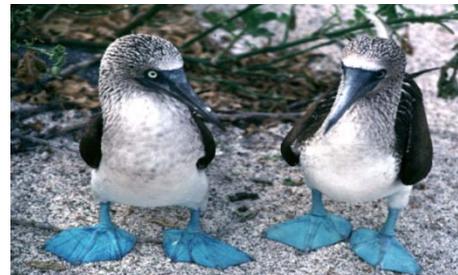




Warden Handbook



United States Embassy
Quito, Ecuador

2011 Warden Conference
June 3, 2011



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Embassy of the United States of America

Quito, Ecuador
Consular Section



Esteemed Warden,

The American Citizen Services Section of the United States Embassy in Quito, Ecuador, would like to thank you for your cooperation and assistance as a Warden. Your role is very important to the health and safety of U.S. citizens living and traveling in Ecuador. This information packet contains useful information regarding your duties and responsibilities as a Warden.

A Warden is a private U.S. citizen who volunteers to assist the American Citizen Services section in communicating with Americans in Ecuador, preparing for disasters and alerting Americans to emergency situations. Warden Systems provide a reliable way to reach American citizens in the event of an emergency as well as facilitate the distribution of routine administrative information. Wardens provide updates on ongoing events to Americans in their district and organizations and assist in the enrollment of newcomers in the Department of State's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) program. In emergencies, Wardens may be called upon to help locate missing Americans, or visit an American citizen in a jail or hospital.

In part because of your efforts, a viable contact system has been developed that has greatly enhanced the Embassy's ability to reach U.S. citizens. In case of emergency, your assistance will help us get in contact with the other Americans who live in Ecuador, and keep the American community united.

In the meantime, please visit the Department of State's Country Specific Information Sheet on Ecuador included in this packet. You can also find it online at: <http://travel.state.gov>. It contains a wealth of information on health, safety and security, entry/exit requirements, etc. It is the first stop for any question or concern regarding Ecuador. Please feel free to pass this information on to all U.S. citizens in Ecuador. Your help is very much appreciated.

Please do not hesitate to contact us at ACSQuito@state.gov with any questions or concerns.

AVIGIRAS E12-170 Y AVE. ELOY ALFARO • QUITO, ECUADOR

PHONE: (593-2) 398-5000 • FAX: (593-2) 398-5268

EMAIL: ACSQUITO@STATE.GOV

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Warden Information and Responsibilities

WHAT IS A WARDEN SYSTEM? A Warden System consists of responsible individuals (usually U.S. citizens) in a foreign country who keep U.S. citizens in the area informed of news and safety information, specifically in times of crisis or natural disaster. Information is disseminated by the Embassy to the Warden to pass on to others. The term “Warden System” is derived from World War II when “air raid wardens” alerted citizens to emergencies.

HOW DOES A WARDEN SYSTEM WORK? Originally, a Warden System consisted of a pyramid of individuals having access to private telephones and residing in areas of concentrated U.S. populations abroad. One person would call other people in his or her area, usually members of organizations such as missionaries, schools or private companies. Today, other modern methods of communication are utilized including a combination of cellular telephone, email, high frequency radio, SMS texting and social networking websites.

The Embassy sends all communications, from news letters to warden messages, directly to registered Americans via email. In addition, we post all communications on our website as soon as they are issued.

WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE WARDEN OR ALTERNATIVE? Wardens play a key role in the providing urgent information to U.S. citizens abroad in time of crisis. As private citizen volunteers, they are part of our consular lifeline to U.S. citizens in distress.

Warden responsibilities include:

- Preparing, updating and maintaining a list of phone numbers and addresses (including email addresses) of U.S. citizens residing in the Wardens’ area.
- Encouraging all U.S. citizens to enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program at: www.travel.state.gov.
- Appointing at least one secondary or alternate Warden who can substitute for the primary Warden in his or her absence. Provide the alternative Warden with copies of lists of U.S. citizens within the area of responsibility. Ensure that the alternate is well versed in the primary Warden's responsibilities.

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- Assisting the American Citizens Services section of the U.S. Embassy in selecting assembly areas and movement routes for use in the event of an evacuation in the Wardens' area. Share this information with U.S. citizens in the area.
- In remote areas where Internet access is limited, Wardens can provide instructions and forms for routine consular services. Wardens can also perform some functions on behalf of the Embassy to assist Americans in distress. For example, if the Consular Section receives a report that an American has been injured far from the capital, the Consular Section could ask a Warden in the area to visit the injured person in the hospital and report back on his/her condition.
- As local residents, some Wardens may have useful contacts that they can call on for information and/or assistance in their areas. They can provide advice or information on local conditions to the Consular Office or perform specific services, such as taking possession of a deceased's American's belongings.

During an emergency:

- In the event of an emergency, all or some forms of electronic communication may fail. If internet service is interrupted, the Wardens will be asked to contact U.S. citizens in their areas by telephone and report back to the Embassy. If the primary Warden expects to be unavailable, ensure that the alternate is available to carry out the Warden's responsibilities.
- If telephone service is interrupted but it is safe to go outside, the Wardens will be requested to contact Americans in their zones in person, if possible, and report back to the Embassy.
- For this reason, it is essential that the Embassy and Wardens keep their lists of American citizens updated at all times. Please inform the Embassy of arrivals and departures of American citizens that you become aware of in your geographic area and regularly update the list of names, street addresses, phone/fax numbers, and email addresses in your Warden zone.
- Wardens can communicate with the American Citizen Services by emailing ACSQuito@state.gov or calling 398-5000.

The U.S. Embassy greatly appreciates the hard work and assistance of its Wardens. Please contact us with questions or for more information.



American Citizen Services – Hours of Service for 2011

All ACS services except for emergencies are done by appointment. This includes services such as renewal or first-time U.S. passports, notary services, Reports of Birth Abroad, adding extra visa pages to U.S. passports and other public services.

American citizens can visit the Embassy without an appointment **ONLY IN AN EMERGENCY** or when in need of assistance with federal benefits, adoptions or re-entry permits. **No services, emergency or otherwise, are provided between 12:00 and 12:45 p.m.** Our hours of service are:

- **General American Citizen Services**
Includes U.S. Passport applications, Reports of Birth Abroad, and other services
Telephone Inquiries: Monday – Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.
Appointments: Monday – Thursday from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. through the Embassy Web site: <http://ecuador.usembassy.gov>
- **Notary Services**
Includes Affidavits of Marriage, Witness Statements and other Sworn Statements
Telephone Inquiries: Monday – Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.
Appointments: Monday and Thursday from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. through the Embassy Web site: <http://ecuador.usembassy.gov>
- **Immigrant Visas, Adoptions and Re-entry Permits**
Telephone Inquiries: Monday – Thursday from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.
IV Appointments: Tuesday and Thursday from 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. through the Call Center at: 1-800-010-145
Adoptions and Re-entry Permits: Walk-ins Monday – Thursday from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.
- **Federal Benefits**
Includes Social Security, Veterans Affairs and Civil Service
Telephone Inquiries: Monday – Thursday from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. and Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.
Walk-ins: Tuesday and Wednesday from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Email: FBUQuito@state.gov

For all inquiries, American citizens may visit the ACS Web site at: <http://ecuador.usembassy.gov> .

Last updated: March 2011

Ecuador Country Specific Information



COUNTRY DESCRIPTION: Ecuador is a Spanish-speaking country about the size of Colorado. It has a democratically-elected government and national assembly. Ecuador is geographically and ethnically diverse. In general, tourist facilities are adequate but vary in quality. Ecuador has used the U.S. dollar as its official currency since 2000. Both U.S. coins and Ecuadorian coins, which are equivalent to the value of the U.S. coins, are used. Read the Department of State's [Background Notes on Ecuador](#) for additional information.

Please visit our section on the [Galapagos Islands](#) for more information.

SMART TRAVELER ENROLLMENT PROGRAM (STEP)/EMBASSY LOCATION: If you are going to live in or visit Ecuador, please take the time to let our Embassy or Consulate General know when you'll be here. If you enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP), we can keep you up to date with important safety and security announcements. It will also help your friends and family get in touch with you in an emergency.

AVIGIRAS E12-170 Y AVE. ELOY ALFARO • QUITO, ECUADOR
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Local Embassy information is available below and at the [Department of State's list of Embassies and Consulates](#) General.

[The U.S. Embassy in Quito](#)

Address for visitors:

Ave. Avigiras E12-170 y Ave. Eloy Alfaro; Quito, Ecuador

Address for local mail and package delivery:

Ave. Guayacanes N52-205 y Ave. Avigiras; Quito, Ecuador

Telephone during business hours (8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.): (011) 593-2-398-5000

Emergency after-hours telephone: (011) 593-2-398-5000

Facsimile: (011) 593-2-398-5100

In order to provide better customer service and reduce waiting times, the Consular Section in Quito uses an online appointment system for passport renewals, first-time passports and additional passport pages, reports of birth abroad, notaries, immigrant visas, adoptions and re-entry permits. Appointments are required to submit your application for these services. You can find more information, including how to schedule an appointment, at the [U.S. Embassy's American Citizen Services website](#). We accept walk-ins Monday through Thursday between 1:00 and 3:00 p.m. only for emergencies or for reports of death or to pick up passports and reports of birth abroad. All other services require an appointment.

[The U.S. Consulate General in Guayaquil](#)

Address for visitors, local mail and packages:

9 de Octubre y Garcia Moreno; Guayaquil, Ecuador

Telephone during business hours (8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.): (011) 593-4-232-3570

Emergency after-hours telephone: (011) 593-4-232-1152

Facsimile: (011) 593-4-232-0904

The American Citizen Services section in Guayaquil uses an online appointment system for passport renewals, first-time passport issuances, insertion of additional passport pages, and reports of birth abroad. Notary appointments are Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., excluding United States and Ecuadorian holidays. Walk-in service for those with questions regarding Social Security is available from 8:00 to 11:00 a.m., Monday through Thursday. All other walk-in service remains available for emergencies only. For more information, and to make an appointment, visit Guayaquil's [American Citizen Services website](#).

Galápagos Islands: The Galápagos Islands fall within the consular district of the U.S. Consulate General in Guayaquil, Ecuador. The U.S. Government also maintains a U.S. Consular Agent within the Galápagos Islands to provide support in case of U.S. citizen emergencies.

U.S. Consular Agent to the Galápagos Islands: Mr. Jack Nelson

Location: Av. Charles Darwin, Puerto Ayora, Santa Cruz Island

(At the former Hotel Galápagos)

Telephone: (05)252-6330 (From the United States, dial 011-593-5-252-6330)

Cellphone: 091-33-4815 (From the United States, dial 011-593-9-133-4815)

[Contact the Consular Agent by E-mail](#)

Travelers to the Galapagos Islands have experienced safety-related problems in the past. For important information regarding safety in the Galapagos Islands, read the “Threats to Safety and Security” section below. Additional information about travel and resources in the Galapagos Islands is included below as well.

U.S. citizens living in or traveling to the Galápagos Islands are encouraged to sign up for the [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#) (STEP) in order to obtain updated information on local travel and security. U.S. citizens without Internet access may sign up directly with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate General. Enrolling is important; it allows the State Department to assist U.S. citizens in an emergency.

ENTRY/EXIT REQUIREMENTS FOR U.S. CITIZENS: If you are a U.S. traveler wishing to enter Ecuador, you must present a U.S. passport with at least six months remaining validity. Ecuadorian customs officials also require evidence of return or onward travel, such as an airline ticket. If you are traveling on a regular passport for tourism or business, you will not need a visa for a stay of 90 days or fewer per 12-month period. There are no provisions for a tourist to remain longer than 90 days per 12-month period in Ecuador. If you are planning a visit longer than 90 days, you must obtain a visa in advance of your arrival. More detailed information and requirements for visas in Ecuador can be found at the [website of Ecuador's Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#). [Visit the Embassy of Ecuador's website](#) for the most current visa information, or for further information regarding entry, exit or customs requirements.

The [Ecuadorian Embassy](#) is located at 2535 15th Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20009, telephone (202) 234-7200. Consulates are located in [Atlanta](#) (404) 746-5859; [Boston](#) (781) 400-1212; [Chicago](#) (312) 338-1002/03, fax (312) 338-1004; [Dallas](#) (972) 712-9107; [Houston](#) (713) 572-8731; [Jersey City](#) (973) 344-8837; [Las Vegas](#) (702) 384-8802; [Los Angeles](#) (323) 658-5146, (323) 658-6020, fax (323) 658-1198; [Miami](#) (305) 539-8215; [Minneapolis](#) (612) 721-6468; [Newark, NJ](#) (973) 344-6900; [New Haven](#) (203) 752-1947; [New Orleans: \(504\) 523-3229](#); [New York City](#) (212) 808-0331; Queens (718) 651-8797; Phoenix (602) 693 5892; [San Francisco](#) (415) 982-1819; [San Juan, Puerto Rico](#) (787) 999-5226 or Tampa (561) 544-8946. **If your U.S. passport is lost or stolen in Ecuador**, you must obtain a police report (“denuncia”) of the loss or theft to obtain a new passport at the U.S. Embassy in Quito or the U.S. Consulate General in Guayaquil. After obtaining a new passport and before departing Ecuador, you will also need to obtain an official record of your arrival and legal status in Ecuador (“Movimiento Migratorio”). You can do this by presenting both your replacement passport and the police report to the main immigration office in either Quito or Guayaquil. Ecuadorian Immigration charges a \$5 fee for this service. The American Citizens Services section can suggest the most convenient location for you depending on your situation.

The closest Immigration Office to the U.S. Embassy in Quito is:
Av. Amazonas N32-171 y Av. República (across from El Jardin Mall)

Telephone: (02)-245-4122 / 246-9216
General Email: info@migracion.gov.ec

In Guayaquil, the closest location to the U.S. Consulate General is:
Jefatura Provincial de Migracion y Extranjeria
Av. Jaime Roldos Aguilera (across from Guayaquil bus terminal, or Terminal Terrestre)
Phone: (04) 213-0010

In order to depart Ecuador, you must present a valid U.S. passport. If you are departing via airplane, you will be charged an airport tax; the price depends on the city from which you depart. From Guayaquil, the departure tax is \$29.78 and from Quito the departure tax is \$40.80. Effective February 8, 2011, the airport tax to depart Ecuador is included in the price of your departure airline ticket. There is no charge to leave the airport in the Galapagos Islands. If you stay in Ecuador beyond 90 days or beyond the terms of your visa, you will be barred from re-entering Ecuador for nine consecutive months from the date of your departure. If you are a traveler seeking to depart Ecuador and your overstay began prior to April 18, 2010, a substantial fine may be imposed by Ecuadorian Immigration prior to your departure.

Special Exit Requirements for Minors: To prevent international child abduction, Ecuadorian law mandates that minors (under the age of 18) *who are citizens or residents of Ecuador* and who are traveling alone, with one parent, or with a third party, must present a copy of their birth certificate and written authorization from the absent parent(s) or legal guardian. When a parent is deceased, a notarized copy of the death certificate is required in lieu of the written authorization. If documents are prepared in the United States, the authorization and the birth certificate must be translated into Spanish, notarized and authenticated by the Ecuadorian Embassy or an Ecuadorian Consulate in the United States. It is not uncommon for local authorities to insist that these documents be apostilled (authenticated) by the Central Authority of the same U.S. state that issued the document (the Central Authority is part of the U.S. state's government, and is usually located in the capital of that state). The U.S. Embassy and Consulate General do not have the authority to apostille documents. If the documents are prepared in Ecuador, only notarization by an Ecuadorian notary is required. This paragraph does not apply to children who enter Ecuador with U.S. passports as tourists, unless they hold dual U.S./Ecuadorian citizenship.

Dual Nationality: Children born in Ecuadorian territory are automatically considered Ecuadorian citizens at birth. Therefore, a baby born to U.S. citizen parents in Ecuador – regardless of whether the baby qualifies as a U.S. citizen – is an Ecuadorian citizen and must depart Ecuador for the first time using an Ecuadorian passport. In order to do so, parents should first obtain an Ecuadorian birth certificate at their local [Civil Registry](#) office and then obtain a national ID card (“cedula”) for the child. With these documents, parents can apply for an Ecuadorian passport. Subsequent to the first trip out of the country, a dual national child may re-enter Ecuador either as an Ecuadorian citizen or as a U.S. citizen (as a tourist or on a particular visa). If the child's U.S. passport states that he or she was born in Ecuador, Ecuadorian immigration authorities will treat him or her as a dual national and will allow the child to enter Ecuador on the U.S. passport alone, provided the child presents their Ecuadorian passport as well upon departure. For additional information, visit the Ecuadorian Ministry of Foreign

Affairs' [Travel Documents](#) website. Information about [dual nationality](#) or the [prevention of international child abduction](#) can be found on our website.

Reimbursement of Value Added Taxes: Beginning in 2011, the Government of Ecuador began a program to reimburse tourists for IVA (Impuesto al Valor Agregado) paid on hotel bills and on the purchase of national products of more than \$50 in value. Only purchases made at businesses displaying the tax-free logo and properly documented on the receipt (factura) for \$50 and above can be reimbursed.

The Government of Ecuador is still working out the details of how the claim will be made. Please see the [Internal Revenue Service of Ecuador's website](#) for more information. A current list of [participating businesses](#) can also be found at the program's website.

The U.S. Department of State is unaware of any HIV/AIDS entry restrictions for visitors to or foreign residents of Ecuador.

Customs Regulations: Ecuadorian law imposes strict limitations concerning temporary importation into or export from Ecuador on items such as firearms, religious materials, antiquities, medications, electronic equipment, currency and donated goods. If you would like to import certain goods to Ecuador, contact the [Embassy of Ecuador in Washington, D.C.](#), or one of Ecuador's Consulates in the United States for specific information regarding customs requirements. Also see the U.S. Embassy in Quito's [Customs Information](#) sheet.

