the case to trial, or for further investigation if necessary. The case is referred to the examining magistrate to perform the judicial inquiry. The prosecutor can request the judicial council to acquit the defendant if the evidence is insufficient. Felonies are tried by the mixed criminal court. Plea bargaining does not exist in the Greek legal system. There are several governmental and private associations in Greece assisting victims of crime. Some of the professionals, including lawyers, provide their services free of charge to victims of crime. At the victim's request the civil courts may or may not appoint a lawyer to a case. If the request is approved, the Bar Association is obligated to appoint a lawyer to represent the victim.

TRIAL: The duration of the trial depends on the complexity and seriousness of the case. The victim will be required to return to the host country at least twice in felony cases, depending on whether the victim is complainant witness or a civil claimant who pressed charges. As a complainant witness, the victim has limited right to be informed of the final decision and she/he will only be informed of the decision if the prosecutor rejects his/her formal complaint. As a civil claimant the victim receives first hand information since they are a party to the proceedings. Only the accused has the legal right to oppose the prosecutor's decision.

The victim may submit a written statement, or provide testimony at the Greek Embassy in the United States. Trials held in the judge chambers (in camera) are very rare. Normally, trials are held as public hearings. Cases concerning juveniles are closed to the public. Often the media publicize details of crimes and photographs of victims, usually without their permission. The president of the court shall appoint an interpreter for a witness who does not speak Greek. Jurors are usually assigned during the trial of a felony by a mixed court and mixed appellate courts. Persons attending a trial must be dressed appropriately and with the judge enters the courtroom the audience should stand up.

SENTENCING: In felony cases, the sentence is announced immediately after the court announces that the defendant is guilty. In crimes prosecuted ex-officio (without the victim's pressing charges), the victim-witness testifies at court while the civil claimant actually initiates the legal proceeding against the defendant asking for his/her prosecution, sentencing and compensation. The sentence starts immediately unless the court decides otherwise. The court is not obligated to inform the victim of its decision after the perpetrator is sentenced, acquitted or released.

APPEALS: The defendant may appeal the court decision within 10 days if he/she is a resident of Greece and 30 days if appellant resides abroad. There is no specific time frame for the duration of the appeal hearing. Victims are expected to appear in court and testify again during the appeal proceedings.

ATTORNEYS: Victims of crime in Greece should consider hiring local attorneys to secure appropriate legal guidance. Local legal procedures differ from those in the United States. Although the public prosecutor is responsible for prosecuting the case and representing the State's interests, an attorney can promote a victim's interests

with the police and the court. While the Consular Section of the United States Embassy cannot recommend specific attorneys, we can provide you with a list of attorneys who speak English and who have expressed interest in representing U.S. citizens. For accessing the list of attorneys, please [Click here \(http://athens.usembassy.gov/medical-legal.html \)](http://athens.usembassy.gov/medical-legal.html)

VICTIM COMPENSATION IN GREECE: There is no national victim support service in Greece. The Greek government does not provide monetary compensation to crime victims. Compensation can only be awarded in addition to a penal sanction. Victims need to file a civil suit to claim compensation for damages. Compensation does not constitute a penal sanction as it is purely based on civil law.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: According to the Cyber Crime Department of the Greek police, American citizens who are the victims of fraud, extortion or defamation committed in Greece via the Internet can press charges to their local police station in the U.S., which will in turn notify the local police via the Athens Interpol Office. American citizens should exercise caution when purchasing items over the Internet. The Greek police Cyber-Crime Department is located at, 173 Alexandras Avenue, 115 22 Athens, Greece, tel. 210-647-6461/4, 210-6476000, fax 210-6476462, email, ccu@cybercrimeunit.gov.gr

EMBASSY LOCATION: Americans living or traveling to Greece are encouraged to register with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate through the [State Department's travel registration website \(https://step.state.gov/step/\)](https://step.state.gov/step/) so that they can obtain updated information on travel and security within Greece. Americans without Internet access may register directly with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate. By registering, American citizens make it easier for the Embassy or Consulate to contact them in case of emergency. The U.S. Embassy is located at, 91 Vas. Sophias Avenue, 101 60 Athens, tel. 210-721-2951, web site: <http://athens.usembassy.gov>, American Services Section, 210-720-2414, fax 210-724-5313, email: athensamericancitizenservices@state.gov.

