

**March 21, 2012**  
**Security Message to U.S. Citizens**

### **Recent Criminal Tactics Used in Asuncion**

In light of increased reports of home invasions in Asuncion, the U.S. Embassy reminds U.S. citizens residing in Paraguay to be aware of their surroundings at all times and keep the following information in mind.

#### Home Invasions

Robbers usually enter a residence when the pedestrian or garage gates have been left open while someone is doing chores outside, such as sweeping the sidewalk, watering the lawn, removing trash, etc. Remind your family members and staff that residential gates and doors should never, under any circumstances, be left open, and garage doors and pedestrian entrances should be locked at all times. Thieves are opportunistic, and can quickly gain entry into your home.

#### Vehicle Vandalism and Robberies

The Paraguayan National Police informed us of two tactics criminals use to rob unsuspecting victims:

- Thieves frequently place sharp objects under tires of vehicles parked at supermarkets, shopping malls, etc. When the driver departs, the object deflates a tire. Once the driver realizes they have a flat, they pull to the side of the road. The thieves approach to offer assistance. When the driver accepts assistance and exits the vehicle, the thieves rob the driver and any passengers of all their belongings. In several cases, the driver was transported in a separate vehicle to their residence, which was subsequently robbed.
- Thieves routinely place fruit (lemons, limes) in the tailpipes of vehicles that are parked at supermarkets, shopping malls, etc. When the driver departs, they soon have engine trouble. Once again, when the driver pulls over, the thieves approach to offer assistance. When the driver gets out, the thieves rob the driver and any passengers of all their belongings.

Before getting in your car, make a quick inspection to ensure your vehicle has not been tampered with. If your car develops tire or engine problems while driving, attempt to safely continue to a populated, well-lit area and contact the police. Tell them where you are, and request that a patrol be dispatched to your location until your vehicle is serviced or repaired, to ensure that you are not being targeted by thieves.

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U.S. citizens who travel to or reside in Paraguay are encouraged to enroll in the [State Department's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#). U.S. citizens without internet access may enroll directly with the U.S. Embassy in Asuncion. By enrolling, you make it easier for the

U.S. Embassy to contact you in case of an emergency. Stay up to date by bookmarking our [Bureau of Consular Affairs website](#), which contains the current [Travel Warnings](#) and [Travel Alerts](#) as well as the [Worldwide Caution](#). Follow us on [Twitter](#) and the Bureau of Consular Affairs page on [Facebook](#). You can also download our free [Smart Traveler iPhone App](#) to have travel information at your fingertips.

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The U.S. Embassy also encourages U.S. citizens to review "[A Safe Trip Abroad](#)," which includes valuable security information for those both living and traveling abroad. In addition to information on the Internet, travelers may obtain up-to-date information on security conditions by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll-free in the U.S. and Canada or outside the U.S. and Canada on a regular toll line at 1-202-501-4444.