THREATS TO SAFETY AND SECURITY: For information about the realities of crime in Ecuador, including the ongoing, serious problem of express kidnapping ("secuestro express"), please see the "Crime" section below.

Political demonstrations occur frequently throughout Ecuador. During demonstrations, protesters often block city streets and rural highways, including major arteries such as the Pan American Highway. Public transportation is often disrupted during these events. Protesters sometimes burn tires, throw rocks, damage cars and other personal property and on occasion detonate small improvised explosive devices. Police response to demonstrations varies and has included water cannons and tear gas. U.S. citizens and U.S.-affiliated interests are not usually targeted, but you should avoid areas where demonstrations are in progress and be prepared with back-up transportation plans. Although political demonstrations have not been directed at foreigners in the past, peaceful demonstrations can turn violent with little or no warning, and you could become a target. Foreigners are prohibited from protesting in Ecuador and you could be arrested for participating in a demonstration.

Ecuadorian authorities sometimes declare a state of emergency or "exception" in provinces and regions affected by civil unrest, natural disaster or other disruptions. During a state of emergency or exception, authorities are permitted to exercise expanded powers to restore order. They sometimes suspend certain constitutional rights, expand detention powers or impose curfews. In late 2009 and early 2010 in response to rising crime, the Ecuadorian government issued a state of exception covering Quito, Guayaquil and Manta. After the police protests on September 30, 2010, the government

declared a state of exception for several months, ending in December. In neither of these states of exception did the government suspend constitutional rights, but the declarations gave the armed forces license to work with the police on anti-crime initiatives. For more information about natural disasters in Ecuador, see the “Special Circumstances” section below.

Due to the spread of organized crime, drug trafficking, small arms trafficking and incursions by various terrorist organizations in the regions of Ecuador bordering Colombia, the U.S. Embassy in Quito advises caution when traveling in this region of Ecuador (including the provinces of Sucumbios, northern Orellana, Carchi and northern Esmeraldas). U.S. Government personnel are under strict limitations with respect to traveling alone or over-nighting in these areas. In October 2009, a U.S. citizen was kidnapped and held for ransom for three weeks near Ecuador's border with Colombia. At least 11 U.S. citizens are known to have been victims of kidnapping in this region over the past decade, including one U.S. citizen who was murdered by his kidnappers in January 2001.

Strong Surf on Coastal Ecuador’s Beaches: If you travel to Ecuador’s beach areas, be aware that strong currents, undertow, and underwater hazards exist in many of Ecuador’s coastal areas. These dangers are infrequently posted and not always obvious. Most beaches lack staffed lifeguard stations. Take safety precautions when surfing, boating or swimming, as drowning and near-drowning accidents have occurred.

The Galápagos archipelago is located more than 600 miles to the west of continental Ecuador. Geographic isolation and the lack of local resources may present challenges to those who choose to travel to the Galápagos Islands. Poor marine safety, rudimentary medical facilities, and difficulty of evacuation are the key problems U.S. citizen travelers may encounter.

The U.S. Embassy in Quito and U.S. Consulate General in Guayaquil strongly recommend that U.S. visitors to the Galápagos Islands [enroll online through the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#) prior to their trip, and to always leave an emergency contact with their hotel or tour operator.

A significant number of Ecuadorian tour vessels operating in the Galápagos Islands are neither inspected nor operated in accordance with U.S. regulations, and do not meet U.S. safety standards. The Government of Ecuador requires that vessels carrying more than 16 passengers comply with the International Safety Management (ISM) code established by the International Maritime Organization. However, the quality of inspections, oversight, crewmember proficiency evaluation and other requisites for safe vessel operation may vary substantially. Travelers should inquire about safety features when boarding vessels. Be sure to look for the life boats, flotation devices and, if possible, take a moment to inspect the life vest you would be using if there were an accident.

In past emergency situations, including the February 2010 tsunami warning (following the earthquake in Chile) that prompted preventive evacuation orders by local authorities, the U.S. Consulate General in Guayaquil received unconfirmed reports that several hotels failed to inform visitors of the potential threat or to take appropriate actions to ensure the safety and welfare of their guests. In some cases, travelers reported to the Consulate General that hotel staff evacuated themselves only and locked

guests inside the hotel premises. In other cases, travelers reported that hotels charged guests to transport them to safety in the highlands. In the March 2011 tsunami warning (following the earthquake in Japan), evacuation orders were much more thoroughly enforced by Ecuadorian officials, and most hotels were reportedly in compliance. We encourage visitors to the islands to take safety considerations into account when choosing a hotel, and to ask about the steps that will be taken in case evacuation from coastal areas becomes necessary. We also encourage you to check the [U.S. Consulate General in Guayaquil's website](#) for updated information on hotel safety in the Galápagos Islands.

Fishing in the Galápagos Marine Reserve is highly controlled by local authorities, and illegal fishing can result in fines and/or jail time. Visitors interested in fishing in the Galápagos should check with the Galápagos National Park prior to engaging in these activities to ensure consistency with local law. Travelers are advised to secure all parts of their bags thoroughly before checking them on flights to the Galápagos. International visitors who attempt to smuggle out the islands' plants and animals in their luggage or on their person face serious sanctions and jail time.

Please see the [Embassy's security and safety page](#), or the [security and safety page of the U.S. Consulate General in Guayaquil](#) for the latest safety and security messages. U.S. citizens may also keep informed of daily happenings by following the local media.

Stay up-to-date by bookmarking our [Bureau of Consular Affairs website](#), which contains 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](#) as well.

You can also call 1-888-407-4747 toll-free within the United States and Canada, or by calling a regular toll line, 1-202-501-4444, from other countries. These numbers are available from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays).

Take some time before travel to improve your personal security—things are not the same everywhere as they are in the United States. Here are some useful tips for [traveling safely abroad](#).

CRIME: Crime is a severe problem in Ecuador. Crimes against American citizens in the past year ranged from petty theft to violent crimes, including armed robbery, home invasion and sexual assault. Several U.S. citizens have also been the victims of murder and attempted murder in the last several years with some of the cases still unsolved. Very low rates of apprehension and conviction of criminals – due to limited police and judicial resources – contribute to Ecuador's high crime rate.

Non-violent crimes, including pick-pocketing, purse-snatching, robbery, bag-slashing and hotel room theft are the most common types of crimes committed against U.S. citizens in Ecuador. They occur in all parts of Ecuador and incidents have increased significantly in the past two years. Pickpockets and other petty thieves are particularly active in airports, restaurants, public transportation, crowded streets, bus terminals, public markets and grocery stores. Backpackers are frequently targeted for robbery as are travelers carrying laptop computer bags. On buses, luggage stowed below the bus or at a traveler's feet is sometimes stolen. One particular method used by thieves in Ecuador is to distract

the victim, sometimes by purposefully spilling liquid on the victim and pretending to help the victim clean it up, while accomplices snatch the victim's bag or pick the victim's pocket. Thefts from vehicles ("smash and grabs") have been known to take place not only when the vehicle was unattended, but also when it was occupied, particularly by a single, female driver in slow-moving or stopped traffic.

To lower your risk of being a victim of petty theft or other non-violent crimes, consider leaving valuables and irreplaceable items in a safe place, or not bringing them at all. Make use of hotel safes when available, avoid wearing obviously expensive jewelry or designer clothing, and carry only the cash or credit cards that you will need on each outing. Stay alert to pickpockets when in crowds and when taking public transportation. Also, stay alert to schemes to distract you, which could result in pick-pocketing. We recommend that you do not store your passport in your luggage. Do not drive with or leave anything of value in plain view in a car, including sunglasses, sports equipment, purses, briefcases or valuables. Always be aware of your surroundings, and try to travel in groups.

Armed or violent robberies can occur in all parts of Ecuador. Thieves and small gangs armed with guns or knives are active not only in Quito, Guayaquil and Manta, but also in smaller cities. Multiple U.S. citizen travelers have been robbed after using ATMs on the street and when exiting banks. Travelers should avoid withdrawing large amounts of cash at one time from banks and ATMs. In some cases, robbers have used motorcycles to approach their victims and flee the scene. Tourists have also been robbed at gunpoint on beaches and along hiking trails.

Cellular phones are also a popular target. A study in 2010 indicated that over 4,000 phones were stolen in Ecuador during the calendar year. Higher-end models such as Blackberrys and iPhones can bring a considerable amount on the stolen goods market. There are reportedly hundreds of cell phone dealers in Quito and other parts of the country who will take a stolen phone in trade without requiring paperwork.

"Secuestro Express" Taxi Assaults: Carjackings have occurred in both rural and urban areas. Robberies and assaults involving taxis present a significant safety concern, most specifically in Guayaquil and Manta, but increasingly in Quito since 2009. Foreigners have been and are continuing to be targeted specifically in a particularly dangerous type of crime known as a "secuestro express." Shortly after a rider enters a taxi, the vehicle is intercepted by armed accomplices of the taxi driver, who is normally complicit in the crime. The accomplices enter the vehicle, threaten passengers with weapons (typically guns and/or knives, but also more recently, pepper spray or scopolamine, a "date rape drug"), rob passengers of their personal belongings and then drive to various ATMs and attempt to withdraw money using the victims' debit cards. In some instances, victims of a secuestro express were beaten, tortured and sexually assaulted. In one particularly brutal incident, a U.S. citizen was burned with an aerosol can and lighter to try and extract a pin number for their debit card.

If you find yourself involved in an express kidnapping and/or robbery, it is best to be non-confrontational and cooperate with the perpetrator. Nothing material is as valuable as your life. Following a criminal incident, U.S. citizens are encouraged to immediately file a "denuncia," or "police report," with the local police and to inform the American Citizens Services Office at the U.S. Embassy in Quito or U.S. Consulate General in Guayaquil.

To lower your risk of being a victim of carjacking or “secuestro express,” drive with your doors locked and windows rolled up. In the Guayaquil area, where 842 “secuestro express” cases were reported in 2010, it is recommended that you use radio-operated taxi companies such as [those listed on the U.S. Consulate General’s website](#) instead of hailing taxis on the street (see more information under “Crime: Guayaquil and Coastal Ecuador” below). In areas other than Guayaquil consider using radio-operated taxi companies or taxis associated with hotels. If you must hail a taxi on the street, increase your security by seeking out taxis that are officially registered and in good condition. Registered taxis in Ecuador are usually yellow, display matching unit numbers on the windshields and the side doors, each printed on an orange placard, feature a taxi cooperative name on the side, and are identified with an orange license plate.

Incidents of sexual assault and rape have increased, including in well-traveled tourist areas. In many instances, criminals targeted women who had become separated from their group. Criminals sometimes use alcohol or incapacitating drugs such as scopolamine on unsuspecting tourists in order to rob and/or sexually assault them. So-called “date rape drugs” are put into drinks in order to disorient the victim and can cause prolonged unconsciousness and serious medical problems. To lower your risk of being a victim of sexual assault, travel in groups, be aware of alcohol or drugs, never allow a stranger to buy you a drink or leave your drink unattended.

Murder of U.S. citizens occurs in Ecuador. Often, the suspects or perpetrators of the murders were personally known to the victims. Since September 2009, three brutal murders of U.S. citizens have occurred in Ecuador. The investigations of these murders have not proceeded with the speed and thoroughness we are accustomed to in the United States. The Ecuadorian government has established the following emergency hotline that callers can use to inform police about murders or contract killings. The number is 1-800-DELITO (1800 335486). The U.S. Embassy and Consulate General are also actively involved in pursuing justice in the case of violent crimes against U.S. citizens.

In 2010, there was an increase in the number of reports regarding unauthorized charges made on U.S. credit or debit cards. “Skimming” is the process of stealing credit card information used in an otherwise legitimate transaction, usually by a dishonest employee of a legitimate merchant. The thief obtains a victim’s credit card number using basic methods such as photocopying receipts, or more advanced methods such as using a small electronic device to swipe and store hundreds of victims’ credit/debit card numbers. Common locations for skimming are restaurants or bars where the skimmer has possession of the victim’s credit/debit card out of the owner’s immediate view.

Restaurants are among the most difficult places to keep tabs on your credit/debit card. If you have the opportunity, take the credit/debit card to the register yourself; this is one of the best ways to avoid skimming. If you use a credit/debit card regularly, monitor your bank account or credit card statement frequently. U.S. citizens are advised to be vigilant when making purchases and as much as possible, make sure that you can see your credit/debit card at all times.

Don’t buy counterfeit and pirated goods, even though they are widely available. Not only are these bootlegs illegal in the United States, but if you purchase them, you may also be breaking local law.

Crime in Quito: Stay particularly alert on the crowded streets of south Quito, at the Panecillo, the Historic District and in the areas of El Tejar, Parroquia San Sebastian, Avenida Cristobal Colon and Gonzalez Suarez. Quito's Mariscal Sucre district, a popular tourist area with numerous restaurants, bars, hotels, hostals and shopping sites, is increasingly a site of crimes; reported incidents in recent years range from petty theft to sexual assault to shootings. In the Mariscal Sucre, try to travel in groups when possible, avoid hailing taxis off the street or using unofficial taxis, and exercise caution in the early morning hours. U.S. Government employees and private U.S. citizens have been victimized in the Mariscal Sucre. Outside of the city, stay alert if hiking to the summit of Pichincha as violent crime has been known to occur there. In 2008, groups as large as eight were robbed at gunpoint by masked men and female hikers were sexually assaulted. There have been no reported incidents since 2009.

Crime in Guayaquil and Coastal Ecuador: Throughout coastal Ecuador, the rate of violent crime against U.S. citizens continues to rise, as well. In Guayaquil, visitors should exercise extreme caution in the downtown area, especially at night, and at all times in the street market area of La Bahia, at the Christ Statue (Sagrado Corazon de Jesus) on Cerro del Carmen, in the airport area, the southern part of the city, as well as along Malecón 2000, and the nearby passage up to the lighthouse in the Las Peñas area, popular with both tourists and locals. There have been armed robberies of restaurants and their patrons, including in the fashionable areas of Urdesa and Samborondon as well as at night in Las Peñas. Guayaquil has experienced an increase in kidnappings for ransom, often in connection with vehicular hijackings, although tourists generally have not been targeted.

As mentioned before, there is an alarming number of reports of U.S. citizens who are kidnapped and robbed in taxis in Guayaquil and Manta, incidents known locally as secuestro express, or express kidnappings. Express kidnappings have occurred even in the more affluent areas of Guayaquil, and target both local citizens and international visitors. Incidents involving U.S. citizens are most frequently reported at the north end of the Malecón 2000 near Las Peñas, outside of the San Marino Mall, and in the Urdesa restaurant/bar district, but have been reported in all areas of the city. Incidents have also been reported in the coastal cities of Manta, Playas and Machala.

Due to the seriousness of the taxi situation in Guayaquil, all personnel working for the U.S. Diplomatic Mission in Ecuador have been prohibited from riding in taxis hailed off the street in Guayaquil, even yellow taxis. In addition, local buses, and other forms of public transportation are also expressly off-limits to U.S. diplomatic personnel in Guayaquil. As an alternative, employees have been told to use their personal vehicles or to call one of the [vetted taxi services listed on the U.S. Consulate General's website](#).

It is imperative that U.S. citizens understand the risks associated with using taxis in Guayaquil, how best to avoid dangerous situations, and whom to contact if one becomes a victim of crime. U.S. citizens should avoid hailing taxis on the street, and to exercise caution when selecting a taxi in all areas of Guayaquil, regardless of location or time of day. We strongly encourage U.S. citizens in the Guayaquil area to use only vetted, radio-dispatched taxis, such as those listed [on the U.S. Consulate General's website](#).

Leaving the Guayaquil airport, there have been repeated instances of armed robbers following travelers from the airport and using multiple vehicles to cut off and intercept the traveler. There is some evidence that those most at risk are those individuals who appear to be returning from overseas travel laden with gifts and large amounts of cash.

Every year, between 15 to 20 U.S. citizens are arrested for attempting to traffic drugs between Ecuador and the United States, or between mainland Ecuador and the Galápagos. Suitcases with false bottoms and other packages are common methods of transporting illegal substances. Many of these U.S. citizens claim to have been unaware that they were transporting drugs. As in any other country, do not accept gifts, packages, or suitcases from anyone you do not know and trust; even trusted travel companions have been known to take advantage of their friends and family to traffic drugs through Ecuador's airports. See the "Criminal Penalties" section below for more details about Ecuador's strict laws and sentences regarding illegal drug trafficking.

VICTIMS OF CRIME: If you or someone you know becomes the victim of a crime abroad, you should immediately contact the local police to file a crime report ("denuncia") at the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate General (see the [Department of State's list of Embassies and Consulates General](#)). If in Quito, the Ecuadorian Tourist Security Service has opened a number of [service centers](#) throughout Quito which both provide general information and a location to file police reports.

If your passport is stolen we can help you replace it. For violent crimes such as assault and rape, we can help you find appropriate medical care, contact family members or friends and help them send you money if needed. Although the investigation and prosecution of the crime are solely the responsibility of local authorities, consular officers can help you to understand the local criminal justice process and to find an Ecuadorian attorney.. If you are a victim of domestic violence, regardless of your gender, you may receive assistance from a local branch of the Commissioner's Office for Women and Family Issues, which has a listing of their branches available on [their website](#).

The local equivalents of the "911" emergency line in Ecuador are: 101 (for local police or ambulance, or to be forwarded to other help as appropriate), 102 (for firefighters or ambulance) or 131 (for the local Red Cross). If you are in Quito or Ibarra, you may also dial 911. If you are in Guayaquil, Cuenca or Loja, you should dial 112. The operators typically speak Spanish only.