SPECIAL INFORMATION FOR CASES OF SEXUAL ASSAULT AND RAPE: Physical evidence is very important in sexual assault cases, and can deteriorate as time passes. As such, victims of a sexual assault should to the extent possible avoid bathing or changing clothes, and should have a physical exam at the first opportunity. Take these steps even if you are unsure about whether you will ultimately report the crime to the police. If you decide to pursue a prosecution at a later time, having taken these steps preserves evidence that will assist the prosecutor. According to the Greek Penal code, article 336, the definition of rape, is the following:

1. One who by bodily duress or threat of serious and immediate danger forces a female into extra-marital intercourse, tolerance or indecent assault, shall be punished by confinement. Article 337, paragraph 2, refers to the sexual abuse: One who brutally offends the decency of another person in the area of his/her genitals, shall be confined for not more than a year or monetary penalty. The police or the public prosecutor authorizes a forensic examination for victims of sexual assault, rape, or domestic violence; the medical exam is only undertaken if victim is cooperative and willing. If a victim of sexual assault needs assistance in communicating with the police, either the Embassy or the National Center of Social Solidarity (197) can help. The Forensic

Service of the area where the crime was reported by the victim is responsible for conducting a sexual assault exam. Crimes reported within Attica region, are handled by the Athens Forensic Service, 10 Anapafseos Str., 116 36 Athens, Greece, tel. 210-9244900, fax 210-9219100. The forensic exam for sexual assault involves description of the injuries, pelvic exam, vaginal/penile/anal swabs, head and pubic hair samples, fingernail scrapings, and blood and saliva samples for DNA identification. A victim is allowed to bring a friend or other support person during the forensic exam. There is no charge for the forensic exam. If you don't have anybody to support you during this process, the Embassy may be able to help.

If the victim elects not to have a medical exam, this does not stop the legal proceeding; however it may negatively impact the chances for a conviction.

Victims of sexual assault should get medical attention to determine the extent of their injuries and to discuss the prevention of pregnancy and the treatment of sexually transmitted diseases. Emergency contraception (the morning-after pill) is available for sale in the local pharmacies while it is not formally provided by state hospitals. Local law provides that a pregnancy which is a result of a criminal act such as rape, incest, seduction of a minor, or abuse of one incapable of resistance, may be terminated by an abortion performed by a medical doctor, provided that this takes place within nineteen weeks of conception. HIV prophylaxis must be provided within 72 hours from the incident and is provided by most of the state hospitals in Greece which have special infectious disease and social support departments. In the Athens area, the following hospitals provide HIV prophylaxis:

- Andreas Syngros, 5 I. Dragoumi Str., 116 21 Ilissia, tel. 210 -7265100, fax 210-7235546
- Evangelismos, 45-47 Ipsylandou Str., 106 76 Athens, tel. 213-2041000, fax 210-7201320
- Laiko, 17 Agiou Thoma Str., 115 27 Goudi, tel. 213-2060800, fax 213-2061215
- Genimatas George, 154 Mesogeion Av., 156 69 Holargos, tel. 213 2032000, fax 210-7788110
- Papadimitriou Hospital, end of Zaimi Str., 151 27 Melissia, tel. 210- 8106200, 210-8042287
- Erythros Stavros, 1 Erythrou Stavrou Street, 115 26 Ambelokipi, tel. 213-2068000, fax 213-2068500
- Attikon, 1 Rimini Street, 124 64 Haidari, tel. 210-5831000
- Tzaneio, 1 Zanni Street, Pireaus, tel. 213-2081000
- Ippokrateio, 114 Vas. Sophias, 115 28 Athens, tel. 213-2088000.
- Agia Sophia, Children Hospital, Thivon & Leivadias, 115 27 Goudi, tel. 210-7467000, fax 210- 7797649
- Sismanogleion, 1 Sismanogleiou Str., 151 26 Marousi, tel. 213-2058001, fax 210-8039543
- Ygeia private hospital, 4 Kifisias & Erythrou Stavrou, 151 25 Athens, tel. 210-6184000
- Agios Panteleimon, 3 D. Mandouvalou Street, 184 54 Nikaia, tel. 213-2077000
- Alexandra, Vas. Sophias 80, 101 60, Athens, tel. 213-2162000.

Hospitals in other areas of Greece:

- Alexandroupolis University Hospital, tel. 25510-74000
- Crete, Venizeleio, Herakleio, Crete, tel. 2810-368000
- Crete, University Hospital, 71110 Herakleio, Crete, tel. 2813-402111
- Patras, 265 00 Rio, Patras, tel. 2610-999111
- Rhodes, 5 Erythrou Stavrou, 85 100, Rhodes, tel. 22410-80000
- Thessaloniki, AHEPA, 1 S. Stylianidi Str., 546 36 Thessaloniki, tel. 2310-993111

A doctor will interview the victim at the hospital. The doctor might request the assistance of the social welfare service situated inside the hospital or refer the case to other specialized medical staff.

Forced sexual intercourse is considered a penal crime and is taken seriously by the medical staff of the local private and state hospitals. Greek authorities provide assistance to male victims of rape on the same basis as they do to female victims. There is special legislation that protects personal data of the victim and the perpetrator from publication under any circumstances; however, victims may experience media attention.

There is no dedicated rape victims' hotline. However, the 24 hour Victims of Violence hotline (197) mentioned below can provide assistance to victims of sexual assault and rape. Most of the operators speak English.

SPECIAL INFORMATION FOR CASES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: Domestic violence is a crime under Greek Law number 3500, which entered into effect on October 24, 2006.