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

CRIMINAL PENALTIES: While you are traveling in another country, you are subject to its laws even if you are a U.S. citizen. Foreign laws and legal systems can be vastly different than our own. Driving under the influence of alcohol in Ecuador could land you immediately in jail. There are also some things that might be legal in Ecuador, but still illegal in the United States, and you could therefore be prosecuted under U.S. law. Engaging in sexual conduct with children or using or disseminating child pornography in a foreign country is a crime [prosecutable in both Ecuador and the United States](#). If you

break local laws in Ecuador, your U.S. passport will not help you avoid arrest or prosecution. It's very important to know what's legal and what's not where you are going.

If you violate Ecuadorian laws, even unknowingly, you may be expelled, arrested, or imprisoned. Penalties for possessing, using, or trafficking in illegal drugs in Ecuador are severe; jail sentences average eight years. If you are convicted for drug charges, you can expect a long jail sentence and a heavy fine.

Based on the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, bilateral agreements with certain countries, and customary international law, if you are arrested in Ecuador, you have the option to request that the police, prison officials, or other authorities alert the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate General of your arrest. They also should forward your communications to the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate General.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES:

Natural Disaster Preparedness: Ecuador has 30 potentially active volcanoes, including three that are currently erupting. Earthquakes occur frequently, usually with little warning. Tsunamis have occurred as well in coastal areas. If a volcano or earthquake occurs, you could also be affected by failures of transportation, water, communications and power systems due to damage to infrastructure or heavy ash fall. In the case of a volcanic eruption, your flight in or out of an Ecuadorian airport might be cancelled due to airport closures. Ash in the air can also cause potentially serious respiratory problems.

Three active volcanoes within 50-100 kilometers of Quito pose a significant threat to the city: Guagua Pichincha, Cotopaxi and Reventador. In 2002, lava and mudflows caused by Reventador volcano, 90 kilometers northeast of Quito, closed a major Quito/northern-border highway and blanketed Quito with volcanic ash, shutting down the Quito airport for several days.

The town of Baños, a popular tourist destination, is located at the base of the Tungurahua Volcano. Tungurahua has erupted explosively several times in the last decade. A 2006 eruption caused deaths in the rural areas and forced thousands to evacuate their homes. In May, June and again in December of 2010, the volcano registered intense activity, affecting the provinces of Tungurahua, Chimborazo, Guayas, Bolívar and Los Ríos. If you choose to stay overnight in Baños, especially on the western side of the town, be aware that mud or lava flows could pose a significant and immediate threat. Baños has developed an advanced disaster preparedness program. If you are traveling to the city, it is recommended that you familiarize yourself with the plan. Baños' siren system might alert people to evacuate; be ready to evacuate on short notice. If you are in Baños when a volcanic eruption occurs, follow the arrows on the street to reach the evacuation shelters in the "Santa Ana" neighborhood on the east side of town, on the main road out of Baños towards Puyo.

Earthquakes in Ecuador or other countries sometimes trigger tsunamis, which could affect you if you are in a coastal area of Ecuador or on the Galápagos Islands. A tsunami is a series of long ocean waves. Each individual wave crest can last 15 minutes or more and extensively flood coastal areas. The danger can continue for many hours after the initial wave as subsequent waves arrive. Tsunami wave heights

cannot be predicted and the first wave may not be the largest. All shores are at risk no matter which direction they face. Extremely strong and unusual currents can accompany a tsunami. Debris picked up and carried by a tsunami amplifies its destructive power. Simultaneous high tides or high surge can significantly increase the tsunami hazard.

The National Risk Management Secretariat, the [Ecuadorian Geophysical Institute](#) and the Quito City government monitor Ecuadorian volcanoes, earthquakes and tsunamis in Ecuador, issuing regular reports on their activity. In the event of an eruption, pay close attention to the news media for updates on the situation. Further information is available via the internet from the [Ecuadorian Geophysical Institute](#) and the [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration](#).

Legal Status: U.S. citizen travelers in Ecuador are required to carry identification, including proof of U.S. citizenship, at all times. We have not received any recent reports of incidences, but if you are stopped and cannot present evidence of identity and legal status in Ecuador, it is possible that you could be arrested and deported. Because of the frequency of passport theft in Ecuador, you should carry a photocopy of your passport (including the personal data page and the entry stamp and/or visa) rather than the actual passport document.

Legal Disputes: Occasionally, business disputes in Ecuador that would normally be handled by civil litigation in the United States are converted into criminal proceedings, especially when one party is charged with fraud. If you are charged with fraud or any other criminal charge while in Ecuador, you might be prohibited from departing the country, arrested and incarcerated while awaiting a hearing of your case.

When considering purchasing property in Ecuador, be aware that competing claims to property sometimes surface after an apparently legal sale has been made. Deficiencies in the Ecuadorian system for surveying and registering property and weaknesses in the judicial system can mean that these disputes can last years. In several cases in the past few years, U.S. citizen land owners in Ecuador were threatened with physical harm and/or confiscation of their property by individuals claiming rights to the land. In at least one case, a building located on the land was razed. If you are considering buying property in Ecuador, carefully research land title issues. We also strongly recommend hiring a competent attorney before making a purchase.

Accessibility: While in Ecuador, individuals with disabilities may find accessibility and accommodation very different from what you expect in the United States. The constitution of Ecuador prohibits discrimination against persons with physical and mental disabilities in employment, education, access to health care, and the provision of other state services. The interagency National Council on Disabilities oversees government policies regarding persons with disabilities. Although the law mandates access to buildings for persons with disabilities, the government does not fully enforce it.

The new constitution extends benefits to persons with disabilities, particularly in the areas of education, employment, and access to social security. The law requires the hiring of persons with disabilities in all public and private enterprises with more than 25 employees. An initiative, "Ecuador

without Barriers," led by the Vice President, helped create an unspecified number of jobs for persons with disabilities.

MEDICAL FACILITIES AND HEALTH INFORMATION: You can readily obtain adequate medical and dental care in the major cities of Ecuador. In smaller communities and in the Galápagos Islands, services are limited, and the quality varies and is generally below U.S. standards. Ambulances, with or without trained emergency staff, are in short supply in cities, but even more so in rural areas.

Pharmacies are readily available in any city. However, you might find that the availability of some medications is sporadic, and formulations and brand names will differ from products available in the United States. Narcotics and tranquilizers are extremely limited in availability. Pharmacy staff sometimes prescribe and dispense medications. These individuals often have little training and prescribe broad-spectrum antibiotics and other inappropriate medications. You should not seek medical advice from them. Folk healers and traditional markets offer herbal and folk remedies. You should exercise caution when exploring these remedies, as the formulations can be questionable and some components may interact with other prescription medications.

Malaria, dengue and yellow fever (which are transmitted by mosquitoes below 7,500 feet of altitude for Yellow Fever, and below 5000 feet for malaria and dengue), leishmaniasis (which is transmitted by sand flies), Chagas disease (which is transmitted by triatomine bugs) and tuberculosis (which is transmitted from person to person via respiratory droplets) are all endemic in Ecuador. Primary prevention (using insect repellants, clothing treated with permethrin and bed nets) helps to protect from all insect borne diseases.

In Ecuador, yellow fever is only found in the Amazon basin. Ecuadorian authorities might require you to show a certificate of yellow fever vaccination when entering or leaving this area, or when continuing travel to other areas of South America. Yellow fever vaccine is encouraged prior to departure from the United States and may be obtained in Guayaquil from the Jefatura Provincial de Salud, Panama y Padre Aguirre, (tel): 230-3160, Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. The vaccine is free if the traveler does not need an international certification, otherwise it costs \$10.40. Antimalarial medication significantly reduces the risk of contracting malaria. There are neither vaccines nor prophylactic medications for dengue, leishmaniasis or Chagas. If you become ill with fever or flu-like symptoms while traveling in a high-risk area, you should promptly seek medical attention. As the onset of these diseases may be delayed, continue taking this precaution for up to a year after leaving the affected areas.

Tuberculosis is an increasingly serious health concern in Ecuador. For further information, please [consult the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#).

The UV index registered in Ecuador – not only in the highlands, but also on the coast and in the Galápagos Islands – has been extremely high for the past several years. Sunscreen, hats and clothing that covers the skin can help you protect against strong UV rays.

You can find good information on vaccinations and other health precautions on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([CDC website](#)). For information about outbreaks of infectious diseases abroad, consult the [World Health Organization \(WHO\) website](#). The WHO website also contains additional health information for travelers, including [detailed country-specific health information](#).

Highlands: If you travel to Quito (close to 9,400 feet) or other highland areas, you will typically require some time to adjust to the altitude, which can adversely affect your blood pressure, digestion and energy level. Consult with your personal health care providers before undertaking high-altitude travel as there are medications available to help combat the effects. If you have heart or lung problems or the sickle cell trait, you may develop serious health complications at high altitudes. If you plan to travel to extreme high altitudes (greater than 10,000 feet), for example, mountain climbing, take precautions to avoid High Altitude Illness.

Galápagos Islands: Located on the equator, the Galápagos Islands have a hot, tropical climate. Travelers should be prepared for high temperatures and intense sun, and must negotiate rocky, uneven terrain at some visitor sites. Visitors should carry potable water with them and remain well hydrated. Consumption of local tap water is not recommended in the Galápagos or anywhere in Ecuador. Medical resources in the Galápagos Islands are severely limited. Acute surgical, cardiac, and other types of specialty medicine are not available. There are two hospitals, located on Santa Cruz and San Cristobal Islands. These facilities have limited personnel and resources, and often do not have the basic medical supplies required to treat serious injuries. Some cruise ships have on-board physicians available for fee-based services.

Serious injury or illness in the Galápagos typically requires costly medical evacuation to the Ecuadorian mainland or the United States for treatment. Transiting by boat between Puerto Ayora and remote islands such as Darwin or Wolf can take approximately 22 hours. In the case of an incident at or around these remote islands, those affected may find themselves more than 24 hours away from even basic medical treatment at a local hospital facility. Medical evacuations by air ambulance are costly (as much as \$50,000 or more) and take significant time to arrange. For that reason, the purchase of traveler's health insurance that includes air evacuation is strongly recommended.

Scuba divers in the Galápagos Islands should be aware of limited facilities for decompression. A privately-owned hyperbaric chamber is available in Puerto Ayora on Santa Cruz Island. In the past, the U.S. Consulate General in Guayaquil has received complaints that divers suffering symptoms of the bends were not able to obtain prompt access to the hyperbaric chamber in Puerto Ayora. The Ecuadorian Navy operates a second decompression chamber at the San Eduardo Naval Base in Guayaquil. Due to the high costs for these services and associated emergency transportation, we strongly advise divers to obtain adequate medical evacuation and diver's insurance.

MEDICAL INSURANCE: You can't assume your insurance will go with you when you travel. It's very important to find out BEFORE you leave whether or not your medical insurance will cover you overseas. You need to ask your insurance company two questions:

--Does my policy apply when I'm out of the United States?

--Will it cover emergencies like a trip to a foreign hospital or a medical evacuation?

In many places, doctors and hospitals still expect payment in cash at the time of service. Your regular U.S. health insurance may not cover doctors and hospital visits in other countries. If your policy does not go with you when you travel, it's a very good idea to take out another one for your trip. For more information, please see our [medical insurance overseas page](#).

Ecuadorian hospitals and health providers do not always accept international travel insurance, preferring to ask for a cash or credit card payment instead. If you are staying in Ecuador on a long-term basis, consider taking out a local insurance plan.

Galápagos Islands: Because serious injury or illness in the Galápagos typically requires costly medical evacuation to the Ecuadorian mainland or the United States for treatment, we strongly recommend that you purchase traveler's health insurance that includes air evacuation.

NOTE: The Social Security Medicare Program does not provide coverage for hospital or medical costs outside of the United States.

TRAFFIC SAFETY AND ROAD CONDITIONS: While in a foreign country, U.S. citizens may encounter road conditions that differ significantly from those in the United States.

Road travel throughout Ecuador can be dangerous, especially at night. Many roads are poorly maintained. Heavy rains and mudslides often close or wash out roads. Heavy fog is common in mountainous areas. Highways are often unmarked and do not have signs indicating destinations. Road safety features such as crash barriers and guardrails along steep mountainsides may be absent. In addition, slow-moving buses and trucks can stop in the road unexpectedly. In the countryside, livestock are often herded along roads or graze on roadsides. Many roads are used for pedestrian and animal traffic as well as vehicular traffic. Speed bumps abound, even on major highways such as the Pan American Highway.

Driving habits vary from region to region; however, country-wide, driving practices differ from U.S. standards and not all drivers obey traffic laws or observe traffic signals. In all areas buses, both intra-city and inter-city, stop at any point on their route to pick up or drop off passengers. Drivers often turn right and left from any lane and do not yield for pedestrians and cyclists. You might encounter intoxicated drivers at any time, though the chances of a drunk driving accident are higher on weekends and during Ecuadorian holidays. Vehicles are reasonably well-maintained. On the coast, drivers have a more lax approach to vehicle maintenance and traffic regulations than in other parts of Ecuador.

If you register a vehicle in Ecuador, you will be required to buy local liability insurance, called SOAT. Whether driving your own vehicle or a rented vehicle, be sure to have proper vehicle registration papers with you. If you are the driver of a vehicle involved in an automobile accident, even if you are not at fault, you may be taken into police custody, especially if injuries are involved and if you do not

have SOAT insurance. In such a case, you are almost certain to spend some time in jail until the local authorities have assigned responsibility and are satisfied that all financial claims (for example, medical treatment bills) have been settled. You may face criminal charges if injuries or damages are serious.

Bus Travelers: Inter-urban and inter-provincial bus passengers are often targets of crime, including robbery and sexual assault. Numerous bus accidents also occur every year in Ecuador, and many buses are overcrowded and unsafe. Ecuador's frontier regions are largely rural, poor, and lack police presence. Because drug traffickers, criminal organizations, and smugglers of all types use clandestine border crossings to move their goods, consider driving on only the the most-traveled highways in these areas. For more information regarding the Ecuadorian border with Colombia, see the "Threats to Security and Safety" section above.

Public transportation in general is a major concern in Guayaquil. Crimes involving the local bus transportation system are also on the rise as armed criminals will board local city buses and rob persons of jewelry, money and other valuables. Often, the crimes are facilitated by minors who are aware that Ecuador has almost no laws punishing minors for these types of crimes. Traveling between cities via tour buses, especially from Guayaquil to the beaches, should be kept to a minimum. There have been some instances in which routes between cities are blocked by criminals, forcing the bus to stop and allowing the criminals to board the bus and rob tourists as well as locals. In one instance in 2010, male passengers on a hijacked tour bus were forced off the bus and locked in the storage compartments under the bus until assistance arrived to release them.

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

Note: The U.S. Embassy and Consulate General cannot apostille U.S. driver's licenses so that they become valid in Ecuador. Apostille services may be requested before departing the United States. Addresses of such locations in each state can be found at the website of the [National Association of Secretaries of State](#).

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

CHILDREN'S ISSUES: Please see our Office of Children's Issues web pages on [intercountry adoption](#) and [international parental child abduction](#).



Warning U.S. Citizens about Situations Abroad

Travel Alerts are issued to disseminate information about short-term conditions, either transnational or within a particular country, that pose significant risks to the security of U.S. citizens. Natural disasters, terrorist attacks, coups, anniversaries of terrorist events, election-related demonstrations or violence, and high-profile events such as international conferences or regional sports events are examples of conditions that might generate a Travel Alert.

A list of current Travel Alerts is available here:

http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/pa/pa_1766.html

Travel Warnings are issued when long-term, protracted conditions that make a country dangerous or unstable lead the State Department to recommend that you avoid or consider the risk of travel to that country. A Travel Warning is also issued when the U.S. Government's ability to assist American citizens is constrained due to the closure of an embassy or consulate or because of a drawdown of its staff.

A list of current Travel Warnings can be found here:

http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html

Warden Messages are communications directly to U.S. citizens enrolled in the Smart Traveler Enrollment System (STEP) via email. The information is news and safety related for that individual country and is specifically useful in times of crisis or natural disaster.

In addition, we post all communications on our website as soon as they are issued. A full list can be found here: <http://ecuador.usembassy.gov/security-and-safety/warden-messages.html>

Country Specific Information (CSI) provides detailed information on local laws, safety and security in every country of the world. For each country, you will find information like the location of the U.S. embassy and any consular offices; whether you need a visa; crime and security information; health and medical conditions; drug penalties and much more. This is a good place to start learning about where you are going.

A copy of the CSI for Ecuador can be found in this packet and online here:

http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1106.html

Last updated: May 2011

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Secure Borders, Open Doors



Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)

The U.S. Department of State has established a secure online travel registration website which allows U.S. citizens to record foreign trips and residence information that the Department of State can use to communicate and assist you in case of an emergency called the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP). When you sign up with STEP, you will automatically receive the most current information on country-specific information, travel alerts, travel warnings, fact sheets and warden messages to provide you with timely and accurate travel information about any country to which you might travel. We include reports on possible risks and security threats so that you can make informed decisions about your travel plans and activities.

Also, by connecting with us on the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program, we will be able to assist you better in the case of an emergency, such as if you lose your passport or it is stolen while you are abroad. Furthermore, we assist U.S. citizens in other emergencies, such as in cases of natural disasters.

The travel and contact information you enter will make it easier for consular officers in U.S. embassies and consulates around the world to contact you and your loved ones during an emergency —including situations where your family or friends in the U.S. are having problems trying to contact you with important news. You only need to sign up once, and then you can add and delete trips from your account based on your current travel plans.

Please know that the data you provide the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program is secured behind Department of State firewalls, accessed only by cleared personnel in U.S. Embassies, Consulates, and the Department of State, and releasable only under the provisions of the Privacy Act.

The STEP website is accessible to American citizens worldwide and can be found at <https://www.travel.state.gov>.



Embassy of the United States of America
Quito, Ecuador
Consular Section



Privacy Act Information and Waiver

Dear Warden,

You may be called upon to provide assistance to an American citizen on behalf of the Embassy. This could include visiting a jail or hospital to confirm the welfare and whereabouts of an American. In these cases, the State Department must operate under strict adherence to the U.S. Privacy Act.

The Privacy Act prohibits the Embassy from releasing any information regarding an American citizen that is not considered to be in the public domain to anyone without the American's written consent. Therefore, we always ask that the first thing a Consular Officer or Warden does when visiting an American is to have the citizen, if in agreement, sign the Privacy Act Waiver allowing the Embassy to contact the specified family/friends regarding the American citizen.

A copy of the Privacy Act Waiver is located on the backside of this page. Thank you for your assistance.

AVIGIRAS E12-170 Y AVE. ELOY ALFARO • QUITO, ECUADOR
PHONE: (593-2) 398-5000 • FAX: (593-2) 398-5268
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Secure Borders, Open Doors

Privacy Act Release

In accordance with the Privacy Act (PL 93-579) passed by Congress in 1974, the Consulate cannot release any information regarding you that is not considered to be in the public domain to anyone without your written consent except as set forth in the Act. Therefore, it is requested that you complete the authorization below specifying whom the post may contact and release information to with regard to your case. Please return the completed authorization to the Consular Officer or the address given above.

AUTHORIZATION FOR THE RELEASE OF INFORMATION UNDER THE PRIVACY ACT

I, _____, do hereby authorize the consulate of the
(your name)
United of America at Quito, Ecuador and the Department of State to release information
regarding my _____ to the following:
(specify type of consular assistance)

A. NAME AND ADDRESSES OF PERSON(S) YOU WISH THE CONSULATE TO CONTACT

_____ NAME
_____ Email address and/or telephone number
_____ NAME
_____ Email address and/or telephone number
_____ NAME
_____ Email address and/or telephone number

B. IN THE EVENT OTHER PERSON REQUEST INFORMATION REGARDING MY CASE INFORMATION CAN BE RELEASED TO THE FOLLOWING:

- | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO | Family (other than those listed under item A) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO | Friends (other than those listed under item A) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO | Individual member of Congress |
| <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO | Member of the Press |
| <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO | The General Public |

Information will only be released under Item B if requested and if we have authorization.

(Date and Place)

(Signature)



Reporting Crimes to the Embassy

Crime is a serious concern in Ecuador. The U.S. Embassy is committed to assisting U.S. citizens who have become victims of crime by providing information on available legal assistance, and support in their interactions with local authorities. The Embassy also attempts to maintain thorough documentation of crimes that have been committed against U.S. citizens, so as to work with the authorities on prosecution and prevention.

We strongly encourage citizens to report crimes. This may be done by submission of the paper Incident Report, reproduced below, or via our new online crime report system. Crime victims may now use this system to report the details of crime incidents. Embassy Consular staff will monitor this system on a daily basis. To access this report, please see the "Safety and Security" page of the U.S. Embassy Quito website: Ecuador.usembassy.gov.

As stated above, the Embassy also continues to accept paper incident reports for American citizens who may not have access to the Internet or otherwise prefer to use the paper version. Please contact the American Citizen Services Section at ACSQuito@state.gov if you have questions or concerns.



Help for American Victims of Crime in Ecuador

The information provided below is a general description of the criminal justice system in Ecuador as is relevant to victims of crime. If you have questions involving interpretation of Ecuadorian law, you should address such questions to legal counsel licensed to practice in Ecuador.

October 12, 2010

Being the victim of a crime in a foreign country can be a devastating and traumatic experience. While no one can undo the emotional trauma, physical injury, or financial loss you may have experienced, the U.S. Mission in Ecuador is ready to help. We are very concerned about violent crimes committed against U.S. citizens in Ecuador. We will assist you in managing the practical consequences of being crime victims and provide you with information about accessing the local criminal justice system, and about other resources for crime victims abroad and in the United States. This office can 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 Ecuador, which is different from the system in the United States.

The information included in this guide relating to the legal requirements in Ecuador is provided for general information purposes only. The information may not be accurate or relevant to a particular case. Legal system in Ecuador proceedings are different from what is stated in their official procedures. Civil cases or the approach of the particular judicial actors (police, public prosecutor, judges) involved may impact the criminal case.

Questions involving interpretation of Ecuadorian laws should be addressed to legal counsel licensed to practice law in Ecuador. 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, and in rare cases, murder.

REPORTING CRIMES: For immediate assistance during an emergency, dial 101 (for local police or ambulance, or to be forwarded to other help as necessary), 102 (for firefighters or ambulance) or 131 (for the local Red Cross). If you are in Quito or Ibarra, you may also dial 911. If you are in Guayaquil, you should dial 112. The operators typically speak Spanish only.

Where to File a Police Report: Depending on the nature of the crime, you may file a written crime report (“*denuncia*”) in one of three locations: (1) a branch of the non-uniformed or “civilian” police,

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called a Commissioner's Office (*Comisaría Nacional de Policía*), (2) a special Commissioner's Office for Family and Domestic Issues ("[Comisarias de la Mujer y de la Familia](#)", click here for [Quito branches](#)) or (3) at a police station with an investigative branch (*Policía Judicial*). You must file a report in the same jurisdiction where the crime occurred.

For petty crimes, including theft of less than \$120, you must file a crime report at a Commissioner's Office. (The addresses of Quito's four Commissioner's Offices can be found on the Commissioner's [Nacionales de Policía](#) website. For Commissioner's Offices in other parts of Ecuador, dial 101.) For domestic violence, sexual assault or child abuse, although a police report is not technically necessary to begin judicial proceedings, you may file one at a Commissioners' Office for Family and Domestic Issues or at an Office of the Public Prosecutor. (The addresses and public hours of Commissioners' Office for Family and Domestic Issues in each province can be found on the [Dirección Nacional de Género](#) website.) For other serious crimes, you must file a police report at a police station (*Policía Judicial*). Police stations are located in every metropolitan area; in large cities, at least one police station is open 24 hours per day.

Certain branches of the Commissioner's Offices for Family and Domestic Issues, for example the Samborondon branch outside Guayaquil, lack infrastructure. Others house private advocacy foundations, for example the Guayaquil branch next to Gobernación, which houses the [Maria Aguiar Foundation](#)). Still others, for example the north Quito branch, work closely with local police, therefore can offer more services than are offered at other branches.

Who May File a Police Report: In most cases, if you have been the victim of a crime, you (or your designated attorney, if you wish) must file your own crime report. In cases of sexual assault, this requirement is waived; a third party may file a report on your behalf if they have sufficient knowledge of the crime. In cases of homicide, any blood relative of the victim up to four degrees removed, or any relative by marriage up to two degrees removed (for example a brother- or sister-in-law) may file the report.

If you are planning to depart Ecuador but wish to file a police report, it is important to file a police report before you depart. If you were unable to file a report before departing the country and wish to do so after your departure, you should contract an Ecuadorian attorney to file the report on your behalf. Although the U.S. Embassy in Quito or the U.S. Consulate in Guayaquil can enquire into the status of your case once the report is filed, Ecuadorian law and common practice prohibit us from filing the report itself. The Embassy of Ecuador in Washington, DC and the Ecuadorian Consulates in the United States will not assist you with a crime report.

When to File a Police Report: You should file a crime report as soon as possible after the crime was committed, not only to preserve evidence but also because in Ecuador, statutes of limitations exist for most crimes. You must file the crime report in the same judicial district where the crime was committed. In cases of theft, you might be asked to give evidence of ownership of the property that was stolen (for example, receipts, customs forms, insurance records or other documentation). It is not necessary to present either Ecuadorian or foreign ID to file a crime report, though in reality you are often asked for this information. There is no fee for filing.

Filing a crime report might take between thirty minutes and several hours, depending on the nature of the crime and the time of day. At commissioner's offices and police stations, interpreters or other English-speaking staff are not always available; if you are not fluent in Spanish, consider bringing an interpreter along with you. You will receive a copy of the report immediately after it has been filed. The number assigned to the police report will be used to identify your case if it ever proceeds to an investigation or trial.

Restraining Orders: For domestic violence or sexually-related crimes, the Commissioners' Office for Family and Domestic Issues or the judicial police (depending on to whom the crime report was made) will issue a restraining order against the offender as soon as you file a police report. For any other crime, you may request a restraining order if you feel threatened, physically or psychologically. Restraining orders are filed at a [Commissioner's Office](#) (click here for a [directory](#)). If an aggressor violates his or her restraining order, you might have grounds to request his or her arrest.

Next Steps: If you have difficulties filing your crime report with an official, please contact the U.S. Embassy in Quito or U.S. Consulate in Guayaquil immediately. You may need a police report to file for crime victim compensation or insurance reimbursement. If you do 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.

For serious cases, once the police report is complete, the police will submit a request for a public prosecutor ("*fiscal*") to be assigned to the case. The process to assign a public prosecutor normally takes two days, but sometimes up to two weeks. The public prosecutor assigned to your case might be a specialist in one type of crime (for example, homicide or sexually-related crimes). Outside the major cities of Ecuador, public prosecutors are more often generalists (working on all types of crimes).

PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATIONS: Many crime investigations never result in the arrest of a suspect. In Ecuador, investigations carried out by either the investigative police or – in the case of a crime against a minor – the specialized police unit for crimes against minors ("*Dirección Nacional de Policía Especializada para Niños, Ninas y Adolescentes*" or "[DINAPEN](#)"). Investigations are divided into two different phases: (1) the preliminary investigation ("*indagación fiscal*") and (2) the formal investigation ("*instruction fiscal*").

Investigative Techniques and Processes: During the preliminary investigation ("*indagación fiscal*"), the public prosecutor directs a police investigative team. The police usually collect physical evidence and record witness testimony. Physical evidence might include photographs, fingerprints and items found at the crime scene. It might also include blood or other samples to be analyzed at a police lab (the victim is often asked to bear the costs of the analysis). Ecuadorian police teams lack forensic resources and specialized training; therefore Ecuadorian police investigations are more limited in scope than those in the United States. DNA is rarely used in Ecuadorian courts for two reasons: first, Ecuadorian authorities often ask the victims to pay for DNA tests (tests average \$250 per sample) and second, because in some cases, Ecuadorian law allows crime suspects to refuse to submit to DNA testing.

Ecuadorian police and public prosecutors rely heavily on written statements made during witness testimony. These statements are taken during victim, witness or suspect interviews, are recorded in

Spanish and become part of the evidence used in later court hearings. As a victim, you might be asked to give your statement multiple times, as the police investigators discover new information and wish to compare your statement with the information they have just received.

Ecuadorian judges usually require that a crime victim complete a psychological evaluation. This normally consists of a one-hour interview with a psychologist, who asks for the details of the crime, assesses the impact of the crime on the victim, and might report on the credibility of the victim's statements.

Tracking Your Case: Preliminary investigations in Ecuador often last months. If the police team does not make progress in your case, the case might be dropped. Progress might be affected by the degree of complexity of the case, the level of collaboration between the public prosecutor and the police team, their work schedules, whether or not suspects flee or hide from officials, forensic examination resources available at the time, and the level of involvement of a private attorney. If you would like information about the progress of your investigation you should regularly ask the public prosecutor, referencing the police report number.

In the overworked Ecuadorian judicial system, the most efficient way to get in touch with the public prosecutor is through a private attorney. Private attorneys' role is to stay in touch with the public prosecutor and keep track of your case. The U.S. Embassy in Quito or the U.S. Consulate in Guayaquil can request status reports on your behalf, as well as making specific enquiries regarding the investigation. However, the U.S. Embassy or Consulate cannot act as a substitute for a private attorney, who can act as your advocate and represent you formally during various stages of the process.

If there is no arrest, your case may remain open for up to five or more years, depending on the crime. The statute of limitations for domestic violence is five years, for homicide is ten years, and for certain sexually-related crimes it is even longer. Even if your case remains open however, it might "go cold" due to lack of progress.

Threats from the Accused: If you, your family or friends receive threats, or are harassed or intimidated by the accused, you should report this to the public prosecutor or the police. The Ecuadorian justice system does not currently have the resources to fund a witness protection program.

ARRESTS: The Ecuadorian system is conservative regarding detention or custody of suspects. Ecuadorian law requires the presumption of liability before a judge may issue an arrest warrant; many public prosecutors take a strict interpretation of this law. Legal mechanisms exist for public prosecutors to request urgent arrest warrants, either in "red-handed" cases ("*delitos flagrantes*", when fewer than 24 hours have passed, the whereabouts of the perpetrator is known, and significant evidence of the perpetrator's guilt exists) or when the case has not yet proceeded to the formal investigative phase but the prosecutor already has sufficient information regarding the suspect's guilt. However, public prosecutors do not always use these mechanisms, preferring to follow the standard step-by-step process. Therefore, gaining an arrest warrant can take several weeks even in "open and shut" cases. In many cases, an arrest is never made.

Temporary Detention Orders: During a preliminary investigation, at the request of the public prosecutor, a judge might issue a 24-hour detention order ("*orden de detención*") for a suspect to be brought to the police for questioning, or to be identified in a lineup. In this case, you might be called in urgently to identify the suspect.

Within 48 hours of such a detention, the judge convenes a public hearing ("*audiencia pública*"). During this hearing, the judge hears and decides on the suspect's requests concerning a substitution for the detention (for example, police surveillance of the suspect, or a schedule in which the suspect "checks in" regularly with the court) or offer of bail (which is prohibited for narcotics and certain major offenses). If the suspect was caught "red-handed" ("*delito flagrante*") by the police, Ecuadorian authorities would need to charge the suspect with a specific criminal offense. The public prosecutor could request that the judge grant an extension of the detention order though in practice this is rare.

Once the suspect has been questioned during a temporary detention, he or she walks free unless the judge – during the public hearing – decides to issue an arrest warrant ("*orden de prisión preventiva*"). In practice, judges rarely issue arrest warrants during the preliminary investigative phase, preferring to wait until a later phase of the investigation. The judge might or might not approve an order for the police investigative team to surveil the suspect – now aware of potential charges against him or her – to assure that the suspect does not flee from justice.

Public prosecutors (or plaintiff's attorneys) often choose to wait until the culmination of the preliminary investigation to request that a judge issue an arrest warrant. First, the public prosecutor or attorney requests that a judge be assigned to the case. Second, the public prosecutor or attorney requests a hearing to press charges ("*audiencia de formulación de cargos*") in which the public prosecutor presents the judge with the results of the preliminary investigation. You do not need to be present during this hearing. During the hearing, the judge decides whether or not sufficient evidence exists to establish a formal case, and – if requested by the public prosecutor – might issue an arrest warrant. In urgent cases where the formal hearing to press charges has not yet taken place but the public prosecutor already possesses sufficient information about a suspect to justify an arrest warrant, the public prosecutor or attorney could request that a judge on duty ("*juez de turno*") at the police station issue an arrest warrant; some public prosecutors are more willing to make this request than others.

When pressing charges, as in the United States, Ecuadorian prosecutors recognize both felonies or aggravated crimes ("*delitos con agravantes*") and misdemeanors or crimes with extenuating factors ("*delitos con atenuantes*").

If an Arrest is Made: You should be informed if an arrest is made in your case.

Individuals arrested in Ecuador have all rights related to due process (for example, the presumption of innocence, the right to a public defender (free of charge in criminal cases), equality of opportunity for litigants and the impartiality of judges). At the time of the arrest, the police read the individual his or her rights, such as the right to remain silent and right to an attorney.

A suspect who has been arrested in Ecuador may challenge the legality of his or her detention by petition within 48 hours of their arrest; in practice few people bring forward such petitions. The senior elected official (usually the mayor) of the locality in which the suspect is held reviews these petitions.

FORMAL INVESTIGATIONS: If, during the hearing to press charges, the judge decides that sufficient evidence exists, your case will proceed to the pre-trial period, known as the formal investigative phase ("*instrucción fiscal*"). This phase lasts between 60-90 days, as determined by the judge during the hearing. The public prosecutor may request that the judge grant an extension of 30 days if necessary.

Your case will be considered "public" once it reaches the formal investigative phase. The public prosecutor will notify the suspect in writing that he or she is now under formal investigation (in some cases, prompting the suspect to flee from justice). Summaries of the procedures will be available to anyone who requests them. In cases where the victim is a minor, despite Ecuadorian laws regarding the protection of minors, such summaries may be made public as well. The following three provincial courts' judicial council websites display case information online: the [Pichincha Judicial Council](#) website, the [Los Rios Judicial Council](#) website and the [Tungurahua Judicial Council](#) website. Other provincial courts' web pages for case information are under construction.

A judge directs the formal investigation, giving instructions to the police investigators, with the public prosecutor assisting. Many judges prefer to take a more passive role, letting the public prosecutor direct the formal investigation just as the public prosecutor did during the preliminary investigation. As in the preliminary investigation, a privately-hired attorney plays a key role in helping the case to move forward.