Restraining orders are available in urgent cases when immediate protection is required. A restraining order may be combined with an order specifying a time limit within which plaintiff must bring the principal action; in case of non compliance, the restraining order expires automatically. The court having jurisdiction over the main pending litigation has the power to modify or revoke restraining orders.

The Consultation Center of Athens of the General Secretariat of Equality which is located in the Syntagma area, at 11 Nikis Street, tel. 210-3317305/6; the Piraeus Center is located at, 76 Alkiviadou Street, 210-4112091. The shelter located in the Athens area may accommodate 15 women and their children. The shelter is located in Piraeus, may accommodate 10 women and their children. Shelters for women victims of violence and their children operate in Athens and in Thessaloniki. Information about the location of the shelters is provided only to the victims, who may be accommodated with their children on a walk-in-basis, depending on the case. The domestic 24-hour SOS telephone line for victims of violence is 197; most of the operators speak English.

The following are some emergency programs for domestic violence located in the Athens area. The three programs provided below help victims of violence, including domestic violence.

- EKKA - National Center of Social Solidarity- 135 Vas. Sophias & Zaharof Streets, 115 21 Athens, tel. 213-2039778, **SOS line: 197**.
- General Secretariat of Gender Equality, 11 Nikis Str, 105 57 Athens, tel. 210-3317305/6, 210-3315291/5, www.isotita.gr, email: isotita4@otenet.gr, **SOS line: 15900**. They have shelters for victims of violence, as well as specialized staff to assist in every case.
- European Network of Women, provide assistance to victims of domestic violence, tel. 210-641-1449, **SOS line: 210-9700814**, <http://www.enow.gr>, e-mail: nroubani@gmail.com

In Thessaloniki, the following programs are available:

- EKKA: National Center of Social Solidarity: Ethnikis Antistaseos & Thiseos St., Terma Finika, tel. 2310-471101, **SOS line: 197** and 4 Nikou Kapatou St., Xirokrini area, tel. 2313-3313800
- Antigone, 4 Posidonos Str, 542 50 Thessaloniki, tel .2310-409770, www.antigone.gr, info@antigone.gr

SPECIAL INFORMATION FOR CASES OF CHILD ABUSE: The Directorate for the Protection of the Family, part of the Ministry of Health and Welfare, is responsible for the protection of children. The Public Prosecutor's Office for Juveniles (tel. 210-8827993, Athens Court House, Sxoli Evelpidon, Athens) investigates allegations of child abuse. The Public prosecutor has juvenile protection offices in most Greek cities. Suspected child abuse may be reported by local social services, teachers, or private individuals who have reasons to believe that a child is being abused. School teachers and any social service are required to report suspected abuse cases to the juvenile protection society. In cases that the District Attorney decides the removal of the child from home, a child in place under the custody and protection of one of the several social services located in Athens and Piraeus area.

Under the auspices of the Ministry of Health there are many centers for children's care in Greece, in addition to non-governmental organizations. Among them are:

SOS children village, 6 Ermou Str., 105 63 Athens, tel. 210-3238048, 210-3313661/3
Pendeli Recuperation Center, Terma Ippokratous Str., 152 36 Pendeli, 213-2059800/10

The Smile of the Child (NGO), 16 Stournari Str., 106 83 Athens, tel. 210-3845261 and in Thessaloniki at 82 Egnatia Str., 546 23 Thessaloniki, tel. 2310-250160

Arsis (NGO), 35 Ptolemeon Str., 546 30 Thessaloniki, 2310-526150

There are three children hospitals located in the Athens area that evaluate and provide medical and psychological treatment to children who have been abused. Two of the hospitals are located in Goudi, 115 27 Athens; "Agia Sophia" hospital (210-7467000)

and Aglaia Kyriakou hospital (213-2009000). The third is the General State Hospital for Children and is located at 8 Ippokratous Street, 152 36 Pendeli, tel. 213-2052200.

Physically and sexually abused children are evaluated by these hospitals with the assistance of the forensic service. The statute of limitations does not apply to crimes involving child abuse. A child is not expected to testify at court which relies on evidence and reports provided by the experts who have evaluated the child's physical and psychological condition.

SPECIAL INFORMATION FOR CASES OF KIDNAPPING: (N/A)

SPECIAL INFORMATION FOR CASES OF HOMICIDE: An autopsy is always required in homicide cases. Family members may participate in the prosecution. There are no special requirements for handling the estate of a homicide victim when a family member is in Greece or travels to Greece from the United States. In cases where there is no next of-kin present, local authorities turn the personal effects of the victim to the diplomatic authorities of his/her country. The Directorate of Public Security of the Hellenic Police is responsible for the investigation of homicides, 210-6476237, 210-6445810, 210-6449168.

NOTE: Further, for any emergency situation while travelling in Europe, please call the European Emergency number **112**, if you wish to communicate with the ambulance, police, fire brigade, or coastguard service. Your call will be answered free of charge, in English.