Recorded Testimony for Victims Departing Ecuador: During the formal investigative phase, Ecuadorian law allows for victims of certain serious crimes – when seriously ill or about to depart Ecuador – to give urgent testimony ("*testimonio urgente*"). Urgent testimony, in contrast to other victim or witness statements made during the investigation, is heard by a judge and has the weight of testimony in a court room. If you will be departing Ecuador and wish to give urgent testimony before your departure, the public prosecutor will decide whether or not you qualify to give urgent testimony. If the public prosecutor decides that you qualify, he or she will set an appointment with the judge assigned to your case.

During the appointment, your private attorney will need to be present. If you ask in advance for a translator, the public prosecutor's office will usually provide one. The level of experience of translators provided by the public prosecutor's office varies. The judge will probably ask you to answer a set of standardized questions, including information about the location, date and time of the crime, information regarding the perpetrators and others who were present, how the infraction was committed and the damage suffered as a result of the infraction. A court secretary will record your testimony and will ask you and the translator to review it for accuracy before finalizing and asking for signatures. Translation errors that result in confusion could jeopardize the case.

PRETRIAL PERIOD: Once the formal investigation closes, the public prosecutor is given up to 31 days to prepare for trial. During this phase, called the intermediary stage ("*etapa intermedia*"), the public prosecutor assesses the evidence gathered and determines whether to dismiss the case or to present formal charges. If the public prosecutor decides to present formal charges, he or she will convene a

trial akin to a grand jury hearing ("*llamamiento a juicio*"). The public prosecutor does this by submitting a request for a panel of three judges ("*tribunal penal*") to be assigned to hear the case. Although a privately-hired attorney does not have the right to convene a trial as does a public prosecutor, he or she might support the public prosecutor during this phase by analyzing evidence or preparing documents. Some public prosecutors lean very heavily on private attorneys during the pre-trial period.

If the three-judge panel decides that there are sufficient and severe presumptions that the alleged perpetrator/s committed the offense or crime, it issues a written notification to both the victim and the accused, therefore beginning the trial stage. During this stage the public prosecutor or plaintiff's attorney will attempt to prove to the three-judge panel the degree or extent of responsibility of the perpetrators or aggressors involved.

Ecuador currently has no provisions in place to offer a plea bargain to a suspect.

TRIAL: A trial ("*audiencia de juzgamiento*") in Ecuador is very different from a trial in the United States. Jury trials do not exist; instead, a three-judge panel ("*tribunal penal*") presides over the courtroom. The proceedings are conducted in several separate sessions. The entire process might last from a few days up to a year, depending on the crime and also on delaying factors. Ecuadorian trials are considered public; anyone may attend a trial, including a consular officer from either the U.S. Embassy or Consulate. Some courts prefer to avoid media coverage while the hearing takes place in order to prevent accusations pertaining breach of public duties or conflict of interests. As the plaintiff, you are entitled to be represented by the public prosecutor, but if you have a privately-hired attorney, he or she could take an active role during the trial. Attorneys representing both plaintiff and defendant usually walk their clients through protocol requirements in the courtroom (including appropriate dress and when to stand out of respect to the judges). Ecuadorian law requires the court to provide a translator free of charge; although, victims and perpetrators are sometimes asked to find a qualified translator, pay the translator's fees, or both.

Procedures of the Trial Hearings: The first trial hearing begins with opening arguments made by the public prosecutor or plaintiff's attorney. Next, the plaintiff is asked to give testimony and must undergo a cross examination by the three judges, the plaintiff's and the defendant's attorneys. After that, the defendant gives his or her testimony. Next, the public prosecutor or plaintiff's attorney presents any relevant forensic evidence. Then the public defender or defendant's attorney present arguments or other forensic evidence and witnesses in favor of the defendant give their testimony.

The public prosecutor or plaintiff's attorney then introduces arguments, in which he or she states whether the defendant is the intellectual author, material author or accomplice of the crime, and requests a specific punishment. The public prosecutor or plaintiff's attorney might request compensatory damages, ("*indemnización por daños y perjuicios*") in addition to a specific sanction. The three-judge panel then gives the defendant an opportunity to respond to the plaintiff's allegations. During an Ecuadorian trial, the defendant is always permitted to have the final word. Before concluding, it is common practice for the defendant to introduce character witnesses to speak positively about the defendant.

Once the defendant has concluded his or her remarks, the presiding judge declares the hearing complete. The court secretary drafts and signs a court's statement ("*acta del juicio*"), containing general information regarding the trial (location and dates, the names of the justices, parties, witnesses, experts and translators, a list of the petitions and decisions produced in the course of the trial and the final conclusions of the parties).

Ecuadorian trial hearings are at times re-scheduled or delayed for several reasons, including but not limited to: the panel refusing to accept certain evidence (prompting the public prosecutor or plaintiff's attorney to prepare to re-submit), illness or incapacitation of the defendant, lack of preparation on the part of an attorney, or scheduling conflicts.

Victim Testimony: Although Ecuador allows for plaintiffs to submit written urgent testimony ("*testimonio urgente*") prior to the trial hearing, Ecuadorian judges also prefer for the victim of the crime to be present during the trial, so that they can see the victim in person and call on the victim to testify as many times as needed. For victims who have departed Ecuador and do not wish to return for multiple courtroom hearings, innovative solutions such as Internet-based video conferencing have been used before. If a three-judge panel accepts testimony via digital video conference, plaintiffs or their attorneys would need to coordinate the logistics, as courts do not possess the necessary technology or staff.

SENTENCING: The defendant must be sentenced within one year of the trial's start date, or he or she will be released and all charges dropped. The three-judge panel decision and sentencing should take place immediately after the hearing is concluded and the court's statement is signed, but it often takes place on a later date. Both the plaintiff and the defendant may give input into sentencing prior to the panel's deliberation.

The panel asks the public to leave and deliberates based on the evidence presented at the hearings. The panel considers if the defendant should be found "innocent" or "guilty" and if "guilty," the factors that would lead them to increase or decrease the punishment suggested by the penal code. The punishment could include a sentence ("*sentencia*") plus compensatory damages ("*indemnización por daños y perjuicios*"). If two out of the three judges agree, the majority decision prevails. If all three judges disagree, the panel applies the ruling most favorable to the defendant.

If the defendant was found guilty, he or she will serve the sentence immediately. Upon the defendant's release from prison (which might be prior to the originally ordered date, because of various Ecuadorian early-release programs), the plaintiff or victim will not be notified.

The court delivers official notification of the decision and sentence three days later. In cases where the U.S. Embassy in Quito or the U.S. Consulate in Guayaquil is following your case, we might obtain this information more quickly.

If the defendant is found guilty victims can file a civil suit against the convicted. The three-judge panel's sentence is used as the basis for the civil suit.

APPEALS: The convict may appeal his or her punishment to the superior court of the province that issued the court ruling. The court rules over the merits of the evidence presented within five days

from the time the appeal is filed. If the appellant wins the appeal, the province's superior court issues a fine to the lower court that initially handled the case. The court might impose sanctions on the judges involved in the case, including removal from office.

In cases where the panel assigns the convicted compensatory damages, the public prosecutor, plaintiff or appellant may appeal the resolution on the amount of damages if they consider that the amount does not correspond to the circumstances of the case. If the appellant wins an appeal regarding compensatory damages, the case is sent back to the original court that heard the matter.

ATTORNEYS: Certain judicial procedures (for example, giving testimony and in some case, attending trial) require the presence of an attorney. Consular staff will do whatever is under their control to protect your legitimate interests and ensure you are not discriminated against under local law, but cannot act as your attorney. Therefore, you should consider hiring a local attorney to secure appropriate legal guidance. Ecuadorian legal procedures differ from those in the United States. Although the public prosecutor is responsible for prosecuting your case, an attorney you hire can promote your interests with the police and the court. While our office cannot recommend specific attorneys, we can provide you with a list of attorneys who have expressed interest in representing U.S. citizens in Ecuador, located on our [legal assistance](#) web page. Click here for a list of [Quito lawyers](#) and a list of [Guayaquil lawyers](#).

Attorneys in Ecuador are not required to register with their province's bar association or any other entity that could check their credentials (though some lawyers register anyway). For this reason, many people in Ecuador use word of mouth and reputation to find an attorney. Ethics standards as exist for attorneys in the United States do not exist in Ecuador. Privacy and confidentiality rules do not exist either; therefore clients come to confidentiality agreements with their attorneys at the time of contracting. Legal malpractice rules do not exist either. The quality of attorneys varies greatly, as do attorney's fees. Attorneys in Ecuador do not normally charge not per hour as is the case in the United States, but per stage of the judicial process.

In situations where the attorney becomes active on a case, the public prosecutor might choose to take a passive role, letting the attorney do much of the work. You might consider requesting that your attorney give regular updates to you and to the U.S. Embassy or Consulate as to the status of your case.

VICTIM COMPENSATION IN ECUADOR: Ecuador does not have a crime victim compensation program. The [Ecuadorian national public prosecutor's office](#), ("*Fiscalía*") is currently exploring options for such programs. Crime victims often rely on the compensatory damages assigned to the accused (if found guilty) and on the results of civil suits, in which the victim can file for damages.

If you are the American citizen victim of crime while in Ecuador, you may benefit from resources available in the United States. Every state in the United States offers a crime victim compensation program and nearly half of states offer benefits to their residents when the residents are victims of a violent crime overseas. Most state's programs require that you report the crime to local law enforcement. You can find more information at the [National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards](#).

For the [U.S. Department of Justice Office for Victims of Crime](#), as well as for help for families of victims of drunk-driving, people who are experiencing domestic violence, parents of murdered children and victims of rape, abuse and incest and other resources, see the [Department of State's web page on Crime Victim Assistance](#).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Identity Theft & Fraud: Fraud is a crime and is prosecutable by a public prosecutor. However, identity theft is not considered a crime. The Public prosecutor's office often prosecutes fraud is the property unit ("*delitos contra la propiedad*"). You can find more information at the website for [Department of State's information on Identity Theft and Fraud](#).

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, survivors should not change clothes, avoid bathing if possible, and have a physical exam at the first opportunity. If you must change clothes, the Ecuadorian police recommend that you keep the clothes you were wearing in a paper bag and bring them with you to file your police report. You should take these steps even if you are unsure about whether to report the crime to police. If you decide to pursue a prosecution at a later time, these steps preserve evidence that will assist the public prosecutor. A consular officer or after-hours duty officer from the U.S. Embassy may be able to accompany victims of sexual assault for the medical exam.

Ecuador has strict laws regarding rape and sexual assault, including specific laws regarding the sexual assault of a minor, and regarding consent (for example, laws indicating that the "consent" of a person who has been drugged, or who has a high blood alcohol level cannot by law be considered consent). The interpretation and enforcement of these laws depends on the public prosecutors and judges.

Sexual Assault Exams: In Ecuador, a forensic exam carried out by an authorized police investigative medical examiner is necessary to open a sexual assault or rape case. In rare cases (including if you are in a remote location without access to a police criminal lab), you may be examined in a private hospital or by a private doctor and may submit the results to the police as evidence. Normally however, an examiner from the local legal medicine office ("*medicina legal*"), which works alongside the criminal lab ("*criminalistica*") must perform the exam. The examiner will perform this only with an order ("*orden*") written by the public prosecutor on duty ("*fiscal de turno*") at the police station.

It is not uncommon for victims to experience a delay of several hours between the time of the police report and the forensic exam. For this reason, if you are a victim of sexual assault or rape, you should file a police report ("*denuncia*") as soon as possible after the crime, and should request the authorities to assist you getting an exam at the legal medicine department as soon as possible.

Forensic sexual assault exams are carried out for the purpose of collection of evidence. Sexual crime victims are usually allowed to bring another person into the room during the exam (either for support or to translate, or both). The legal medicine expert performing the exam will usually perform an external pelvic exam, checking for signs of trauma, as well as taking vaginal, penile or anal swabs as relevant, taking samples of semen or blood if present, and taking photos to document findings. The expert will probably explain his or her findings to you, answering any questions you might have during

the exam. While examiners in the United States often conduct internal exams (sometimes using cameras) and take head and pubic hair samples, fingernail scrapings, blood and saliva samples, the Ecuadorian expert might or might not take such measures.

In cases where the medical expert believes that alcohol or drugs were involved, he or she will order blood or urine tests ("*examenes toxicológicos*"). You might be asked to pay up to \$85 for a toxicology analysis. If you believe that alcohol or drugs were used to perpetrate a crime against you, it is important to make sure a toxicology exam is conducted as soon as possible, as the results could confirm your statements or testimony in a later judicial case.

If you are a victim of sexual assault or rape and decide not to have a forensic medical exam, it is unlikely that your case would go to trial. Ecuadorian judges often prefer to see physical evidence to back up victims' claims of abuse. In addition to the forensic exam, you might be asked to complete a psychological exam (see section titled, "Preliminary Investigations" above). While the forensic exam should be completed ideally within 12 hours of the crime, you could complete the psychological exam at a later date.

Medical Care: While a police exam will provide important evidence and in some cases, information as to whether a sexual assault or rape occurred, a police exam will not address your physical well-being. You should get medical attention to determine if you have been injured in any way and to discuss treatment and prevention options for pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. The U.S. Embassy in Quito or the U.S. Consulate in Guayaquil can provide you with a list of local doctors, hospitals or clinics.

If you have been the victim of a sexual crime, even one that did not involve penetration, it is important to seek medical attention as soon as possible, so that you can make decisions – for example whether to be tested for gonorrhea, Chlamydia, HIV or other sexually-transmitted diseases or whether to take prophylaxis – within 72 hours. Emergency contraception (the "morning-after pill") is available in Ecuador. For information regarding HIV, including information regarding post-exposure prophylaxis, see the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' [AIDS Info](#) page. A commonly-prescribed HIV prophylaxis is available in certain major cities in Ecuador.

If you choose to seek medical care before filing a police report, your doctor or nurse will be under a legal obligation to report assault or rape to the police, or to guide you in how to do so yourself. For adults victims of sexual assault the doctor or nurse might not file the report in a timely manner or might not report the sexual assault at all, especially at the victim's request. In the case of sexual assault of a minor, most Ecuadorian doctors and nurses take this obligation seriously, calling the police directly and promptly.

Sexual Assault Investigations: As a victim of rape or sexual assault, you will be interviewed multiple times and by several different people, including: police officers, the legal medicine expert, a public prosecutor, a psychologist and multiple judges. Some interviewers might seem skeptical about your claims or unable to process the details you state. Other interviewers might seem professional and caring. Although date rape, acquaintance rape, spousal rape and rape perpetrated on male victims are crimes in Ecuador, authorities do not always take them as seriously as they do other types of rape. Even in cases where public prosecutors and police are working seriously on a case, the level of

bureaucracy and administrative requirements are high, making the Ecuadorian judicial system seem impersonal and slow to many victims.

If a medical expert takes blood, semen, hair or other samples for analysis during your forensic exam, these samples will not be tested for DNA, but rather are likely be held in a lab until a suspect is identified during the formal investigation phase. Even if a suspect is identified, Ecuadorian authorities might not perform DNA analysis to find out if a match exists, in part because the victim is usually required to pay for DNA samples (approximately \$250 each) and also because suspects reserve the right to refuse to submit to DNA testing.

Privacy laws - including laws to protect the identity of sexual assault survivors - do not exist in Ecuador. (For more information, see section titled "Preliminary Investigations" above.) Nevertheless, media attention for sexual assault cases is rare.

More Help: Ecuador does not have a rape crisis hotline. However you can find information and resources on the website of the [Office of Gender at the Ministry of Government](#). For information for the national police headquarters ("*Jefatura Nacional*"), call (02) 256-1701. See also the United States-based [Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network](#) (RAINN).

SPECIAL INFORMATION FOR CASES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: Stalking is not considered a crime in Ecuador. However, domestic violence is considered a crime. Victims of domestic violence may request a restraining order at a Commissioners' Office for Family and Domestic Issues. A restraining order might apply to the victim's home, place of employment or study, or other family members. The order might include treatment for the affected family. In reality, restraining orders vary in their enforcement. Commissioners' Offices for Family and Domestic Issues have the authority to issue, but not to enforce their restraining orders; therefore, only Commissioners' Offices for Family and Domestic Issues that work closely with police officers provide enforcement for the restraining orders they issue. However if an individual violates the terms of a restraining order, the protected can request the arrest of that individual.

For cases of domestic violence, you should consider visiting a Commissioner's Office for Family and Domestic Issues before filing a report, in order to find out which is the necessary branch to file the report. If you file your report in the wrong branch, your case may not be tracked correctly.

Some Ecuadorian nongovernmental organizations provide assistance to battered women and their children. For more information, see the website of [Victims of Maltreatment, Abuse and Sexual Hostage-taking](#). For information regarding trauma counseling in the United States, see the [U.S. Department of Justice's web page for the Office on Violence Against Women](#). For other resources, see the [Department of State's web page for Crime Victim Assistance](#).

In cases of domestic violence where the victim is the parent of an Ecuadorian or dual-national child and would like to depart Ecuador with the child, the victim must comply with Ecuadorian laws regarding dual parent consent to depart the country with a minor. This requires either gaining consent from the other parent or obtaining full custody of the child.

SPECIAL INFORMATION FOR CASES OF CHILD ABUSE: The Ecuadorian National Council for Children and Adolescents ("*Consejo Nacional de la Niñez y Adolescencia*" or "[CNNA](#)") is responsible for the protection of children in Ecuador.

The [CNNA](#) relies on other Ecuadorian agencies for outreach, investigation, intervention, statutory protection and casework. For example, you can file a child abuse report at one of two different entities: (1) the Metropolitan Board on the Protection of Children and Adolescents' Rights ("*Junta Metropolitana de Protección de Derechos de la Niñez y Adolescencia*"), which has its own doctors and psychologists on staff, or (2) the Office of the Public Prosecutor ("*Fiscalía*"). The two entities that will carry out the investigation are either a police investigative team ("*Policía Judicial*") or, the Ecuadorian police unit specializing in crimes against children ("*Dirección Nacional de Policía Especializada para Niños, Niñas y Adolescentes*" or "[DINAPEN](#)"). The prosecution will be carried by either the Metropolitan Board or a InEcuador all citizens must report suspected child abuse, especially educators and physicians. The Office of the Public Prosecutor is entitled to prosecute child abuse even if nobody has filed a police report ("*de oficio*"). If you suspect child abuse, you can report it by filing a police report in either the Metropolitan Board or the Office of the Public Prosecutor. If the child needed to be placed in a temporary home or shelter, [CNNA](#) or [DINAPEN](#) would find one. Medical examination is available at the Forensic Medicine's Police Unit ("*Medicina Legal*") or by a physician provided by the Metropolitan Board.

In judicial proceedings a child is expected to testify against the abuser. The prosecutor or a member of the Metropolitan Board would help prepare the minor for the trial. Ecuadorian courts are required to make special accommodations for the child in order to minimize the trauma of testifying; therefore they might place the minor in a separate room from the abuser during the testimony.

In cases where a dual national child has been abused and one parent would like to depart Ecuador with the child, the victim must comply with Ecuadorian laws to depart the country with a minor. This requires either gaining consent from the other parent – even if the other parent is the abuser – or obtaining full custody of the child (a process that takes place in the Ecuadorian court system).

SPECIAL INFORMATION FOR CASES OF KIDNAPPING: In cases of kidnapping for ransom, the Ecuadorian anti-kidnapping police branch, (UNASE), conducts the investigation and - if relevant - a rescue operation. The FBI might offer support. If you know an American citizen who has been kidnapped for ransom in Ecuador, you should call the U.S. Embassy in Quito (at any hour) at (02) 398-5000 and ask to speak to the embassy's Regional Security Officer. If you are concerned about the welfare or whereabouts of an American citizen in Ecuador but do not suspect kidnapping, call the American Citizen Services section of either the U.S. Embassy in Quito (02) 398-5000 or the U.S. Consulate in Guayaquil at (04) 232-3570 or (after hours) (04) 232-1152.

International Parental Child Abduction: Parental child abduction is not considered a criminal offense in Ecuador. However, Ecuador is member to the [Hague Convention of 1980 on Abduction](#) and therefore recognizes international restitution. The Ecuadorian government's central authority for international abduction cases is the Ecuadorian National Council for Children and Adolescents ("*Consejo Nacional de la Niñez y Adolescencia*" or "[CNNA](#)"). The "left-behind" parent may present a formal request to the [CNNA](#), including proof of the child's habitual residence, photos of the child and the "taking" parent and custody or visitation documents. The specialized police unit for crimes against

minors (“*Dirección Nacional de Policía Especializada para Niños, Ninas y Adolescentes*” or “[DINAPEN](#)”) performs the search for the child, if in Ecuador.

You can find more information regarding international parental child abduction at the website of the [Department of State’s Office of Children’s Issues](#), which assists parents in cases of international parental child abduction, the [National Center for Missing and Exploited Children](#) and [INTERPOL](#).

SPECIAL INFORMATION FOR CASES OF HOMICIDE: Host country police and public prosecutors are the competent authorities for the investigation of homicides, suicides or accidental deaths. Ecuador is in the process of transitioning to an accusatorial criminal justice system, in which the public prosecutor, rather than a judge, directs the investigation. Many public prosecutors do not have extensive experience leading a murder investigation. In rare cases, there may be a role for U.S. law enforcement to get involved, particularly in deaths involving acts of terrorism, transnational kidnapping, or transportation safety. However, this is the exception rather than the rule.

Murder investigations in Ecuador proceed slowly, and are not as thorough as many Americans expect. The Ecuadorian government now uses the following emergency hotline that callers can use to inform police and public prosecutors about murders or contract killings: 1-800-466-424.

An autopsy is mandatory in the case of a homicide in Ecuador, since the forensic physician from a police criminal lab (“*medicina legal*”) is required by law to determine the cause of death.

There are three modalities of homicide: (1) unintentional homicide (“*homicido inintencional*”), (2) manslaughter (“*homicidio simple*”), and (3) murder (“*asesinato*”). Unintentional homicide carries a sentence of three months to two years. Manslaughter carries a sentence of eight to twelve years. Murder carries a sentence of twelve to twenty-five years.

There are three categories of perpetrators: the intellectual author, the material author and the accomplice. Murder sentences are strictest for an intellectual author and the least strict for an accomplice.

Information and Support: Support organizations for the families of homicide victims do not exist in Ecuador. For information and support for families of homicide victims, see the [U.S. Department of Justice’s Homicide Survivors and Co-Victims](#) web page, [Compassionate Friends](#), [Parents of Murdered Children](#), the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), which has a Grief and Loss page, and AARP’s [Ways Parents Can Cope](#).

INFORMATION REGARDING ECUADORIAN POLICE, PUBLIC PROSECUTORS AND COURTS:

For information regarding commissioner’s offices across Ecuador, see the the [Dirección Nacional de Género](#) website. For Quito-specific information regarding commissioner’s offices, see the [Nacionales de Policía](#) website. Click here for the location of [Quito commissioner’s offices](#). The national police headquarters (“Jefatura Nacional”) is located in Quito and can be reached at: (02) 256-1701. Click here for information regarding the specialized police unit for crimes against minors (“*Dirección Nacional de Policía Especializada para Niños, Ninas y Adolescentes*” or “[DINAPEN](#)”). Another informational website is managed by the [Office of Gender](#) at the Ministry of Government.

The legal examiner's ("*Medicina Legal*") office in Quito is located on Avenida Mariana de Jesus in the police headquarters across from the Hospital Metropolitano. The legal examiner's office in Guayaquil is located at the Hospital de la Policía Nacional at Cdla. Modelo, Ave. De las Américas entre Calle Maria Juárez Domínguez y Ernesto Noboa y Caamaño (telephone: (04) 229-2962).

For more information regarding the prosecution cases in Ecuador, contact the [Ecuadorian national prosecutors' office](#). For a public prosecutor's office for a particular province, see the national prosecutors' office website [information for each province](#).

Some of Ecuador's provincial courts have websites, managed by the province's judicial council ("*Consejo de la Judicatura*"), which oversees judges. Click here for: the [Pichincha Judicial Council](#), the [Los Rios Judicial Council](#), the [Tungurahua Judicial Council](#), the [Guayas and Galapagos Judicial Council](#), the [Loja Judicial Council](#) and the [Imbabura Judicial Council](#).

To report information regarding a murder or contract killing in Ecuador, call 1-800-466-424

The following is a list of issues that the police and public prosecutor would not settle: certain debts, rent collection (which are handled by courts that handle tenancy disputes or "*juez de inquilinato*"), alimony or recovery of children taken by one parent (which are handled by children's courts or "*juez de la niñez y adolescencia*"), recovery of animals (which are handled by the city's intendant or "*intendente*"), restraining orders (which are handled by the commissioner's offices or "*comisarias de la mujer y la familia*"), mutual respect agreements (common in Ecuador after domestic violence, and which are drafted and issued by an authority on domestic issues ("*intendente general de policía*") or a Commissioner's Offices or Commissioner's Offices for Domestic and Family Issues), insurance recovery processes (usually settled by insurance companies or by intermediaries known as insurance brokers) or reports regarding stolen documents (for more information regarding stolen passports please see the embassy's [website](#)) or complaints regarding damaged property (these complaints go straight to a criminal court without passing through a public prosecutor).

For more information regarding Ecuadorian government processes, see the website regarding [paperwork and processes](#).

EMBASSY/CONSULATE LOCATION: Americans living or traveling in Ecuador are encouraged to register with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate through the [State Department's travel registration website](#) so that they can obtain updated information on travel and security within Ecuador. 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 Avigiras E12-170 y Eloy Alfaro (in the far northwest sector of Quito), telephone both during and after working hours: (02) 398 5000. The U.S. Consulate in Guayaquil is located four blocks west of Centennial Park at 9 de Octubre y Garcia Moreno, working hours +593 (4) 232-3570 and after hours +593 (4) 232-1152.



List of Attorneys in Ecuador

Prepared by the Consular Section
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The Quito Consular District comprises the provinces of Pichincha, Esmeraldas, Tungurahua, Cotopaxi, Chimborazo, Imbabura, Carchi, Bolivar, Napo, Orellana, Pastaza, Santo Domingo de los Tsachilas, Sucumbios and Morona-Santiago. Consular jurisdiction for the remainder of Ecuador, including the Galapagos Islands, is vested in the American Consulate, Guayaquil.

All of the following lawyers, except where noted, are members of the Quito Bar Association (additional memberships are indicated) and are Ecuadorian citizens authorized to practice before Ecuadorian courts. They all speak Spanish and English unless otherwise noted. Any additional language ability is indicated. They do not handle criminal cases and are not public notaries except where indicated.

Please note that the rules of the Quito Bar Association (Colegio de Abogados) prohibit all advertising on the part of its members. As the publication of the names of members of the Bar together with any data concerning their professional experience and qualifications may be considered as a contravention of this rule against advertising, this list is released on the condition that it is not to be published.

The U.S. Embassy in Quito assumes no responsibility or liability for the professional ability or reputation of, or the quality of services provided by, the following persons or firms. Inclusion on this list is in no way an endorsement by the Department of State or the U.S. Embassy. Names are listed alphabetically, and the order in which they appear has no other significance. The information in the list on professional credentials, areas of expertise and language ability are provided directly by the lawyers. You may receive additional information about the individuals by contacting the Quito Bar Association.

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18. IZURIETA Mora Bowen, Dr. Ricardo

Name of Firm: "Estudio Juridico Izurieta Mora Bowen." Address: Ave. Amazonas 3589 y Corea, 5to. Piso, Edificio Amazonas 4000, Junto al Ex-Banco del Progreso, P.O. Box 17-01-638, Quito. Telephone: 2263-500. Fax: 2462-562. Born October 6, 1941, Quito. E-mail address: rizurieta@izurietamorabowen.com. Admitted to Bar, 1969. Specializes in corporate and commercial law, patents and trademarks, land ownership and land reform problems, corporations and contracts, and trade collection cases on a percentage basis. Does not handle estate and/or criminal cases. Other language: French. Handles immigration cases.

19. IZURIETA Mora Bowen, Dr. Raul

Name of Firm: "Estudio Juridico Izurieta Mora Bowen." Address: Ave. Amazonas 3589 y Corea, 5to. Piso, Edificio Amazonas 4000, Junto al Ex-Banco del Progreso, P.O. Box 17-01-638, Quito. Telephone: 226-500. Fax: 2462-562. E-mail address: rizurieta@izurietamorabowen.com. Born June 6, 1943, Quito. Graduated: Master of Law, Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana, June 1968. Doctor in Jurisprudence, Central University, Quito, November 1969. Admitted to Bar, 1969.

Specializes in corporate, commercial, labor and petroleum law. Administrative cases. Trademarks. Handles estate cases. Handles collections on a percentage basis. Handles trade disputes, preferably for out-of-court settlement. Especially handles criminal cases. Handles foreign investment in Ecuador.

20. JIJON L., Dr. Rodrigo

Name of Firm: "Perez, Bustamante y Ponce". Address: Ave. Republica de El Salvador 1082 y Naciones Unidas, Edificio Mansion Blanca, Torre Londres, 9th Floor, Quito. Telephone: 2260-666. Fax: 2258-038. E-mail address: rjijon@pbplaw.com Born March 14, 1959, Quito. Admitted to Bar, 1983. Education: Catholic University, Quito, (Doctor in Law, 1983); Tulane Law School (M. A. 1984). Member of the Interamerican Bar Association, Tulane Lawyers Association, Asia-Pacific Lawyers Association. Other languages: French. Specializes in immigration law, commercial, tax, companies, labor.

21. MOLINA Novillo, Dr. César

Name of Firm: "Barrera Molina Viteri & Andrade Cevallos". Address: Ave. Amazonas 3655 y Juan Pablo Sanz, Edificio Antisana 1, 10mo. Piso, Quito. Telephone: 224-5830. Fax: 224-5827. Born Aug 23, 1959. Email address: info@barreramolina.com. Graduated as Doctor in Jurisprudence at the Catholic University in Quito, 1984. University of Rome,- Roman Law, 1987. Languages: Spanish, English and Italian. Specializes in public and private procurement, foreign investment, immigration, aeronautical law, intellectual and industry property.

22. MUÑOZ Neira, Dr. Luis Alfredo

Name of firm: "Estudio Jurídico Dr. Luis Alfredo Muñoz N." Address: Patria 640 y Amazonas, Edificio Patria, Oficina 903. Telefaxes: 2543-461 and 2523-562. E-mail address: mnlawyers@andinanet.net Born September 28, 1957. Admitted to Bar 1982. Specializes in criminal cases. Handles criminal and immigration cases.

23. NEIDL, Dr. Andrew G.

Name of Firm: "Gallegos Neidl Abogados". Address: P.O. Box 17.01.2772 Ave. Republica 396 y Diego de Almagro, Quito, Ecuador. E-mail: Andrew.neidl@eign.com. Specializes in general practice, real estate, corporate, intellectual property and anti-counterfeiting, international IP matters, venture capital, merger and acquisitions, commercial and foreign investments, energy and hydrocarbons, banking & finance, telecommunications and IT, government bids and contracts, ADR & negotiations, aviation and maritime, environmental and translations.

24. ORTEGA DE GRIJALVA, Dra. Alba Lucia

Name of Firm: "Ortega Grijalva Abogados". Address: World Trade Center, Ave. 12 de Octubre N24-562 y Cordero, Torre A, Oficina 1108, Quito. Telephones: 2229-159 and 2228-411. Fax: 2228-831. E-mail address: ogabogad@uio.satnet.net. Born: May 17, 1959. J.D. Catholic University. Admitted to Bar in 1989. Specializes in commercial law, immigration, insurance, banking and labor matters, international rights.

25. PAZ Durini, Dr. Jorge

Name of Firm: "Paz & Horowitz." Address: Whimper #1105 y Diego de Almagro, P.O. Box 17-21-1533, Quito. Telephones: 2222-057, 2508-123, 2227-676, 2501-354. Fax: 2501-902, 2222-058. Born 1958, Quito. E-mail address: ph@ph.com.ec Doctorate in Laws from Catholic University, Quito and admitted to Bar in 1982. International Joint Ventures and Investment Treaties at IDLI, Rome, 1988. LL.M. in International Business Transactions and U.S. Contract and Corporate Law, Temple University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1991. Vice President of the Mining Chamber of Ecuador. The firm provides legal services in international and national commercial law, with particular emphasis on mining, oil and gas, intellectual and industrial property, telecommunications, transfer of technology and personnel, foreign investment, and management/labor issues. Has process server on staff.

26. PEREZ Arteta, Dr. Jose

Name of Firm: "Perez, Bustamante y Ponce". Address: Ave. Republica de El Salvador 1082 y Naciones Unidas, Edificio Mansion Blanca, Torre Londres, 8th Floor, Quito. Telephone: 2254-323, 2260-666. Fax: 2258-038. E-mail address: jperez@pbplaw.com Born May 11, 1934. LL. B. Catholic University, Quito. Master of Comparative Law, SMU, Dallas, Texas. Specializes in civil and corporate law (including patents), handles collection cases on a percentage basis, estate cases, trade disputes. Other language: French. Member of the Interamerican Bar Association, Washington, D.C.; International Fiscal Association. Handles immigration cases.

27. ROMERO PONCE, Dr. Diego

Name of Firm: "Romero Arteta Ponce Abogados." Address: Ave. 12 de Octubre N26-97 y Abraham Lincoln, Edificio Torre 1492, 8th Floor, Quito. Telephones: 2986-666 and 2986-667. Fax 2986-664 and 2986-665. E-mail address: rap@law.com.ec & gvillagomez@law.com.ec. Web Page: www.rap.com.ec & www.ecuadorlawyer.com. Born May 1960. LL. B. Central University, Quito, 1968. Post graduate studies: LL. M. Pittsburgh University, Pennsylvania; LL. M. Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts. Specializes in Corporate Law. Foreign

investment, negotiations, public and private, oil and mining law, administrative cases, estate cases, intellectual property, immigration law. Member of the International Bar Association (IBA), London; Interamerican Bar Association, Washington, D.C.; Asia-Pacific Layers Association (APLA), Korea; Interamerican Association of Industrial Property (ASIPI); Brazilian Association of Intellectual Property (ABPI).

28. ROMERO Ponce, Dr. Gustavo

Name of Firm: "Romero Arteta Ponce Abogados." Address: Av. 12 de Octubre N26-97 y A. Lincoln, Edificio Torre 1492, 8vo. Piso, P.O. Box 17-03-719, Quito.
Telephones: 2986-666, 2986-667 Fax: 2986-664. E-mail address: rap@law.com.ec.
Born September 30, 1955. Degrees: Solicitor and Doctor in Law of the Catholic University, Quito. Specializes in commercial law, patents and trademarks, aeronautic law, oil and gas. Member of the Quito Bar Association; Ecuadorian Industrial Property Association (AEPI); American Association of Industrial Property (ASIPI); International Bar Association (IBA); International Association for the Protection of Industrial Property (AIPPI); Asia-Pacific Lawyers Association (APLA); Licensing Executive Society (LES); Interamerican Lawyer's Federation, Washington, D.C.; International Bar Association.

29. SALAZAR B., Dr. Rodrigo

Name of Firm: "Perez, Bustamante y Ponce". Address: Ave. Republica de El Salvador 1082 y Naciones Unidas, Edificio Mansion Blanca, Torre Londres, 9th Floor, Quito.
Telephone: 2260-666. Fax: 2258-038. E-mail address: rsalazar@pbplaw.com Born April 7, 1952, Quito. Admitted to Bar, 1979. Education: Catholic University, Quito, Doctor in Law, 1979. Member of the Interamerican Bar Association, Asian-Pacific Lawyers Association. Specializes in corporation and foreign investment, banking, aviation.

30. SANTELICES I., Dr. Waldo

Name of Firm: "Estudio Jurídico Santelices". Address: Juan Rodríguez 110 y 6 de Diciembre, Quito. Telephone: 593-2-223-0236. Cell: 09-857-4015. E-mail address: wsantel@ejsantelices.com. Born July 21, 1963, Santiago de Chile, Chile. Admitted to Bar: August 31, 2005. Education: Catholic University, Quito, Bachelor in Legal and Social Sciences, 1996. Graduated as Attorney in the "Universidad Internacional del Ecuador" in 2004. Specializes in criminal cases and commercial law. Speaks some English.

31. SEMPERTEGUI, Dr. Leonardo

Name of Firm: "Sempertegui Ontaneda LLP" Address: Ave. Eloy Alfaro y Ave. 6 de Diciembre esquina, Edificio Monasterio Plaza, Piso 10. Telephone: 593-2-6012-442 & 6012-443, cel phone 084057181. Email: LSV@sempertegui.com Web Page: www.sempertegui.com. The Firm specializes in constitutional law, administrative law, energy law, oil & gas law, taxation, public contracts, litigation, human rights, foreign investment, intellectual property, corporate law, civil law & private contracting, employment labor law, antitrust. Member of ABA and AIPM. Speaks fluent English.

32. SILVA Altamirano, Dr. Walter E.

Address: Espinoza E4-11 and Ave. Colombia, Edificio Avila, Office 301, Quito. Telephone: 2955-191, 2286-583, 09-9449-107. Fax: 2286-583. Home: 2542-226. Born Jul 2, 1939. Central University graduate with experience in foreign countries. Specializes in traffic cases. Does not speak English.

33. TOBAR Carrion, Dr. Bernardo

Name of Firm: "Tobar & Bustamante Abogados." Address: Ave. 12 de Octubre y Lincoln Esq., Edificio Torre 1492, 10th. Floor, Office 1002, P.O. Box 17-03-883, Quito. Telephones: 2986-456, 2986-457. Fax: 2986-462. E-mail address: xcalderon@tobarybustamante.com Born August 13, 1965. Attorney at Law and Doctor in Jurisprudence, Catholic University, Quito. Admitted to Bar, 1989. Ph.D. in Advanced International Legal Studies, Dipl. International Business Transactions, University of The Pacific, McGeorge School of Law, Salzburg University, Faculty of Law, and Austro-American Institute of Education. Dipl. Intellectual Property, International Copyright Institute of the U.S. Copyright Office and WIPO. Drafter and lobbyist of the new Ecuadorian Intellectual Property Law. The firm specializes in intellectual property ,including Patent and Trademark Law and Technology Law; and Transnational Business, particularly commerce. The firm is a leader in litigation in IP and IP trade-related matters, and anti-piracy and anti-counterfeiting practices. Member of Ecuadorian Industrial Property Association, Interamerican Institute of Copyrights, Latin-American Institute of Technology, Information and Law.

34. TORRES Gonzalez, Dr. Oswaldo

Name of Firm: "Torres & Asociados." Address: Robles 653 y Ave. Amazonas, Edificio Proinco, 11th Floor, Office 1109-1112, Quito. Telephone: 256-2914. Fax: 2562-793. E-mail address: otorres@uio.satnet.net Born July 22, 1939. LL. B. Central University, Quito. Admitted to Bar, 1965. Harvard University, 1965. New York University, 1966. Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, 1967. Specializes in commercial, corporate,

civil, patent, trademark, and taxation cases. Handles collections on a percentage basis, trade disputes, oil and mining law, and immigration cases.

35. VINTIMILLA Saldaña, Dr. Jaime R.

Name of Firm: "VGYLEX abogados" Vintimilla, Gomez de la Torre e Ycaza Abogados,
Address: Ave. Juan Ramírez N 3615 y Germán Alemán. Tele/Fax: 2243-647and 2249-182. Cell phone: 09-9-461-989 Home: 2503-395. E-mail address:

jvintimi@interactive.net.ec and jvintimilla@vgylex.com.

Born November 18, 1967, Azogues. Doctor in Jurisprudence, Catholic University, Quito, 1995. Member of the Interamerican Bar Association, Ecuadorian Bar, Roman Law Institute. Other language: French. Specializes in immigration matters, constitutional procedures, registration and establishment of foreign firms in Ecuador, alternative methods of conflict resolution. Handles civil and commercial law.

QUITO LAWYERS SOCIETIES

Colegio de Abogados (Quito Bar Association)

Piedrahita 225 y 6 de Diciembre

Quito, Ecuador

Telephone: 256-7619, 256-7621 Fax: 256-8567

E-mail address: colabpi@mail.colobpi.pro.ec Website: www.colabpi.pro.ec

PUBLIC ACCOUNTING FIRMS

Deloitte & Touche (deloitteecuador@deloitte.com)

Ave. Amazonas 3517 y Pablo Sanz, Edificio Xerox

Quito, Ecuador

Telephone: 225-1319, 2254412 Fax: 2435-807, 2460-062

Price Waterhouse Coopers (www.pwcglobal.com)

Almagro 2054 y Whimper, Edificio IBM

Quito, Ecuador

Telephones: 2525-440, 2562-288 Fax: 2567-096

Romero & Asociados (www.romeroyasociados.com)

Ave. Amazonas N33-319 y Rumipamba

Edificio Torre Carolina, 8th, 9th, & 10th Floor

Quito, Ecuador

Telephone: 2267-012 Fax: 2257-013

Credit reports can usually be obtained through banks or through commercial reporting agencies such as Dunn and Bradstreet, Inc. In addition to Ecuadorian government and commercial banks, and branches of several foreign banks, there is a Quito branch of the First National City Bank (Citibank), Republica de El Salvador y Naciones Unidas, Quito, telephones: 297-0052, 297-0053.

There is an organization in Ecuador that conducts genealogical investigations.

You may write to:

Centro Nacional de Investigaciones Genealogicas y Antropologicas

P.O. Box 135-B, Quito, Ecuador

President: Juan Freile Granizo



Public and Private Hospitals in Ecuador

In a medical emergency American citizens can reach an ambulance by dialing 911 or 102 (Quito Fire Department), 131 (Red Cross) or 101 (Police).

A list of many of Ecuador's hospitals can be found below. Some of the larger hospitals have lists of specific doctors arranged by specialty. The U.S. Embassy assumes no responsibility for the professional ability or reputation of the persons and medical facilities on this list. Hospitals listed include some of those used by U.S. citizens in the past whose services have been found satisfactory and who may have staff members who speak English.

If you need information on specific services available, please contact the hospital directly:

Ambato

Clinica Tungurahua

Calle Juan Benigno Vela 717 y Juan Leon Mera
(03) 288-1721, (03) 282-2369, (03) 282-9582

Baños

Hospital Betesda

Calle de los Rosales Barrio El Recreo Tumburagua
(03) 274-0643

www.hospitalbetesda@andinanet.net

Cuenca

Clinica Santa Ines

Av. Daniel Córdova T2-67 y Agustín Cueva
(07) 282-7888, (07) 283-4360
Citas: (07) 282-3272, (07)283-1461

Esmeraldas

Clinica Colon

Ave Colon 225 y Guayas
(06) 271-3557

Hospital Delfina Torres Ave Libertad y Manabi Parada 7

AVIGIRAS E12-170 Y AVE. ELOY ALFARO • QUITO, ECUADOR

PHONE: (593-2) 398-5000 • FAX: (593-2) 398-5268

EMAIL: ACSQUITO@STATE.GOV

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(06) 272-2778, (06) 272-2779

Guaranda

Hospital San Miguel

Cesar Abel Pasmio y Juan Pio de Mora
(03) 298-9112

Ibarra

Clinica Ibarra

Eleodora Ayala 110 y Jorge Davila Mesa, Parque Chile Ciudadela Jardin
(06) 2953030, (06) 2606203

Clinica Inmaculada

Calle Sucre 970 y Colon
(06) 2954361 (06) 2950860

Latacunga

Hospital General de Latacunga

Paez 1-02 y Dos de Mayo
(03) 2800331, (03) 2800332, (03) 2810278, (03) 2801662
<http://www.hpgl.gov.ec>

Loja

Clinica San Agustin

18 de Noviembre # 1072 y Azuay
(07) 257-0314, (07) 257-3002, (07) 257-0094

Machala

Clinica de Traumatologia

Circunvalacion Norte s/n y Marcel Laniado
(07) 298-1060

Pastaza

Hospital Voz Andes del Oriente

Camilo Gallegos Asuncion Cuevas 2-06 Parroquia Shell, Canton Mera
(03) 279-5171, (03) 279-5172
hvoinfo@hcjv.org.ec

Quito

Hospital Metropolitano

Avs. Mariana de Jesús y Occidental
(02) 399-8000

<http://www.hospitalmetropolitano.org/index.php>

Hospital de los Valles

Via Interoceánica Km 12 ½ y Ave. Florencia (past Cumbaya)
(02) 297-7900, (02) 297-7911

<http://www.hospitaldelosvalles.com>

Hospital Voz Andes

Villalengua 278 y Av. América
(02) 226-2142

<http://www.hospitalvozandes.org>

Riobamba

Hospital de Especialidades

San Juan Veloz y Autachi
(03) 294-4636, (03) 296-3098

www.hospiesaj.med.es

Santo Domingo

Clinica Bermudez

Redondel de la y del Indio Colorado
(02)275-9664, (02) 275-6014

Tulcan

Hospital Provincial General Luis G. Davila

10 de Agosto 12051 y Loja
(06) 298-0315, (06) 298-7206

AMBULANCE SERVICES

Ambulance: QUITO FIRE DEPARTMENT: 911 or 102
RED CROSS: 131 or 316-1016
EMI: 227-227, 227-4700
UTIM: 973-9801

Air Ambulance: AIR MED 246-9902, (09)563-6363



List of Translators

NAME	TELEPHONE
Matthew Adams	256-4721 or 099-016-720
Diego Rendon C	09-4144197
Juan Javier Aguiar	244-4897
Leonardo Alvear	2430-297 or 09-9-818-181
Ernesto Andino G.	2234-873 or 09-9-710-760
Bustamante & Bustamante Law Firm	256-2680 ext. 248
Julieta Baquerizo de Mosquera	224-9755 or 09-9-658361
María Cecilia Burgos	288-4688 or 09-541-6931
Zoila de Lourdes Calderon	234-9177 or 09-8-314-713
Vicente Carlosama	09-5-863-784
Diana Cerón Diaz	242-9515 – 08-4-572-186
Catalina Cueva	241-8569 or 09-7-764-853
Silvia D’Aniello	2432-482 or 09-9-019575
Silvia Donoso	2490-739 or 099-736-990
Carmen Espinosa	2239-799 or 099-496-520
Gioconda Faini	2249-994
Maria Eugenia Falconi	223-0909/ 223-0047 or 2521-157
Patricia Fierro	2414-705 or 09-9-038-965
Jenny E. Garcia	2272-187
Martha Ellen Gibbs	2385-128 or 09-9-360-888
Maricruz Gonzalez	2432-723 cell 09-9554-133

María Victoria González Iturriaga	223-7431 or 09-9-566-493
Jaime Granizo	2482-460/2270-699
Amani Harrison	2662-439 cell 08-1-140-389
Heather L. Hayes	245-6495 or 09-9-393953
William Hillsdaley	243-6051
Clare St Lawrence	326-3440 or 09-8-382-314
Leonor Lazaro Vesper	09-1-170-325
J. Aisha Mathews	322-8518 or 09-6-268-256
María Fernanda Merino (Centro de Traducción Servicios de Computación)	2257-752 or 09-9-001-360
Eric Meyer	09-6-086-460
Lisa Mirsky	2240-229
Alfonso Moscoso Plaza	2491-809
Galo Novillo Flor	2296-103/244-0863 or 09-1-438-421
Gladys Oviedo	246-1012 or 09-850-4769
Sandy E. Palacios	08-7-162-204
María José Pasquel Andrade	2430-106/2244864 or 09-7-786-666
José Rivadeneira	229-0453/244-6998 or 09-8-004-607
Giovanny F. Rivadeneira	2924-067 or 09-9-780-738
Juan Carlos Rodriguez	2432-134
Eugenia Salazar-Bonaros	2240-560
Jacqueline Valdivieso	2255-483 or 090-456-284
Maria del Cisne Villalba	2528-195/2268-777 or 09-771-3161
Esteban Arcos	333-1054 or 097413819

Revised: October 12, 2010



Reporting the Death of an American Citizen Abroad

In order to obtain a Consular Report of Death Abroad for an American citizen, the following documents of the deceased should be submitted to the Consular Section:

- U.S. Passport,
- Social Security Number,
- Ecuadorian Death Certificate from the Civil Registry (Certificado de Defuncion),
- Most recent address in the U.S. of the deceased U.S. citizen,
- Address where the U.S. citizen was residing while overseas,
- Medical or autopsy certificate,
- Name of the person in charge of the belongings (Disposition of Effects),
- Certificate of the exact place of burial or cremation (Disposition of Remains),
- Person(s) that the deceased was/were traveling or living abroad with:
 - Name
 - Address
 - Phone number
- Person(s) that need a copy of the Report of Death Abroad:
 - Name
 - Address
 - Phone number

Transporting Remains to the United States

If the body is being transported to the United States for burial, the following are required:

TO SHIP THE ASHES:

- Ecuadorian Death Certificate from the Civil Registry (Certificado de Defuncion) or Consular Report of Death Abroad and two (2) copies,
- Cremation Certificate (a document from a crematory certifying that the deceased was cremated on a specific date) and two (2) copies,

- Transportation permit from the Ecuadorian authorities (Ministry of Health) and two (2) copies
- Detailed itinerary
- Information about the Consignee or Accompanying party:
 - Name
 - Address
 - Phone number
- If somebody is escorting/accompanying the ashes we require two (2) copies of the passport
- A funeral home representative that witnessed the cremation and the packaging of the remains and MUST come to the Embassy with a picture ID to notarize a statement.

TO SHIP THE BODY:

- Ecuadorian Death Certificate from the Civil Registry (Certificado de Defuncion) or Consular Report of Death Abroad and two (2) copies
- Transportation permit from the Ecuadorian authorities (Ministry of Health) and two (2) copies
- Embalming certificate from the Ecuadorian authorities (Ministry of Health) and two (2) copies
- Detailed itinerary
- Information about the Consignee:
 - Name
 - Address
 - Phone number
- A funeral home representative, that will certify the embalming and packaging of the remains, MUST come to the embassy with a picture ID to notarize a statement.

For more information, contact the Consular Section at the U.S. Embassy Quito via email at ACSQuito@state.gov or call the Embassy at 02-398-5000 and advise the operator that you are calling on behalf of a deceased American citizen and ask that you be transferred immediately to the American Citizen Services Section.

AVIGIRAS E12-170 Y AVE. ELOY ALFARO ● QUITO, ECUADOR

PHONE: (593-2) 398-5000 ● FAX: (593-2) 398-5268

EMAIL: ACSQUITO@STATE.GOV

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Visas for Ecuador

Ecuador issues two types of visas: Nonimmigrant and Immigrant (Residence) Visas:

Nonimmigrant Visas categories are issued by the Ecuadorian Ministry of Foreign Relations located at Carrion 10-40 and Ave. 10 de Agosto, Quito. Tel: 593-2-299-3284 or 593-2-299-3285.

- 12:I – Diplomatic Missions and International Organizations
- 12:II - Diplomatic Missions and International Organizations
- 12:III
- 12:IV - Asylum and refugee
- 12:V - Study
- 12:VI - Work
- 12:VII - Volunteer Religious Missionaries
- 12:VIII- Cultural Exchange
- 12:IX - Business
- 12:X - Tourism

Detailed information and requirements is available at the following link:

http://www.mmree.gob.ec/servicios/req_visas.asp

Immigrant Visas are issued by the “Dirección General de Extranjería” located at San Ignacio 207 and San Javier, Quito. Tel: 593-2-222-1817 or 593-2-255-2750.

- 9- I - Jubilados (Retirees)
- 9-II - Inversión en Póliza o Bien Raíz (Stock holders or Real Estate Investment)
- 9-III - Inversión en Industria, Agricultura, Ganadería o Comercio de Exportación (Investment in Industry, Agriculture, Livestock or Export Trade)
- 9-IV - Apoderado General, Contrato Indefinido de Trabajo, Religiosos (General Representative, Indefinite Work Contract , Clergy)
- 9-V - Profesionales (Professionals)
- 9-VI - Amparo (Spouses, children, parents and other dependents of Ecuadorian citizens)

Detailed information and requirements is available at:

http://www.mingobierno.gov.ec/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=54&Itemid=1168lang=es

Revised: October 12, 2010

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Dual Nationality

WHAT IT IS

The Supreme Court of the United States has stated that dual nationality is “a status long recognized in the law” and that “a person may have and be subject to the responsibilities of both. The mere fact that he asserts the rights of one citizenship does not mean that he renounces the other”, *Kawakita v. U. S.*, 343 U.S. 717 (1952).

HOW IT'S ACQUIRED

Dual nationality results from the fact that there is no uniform rule of international law relating to the acquisition of nationality. Each country has its own laws on the subject, and its nationality is conferred upon individuals on the basis of its own independent domestic policy. Individuals may have dual nationality not by choice but by automatic operation of these different and sometimes conflicting laws.

The laws of the United States, no less than those of other countries, contribute to the situation because they provide for acquisition of U. S. citizenship by birth in the United States and also by birth abroad to an American, regardless of the other nationalities which a person might acquire at birth. For example, a child born abroad to U. S. citizens may acquire at birth not only American citizenship but also the nationality of the country in which he was born. Similarly, a child born in the United States to foreigners may acquire at birth both U.S. citizenship and a foreign nationality, depending on the nationality of his/her parents. The laws of some countries provide for automatic acquisition of citizenship after birth. For example, a U.S. citizen may acquire another nationality merely by marrying a citizen of a certain foreign country. In addition, some countries do not recognize naturalization in a foreign state as grounds for loss of citizenship. A person from one of those countries who is naturalized in the United States keeps the nationality of the country of origin despite the fact that one of the requirements for naturalization in the United States is a renunciation of other nationalities.

The automatic acquisition or retention of a foreign nationality does not affect U. S. citizenship; however, the acquisition of a foreign nationality upon one's own application or a requirement to reaffirm a nationality which involves a potentially expatriating act such as taking an oath of allegiance may cause loss of U. S. citizenship under Section 349(a)(1) or 349(a)(2) of the

Immigration and Nationality Act (8.U.S.C. 1481). In order for loss of nationality to occur under these sections, it must be established that the naturalization was obtained with the intention of

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relinquishing U. S. citizenship. Such an intention may be shown by a person's statement or conduct. If the U. S. Government is unable to prove that the person had such an intention when applying for and obtaining the foreign citizenship, the person will not lose his/her U.S. citizenship.

CURRENT LAW AND POLICY

United States law does not contain any provisions requiring U. S. citizens who are born with dual nationality or who acquire a second nationality at an early age to choose one nationality or the other when they become adults. The current nationality laws of the United States do not specifically refer to dual nationality.

While recognizing the existence of dual nationality and permitting Americans to have other nationalities, the U. S. Government does not endorse dual nationality as a matter of policy because of the problems which it may cause. Claims of other countries upon dual-national U. S. citizens often place them in situations where their obligations to one country are in conflict with the laws of the other. In addition, their dual nationality may hamper efforts to provide diplomatic and consular protection to them when they are abroad.

ALLEGIANCE TO WHICH COUNTRY

Like Americans who possess only U. S. citizenship, dual national U. S. citizens owe allegiance to the United States and are obliged to obey its laws and regulations. Such persons usually have certain obligations to the foreign country as well. Although failure to fulfill such obligations may have no adverse effect on the person while in the United States because the foreign country would have few means to force compliance under those circumstances, the person might be forced to comply with those obligations or pay a penalty if the person goes to the foreign country. In cases where a dual national encounters difficulty in a foreign country of which the person is a citizen, the ability of U. S. Foreign Service posts to provide assistance may be quite limited since many foreign countries including Ecuador may not recognize the dual national's claim to U. S. citizenship.

WHICH PASSPOR TO USE

Section 215 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1185) requires U. S. citizens to use U. S. passports when entering or leaving the United States. Dual nationals may be required by the other country of which they are citizens to enter and leave that country using its passport, but they do not endanger their U. S. citizenship by complying with such a requirement. Please note that U. S. law prohibits the issuance of visas to U. S. citizens.

LOSS OF UNITED STATES CITIZENSHIP

It is the right of every U. S. citizen to remain a citizen until he or she intends to give up citizenship. It is also the right of each U. S. citizen to relinquish U. S. citizenship. Thus, a person can lose U. S. citizenship only if he or she voluntarily performs an expatriating act with the intent to relinquish. Expatriation is irrevocable and means that the person has relinquished all of the rights and duties of a citizen of the United States. Since the U. S. Government has an interest in knowing with certainty who is a U. S. citizen, it has established by law the procedures for determining when a person has relinquished his or her citizenship.

EXPATRIATING ACTS

You cannot lose your citizenship unless you voluntarily perform an expatriating act. Expatriating acts are designated by law.

INTENT TO RELINQUISH

If you have voluntarily performed one of the seven expatriating acts, the government must determine whether you did so intending to relinquish your U. S. citizenship. This determination is made under guidelines based upon Supreme Court cases. The two most important cases are Afroyin v. Rusk and Vance v. Terrazas. The essential holding of each of these cases is set out below.

The time for the determination of the person's intent with regard to retention or relinquishing of citizenship is the time of the performance of the designated act. An intent formulated at any time before or after the person performs the expatriating act may not be directly relevant to the question of relinquishment of citizenship.

WHAT ARE EXPATRIATING ACTS?

There are seven expatriating acts designated in Section 349(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act by which a native born or naturalized U.S. citizen may lose his nationality. They are as follows:

- (1) Obtaining naturalization in a foreign state.
- (2) Taking an oath or making an affirmation or other formal declaration of allegiance to a foreign state or political subdivision thereof.
- (3) Entering, or serving in, the armed forces of a foreign state.
- (4) Accepting, serving in, or performing the duties of any office, post, or employment under the government of a foreign state.

- (5) Making a formal renunciation of nationality before a diplomatic or consular officer of the United States in a foreign state, in such form as may be prescribed by the Secretary of State.
- (6) Making in the United States a formal written renunciation of nationality in such form as may be prescribed by, and before such officer as may be designated by the Attorney General. (Only under wartime situations).
- (7) Committing any act of treason against, or attempting by force to overthrow, or bearing arms against, the United States.

PRESERVING UNITED STATES CITIZENSHIP

If you have performed or intend to perform an expatriating act, or if you have any questions concerning the rights or duties of citizenship, the nature of the statutory expatriating acts, or the question of intent to relinquish citizenship; you are urged to contact the closest U.S. Embassy or Consulate.



Marriage in Ecuador

A marriage that is valid under Ecuadorian law is generally valid in any state of the United States. Marriage of American citizens in Ecuador must be performed in accordance with Ecuadorian law. Please note that Dual nationals (American/Ecuadorian citizens) who wish to marry in Ecuador need not marry as U.S. citizens in order for their marriage to be recognized in the United States. They may instead marry as Ecuadorian citizens – a process which incurs less time and expense than the process to marry as a U.S. citizen. The below information is therefore relevant to dual citizens who still wish to marry as U.S. citizens and to U.S. citizens who do not hold dual nationality with Ecuador. In addition, this is for general information purposes only, since the interpretation of Ecuadorian laws and regulations does not fall within the competence of the U.S. Embassy.

An American citizen who wants to get married in Ecuador must establish, to the satisfaction of the Ecuadorian authorities, that he or she is free to marry under the laws of the state of his or her residence in the U.S. Additionally, Ecuadorian law requires non-residents of Ecuador to reside in Ecuador for 75 consecutive days prior to the date they wish to marry. Exceptions are granted if the non-resident has Ecuadorian children; in that case they may marry before 75 days by having an interview with the Chief of Marriages at Civil Registry (Jefe de Matrimonios at Registro Civil). If authorized, they can get married in what is known as “Marriage by Exception” (“Matrimonio por excepcion”).

If two foreign nationals wish to marry in Ecuador, they must also have valid Ecuadorian [nonimmigrant visas](#) (known as “12 Visas”, such as a student, employment, volunteer, cultural exchange, business, etc.). If one foreign national possesses a valid permit for tourism purposes, known as a T-3 permit, the marriage cannot be approved, unless his or her status is changed to a 12-X or a 12-IX visa by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. If a foreign national and an Ecuadorian wish to marry in Ecuador, the foreign national must have a valid “12 visa” as well.

Nonimmigrant visas may be requested at an Ecuadorian Consulate or at Ecuador’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, if the applicant is currently in Ecuador. The specific procedures for each nonimmigrant visa, as to the requirements, are available on the visa page of the [Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Commerce and Integration’s website](#).

To be legal, all marriages must be performed by an Ecuadorian civil authority (Registro Civil); religious ceremonies do not have legal validity under Ecuadorian law. Civil marriages between

an American citizen and a non-national are only permitted to be conducted in the cities of Quito or Guayaquil, at the following locations:

- Amazonas N37-61 y Naciones Unidas esq. Tel: (593)(2) 381 42 90 **(Quito)**
- Av. 9 de Octubre entre Pedro Carbo y Pichincha. Tel: (04)3 802-300 **(Guayaquil)**

Marriage by exception (“Matrimonio por excepcion”) is only permitted to be performed in the city of Quito. Be advised that marriages entered in other provinces are neither legal nor recognized by Ecuadorian authorities.

In order to complete a legal marriage, the Ecuadorian Government requires the following documentation for foreign, non-residents in Ecuador:

- a. A copy of the entry stamp (“Movimiento Migratorio”) issued by the Ecuadorean Bureau of Immigration (“Direccion Nacional de Migracion”) in order to prove that the applicant has been legally in Ecuador for at least 75 days before getting married.
- b. Valid passport with a valid nonimmigrant visa (original and copy).
- c. Notarized certification of nationality and marital status (translated if applicable). To obtain this document:
 - It may be obtained in the country of nationality and authenticated by apostille in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of said country, or authenticated at the Embassy/Consulate of Ecuador in said country, or authenticated by an apostille at the appropriate Central Authority in the United States under The Hague Convention (<http://www.hcch.net>); or,
 - It may be obtained in the Embassy/Consulate of the corresponding country in Ecuador, and notarized at the same Embassy/Consulate.
- d. Documents to prove the legal termination of any previous marriages (divorce, death, or annulment certificates). Foreign documents must be authenticated by an Ecuadorian Consul abroad (not in Ecuador) or an apostille and accompanied by a certified translation into Spanish. The certification of the translation must be prepared by an Ecuadorian Consul in the United States or abroad, an Ecuadorian Civil Court or a Notary Public in Ecuador.
- e. One adult witness for each person, with a valid photo-ID card and voting certification (original and a copy).

The Ecuadorian Civil Registry requires the following documentation in order to perform a marriage:

- a. [Affidavit for Marriage](#) granted by the Embassy or Consulate of the applicant's country of origin. Click on the U.S. Embassy's web page for [Notarials](#) for more information.
- b. Valid passport with a valid Ecuadorian visa (original and a copy). Foreigners with resident status in Ecuador should also present an Ecuadorian national photo ID card (also known as Cedula de identidad).
- c. Documents to prove the legal termination of any previous marriages (divorce, death or annulment certificates). Foreign documents must be authenticated by an Ecuadorian Consul abroad (not in Ecuador) or an apostille by the appropriate Central Authority in the U.S. or other country under [The Hague Convention](#) and accompanied by a certified translation into Spanish. The certification of the translation must be done by an Ecuadorian Consul in the United States or abroad, an Ecuadorian Civil Court or an Ecuadorian Notary public (in Ecuador).

For updated information concerning fees for marriages in Ecuador please visit the [Ecuadorian Civil Registry's Fee](#) page.

Please contact the nearest [Ecuadorian Consulate in the United States](#) if you wish to get married in Ecuador and have additional questions regarding local marriage requirements.

Immigration of Alien Spouse to the United States

The alien spouse of an American citizen does not automatically acquire United States citizenship through marriage. S/he must obtain an immigrant visa to be able to immigrate to the United States.

For further information on immigration; please visit the [Alien Spouse of a U.S. Citizen page of our Immigrant Visas Section](#).

Divorce in Ecuador

Divorces are generally arranged with the assistance of a lawyer because the process is complex. Depending on the circumstances, various documents (such as the marriage certificate, birth certificates, financial documents, etc.) must be submitted to the local court that is handling the case.

The Embassy provides a [list of Ecuadorian attorneys](#) for your reference. The Embassy assumes no responsibility for their professional ability and integrity.



Sending Money to U.S. Citizens Overseas

8AM - 8PM weekdays
1-888-407-4747

When a U.S. citizen encounters an emergency financial situation abroad, the Department of State's Office of Overseas Citizens Services (OCS) can establish a trust account in the citizen's name to forward funds overseas. Upon receipt of funds, OCS will transfer the money to the appropriate U.S. Embassy or Consulate for disbursement to the recipient. The recipient must contact the Embassy or Consulate directly to arrange receipt. The fee for establishing a trust account is \$30. The **recipient's name and overseas location (city, country) must be provided with the fund transfer, or the transfer will be delayed.** The Embassy or Consulate normally disburses funds in the foreign country's currency and not in U.S. dollars. Trust fund transfers are a one time service, except in specific, pre-approved circumstances. Funds sent during non-business hours may not be processed until the next business day. Questions can be directed to OCS at 1-888-407-4747.

There are three methods of transmitting funds to OCS for transfer overseas:

WESTERN UNION: Funds sent via Western Union are generally processed and available for disbursement overseas within 24 hours during the business week. This is usually the fastest method of sending funds to OCS. Funds can be sent one of three ways. (1) call Western Union's Quick Collect® service at 1-800-634-3422, (2) log onto <http://www.westernunion.com/>, or (3) visit a Western Union agent location. In most cases, funds sent via Western Union arrive at OCS within 30 minutes.

- **If you have a MasterCard or Visa credit card**, you can call Western Union's QuickCollect service at 1-800-634-3422. Western Union has a limit per credit card within a 7 day period. A second credit card may be required to send an additional amount over the first during the same 7 day period.
 - The "code city" is "OVERSEASEMERGENCY, DC."
 - The "pay to" name is "Department of State."
 - Use your telephone number as the account number.
 - Ask the operator to add the name and location of the U.S. citizen you are sending money to in the "reference" field.

- **If you have a MasterCard or Visa credit card**, you can visit Western Union's website:
 - Click on "Make Payment."
 - Choose a payment type.
 - Choose "Other Billers."
 - Select code city "OVERSEAS CITIZEN SERVICES."
 - Follow the instructions to register.

- **If you want to pay in cash**, you can visit any Western Union location in person:
 - This is the cheapest way to send money.
 - Call 1-800-325-6000 to find the closest location.
 - Complete a blue payment form.
 - Include the name and location of the U.S. citizen you are sending money to on the form.
 - We will deduct our \$30 processing fee during the transfer.
 - The final amount received overseas will be \$30 less than what you send so you should include it in the total.
 - Western Union charges additional fees for its services.

- **U.S. Mail or Courier Service:** Overnight or courier mail may take 3-4 days to reach us. Regular mail may take 3-4 weeks to reach us, due to security procedures. We do not recommend this method for urgent situations or emergencies.

- **We do not accept personal checks.** Send a cashier's check or money order, payable to "Department of State," for the required amount plus the \$30 processing fee, to:

Overseas Citizen Services, Department of State
SA-29, 4th Floor
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

 - Include the name and location of the U.S. citizen you are sending money to. Include your name, address and telephone number.



Non-Immigrant Visa Information

The immigration and Naturalization Law of the United States of America assumes that applicants for most categories of non-immigrant visas are applying with the intent to immigrate. Because of this, each applicant for a tourist visa must prove the following:

- That they have a well-established residence outside the United States as well as other obligations in their own country that assure that they will return to their country of origin at the end of their visit. Because of this, the Consular Section recommends that each applicant should apply for a visa in their current country of residence if the current country of residence is different from their country of birth or nationality.
- That their stay in the United States will be for a limited and specific time.
- That they have the financial resources necessary to cover the costs of the visit and round-trip transportation.

Applicants should bring any visas for travel to the United States that they have received in the past. They may also present documents that they believe demonstrate the above points. Normally, these will be documents that prove work, income, study, or, in the case of dependents (wife or husband, children under 18 years of age), similar documents for their spouse or parents. Applicants may bring all documents they feel are appropriate, however, the consular officer will generally only wish to inspect employment letters, bank statements, prior passports and/or visas, and professional credentials. Additionally, consular officers are under no obligation to review any documents and may not look at them. Titles to property and vehicles, stock certificates and articles of incorporations are not encouraged. Dependents must also prove their relationship to the family member in question with a birth or marriage certificate.

If applicants do choose to present documents, each document must be an original, must be current, and must be legalized by the Ecuadorian government when appropriate. Presenting falsified documents with the application may result in a finding of permanent ineligibility for a visa and being permanently barred from entering the United States. There is no one document that guarantees the issuance of a visa.

For an overview of the basic steps to apply for a non-immigrant visa, you may see general information on the Consular section of our website: <http://ecuador.usembassy.gov/>, select English language, and then go to the Visas subsection.

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Helpful Internet Sites

U.S. Embassy Quito: <http://ecuador.usembassy.gov>

American Citizen Services email: ACSQuito@state.gov

For nonimmigrant and all other general inquiries: ConsularQuito@state.gov

U.S. Consulate General Guayaquil: <http://guayaguil.usconsulate.gov>

Federal Income Tax Information: <http://www.irs.gov>

Voting (to register and information): <http://www.fvap.gov>

Social Security: <http://www.ssa.gov>

U.S. Department of Homeland Security: <http://www.dhs.gov>

U.S. Citizens and Immigration Service: <http://www.uscis.gov>

Centers for Disease Control: <http://www.cdc.gov>

U.S. Civil Registry Records: <http://usavital.com>

Country Specific Information Sheets, Travel Advisories, World Wide Caution Announcements:
<http://travel.state.gov>

Foreign Service Officer's Exam and other Employment Information:
<http://www.careers.state.gov>

United States Visas: <http://www.unitedstatesvisas.gov>

Hague Convention-Apostille Section: <http://www.hcch.net>

Register on-line: <http://travelregistration.state.gov>

U.S. Police Records: <http://www.fbi.gov>

Selective Service Registration and Information: <http://www.sss.gov>

Ecuador Travel Information: <http://www.ecuador.travel/>

Ecuador Expats Yahoo Group: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ecuador_expats/

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