



China 2011 OSAC Crime and Safety Report: Shenyang

Crime; Stolen items; Surveillance; Information Security; Political Violence; Natural Disasters

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Overall Crime and Safety Situation

The overall crime and safety situation in Shenyang and northeast China is stable, and the crime rate remains assessed at the low level. Though crime in northeast China is on the increase, the rate is low in comparison with other parts of the country. Northeast China is where the heavy industry sectors (automobile manufacturing, aircraft manufacturing, steel production, etc.) were located. After China's economic focus turned from the northeast toward the southeast, northeast China was left behind economically. It is only now starting to catch up.

Shenyang, as well as other parts of northeast China, has a large transient population made up of migrant laborers from the poorer parts of the country. This population increases dramatically during the warmer months when large construction projects are in full swing and will ebb during the colder months when construction slows. The transient population is often housed in large tents that move from one construction project to the next and houses many workers. This transient population brings with it some crime (e.g. petty thefts, assaults, etc.) that is often fueled by opportunity, alcohol, and desperation.

Based on local reports, the northeast is also experiencing an increase in its drug trade. Local media has reported that criminal elements are transporting illegal substances, particularly methamphetamine, across the DPRK border for distribution around China as well as to other countries. The focus of these reports has been on foreign criminal organizations (e.g. Japanese yakuza, etc.) involved in the illegal drug trade, but elements of the DPRK regime have also been accused of involvement. Local law enforcement has said that they are diligently combating the problem.

Fraud and corruption remain a constant in northeast China. One of the largest fraud centers in China is located in Liaoning province in Fushun. Likewise, bribing officials remains an acceptable form of conducting business in the northeast. However, some in-roads have been made to combat public corruption in the local government where a former vice-mayor was



convicted of extortion and bribery, and a former mayor was executed.

Crime Threats

Shenyang and most of the northeast has a fairly small Western ex-pat community. The most common crimes that affect Westerners are crimes of opportunity (i.e. purse snatchings, pick pocketing, taxi-fare extortion, etc.). Though not specifically targeted by criminal elements, Westerners sometimes fall prey to these crimes of opportunity, especially around tourist centers (e.g. hotels, points of interest, etc.) much like in large Western cities. Some reports of assaults on Westerners have been reported; however, they are infrequent and typically involve alcohol.

Road Safety

Driving in northeast China, and especially Shenyang, can be a challenging endeavor. Traffic laws are rarely enforced and frequently ignored by the general public. Roads are poorly maintained, and often lane markers are unidentifiable due to fading and failure to repaint them. Other hazards include open manholes, pedestrians, bicycles, motorbikes, and unplowed roads. Snow removal in the northeast consists of crews with coal shovels and brooms removing snow from the roadways and sidewalks by hand. Front loaders will clean up piles left behind. This makes for a slow process, and snow quickly becomes packed into ice in the frigid winter temperatures.

Because of a boom in auto ownership, most of the drivers on the road have been licensed within the last 10 years and are very inexperienced. Drivers do not maintain their respective lanes. Instead, they typically float between lanes or will straddle lane markers without heeding traffic to their rear. U-turns in the middle of traffic and counter-flow traffic (driving into oncoming traffic) is a common occurrence. Likewise, driving on sidewalks also occurs with regularity. Right-of-way is not recognized when turning left against oncoming traffic or entering traffic circles. Whoever yields first loses right-of-way. The same is true for pedestrians crossing the street: cross-walks and pedestrian right-of-way are not respected.

Traffic accidents are handled at the scene either with both parties agreeing to fault or by traffic enforcement, if they respond, determining who is at fault. Sometimes a determination cannot be made at the scene, and both vehicles will be impounded by traffic enforcement for further evaluation.

Political Violence



Historical Perspective

Like other parts of China, the threat of political violence remains low. Police are quick to react to violent outbreaks using force to subdue any disturbances. Unlike other parts of China, northeast China seems to be a bit more moderate in terms of political violence. Events that will spark political unrest in other parts of China frequently do not resonate in the northeast. For example, many parts of China saw widespread protests accompanied by mild political violence directed at Japanese government facilities and business organizations in retaliation for Japanese officials detaining a Chinese fishing vessel and arresting its crew. In northeast China, where one might expect a large reaction to this sort of event due to its history with Japan, not a single protest was witnessed.

Regional Terrorism and Organized Crime

The threat from indigenous terrorist organizations is rated as low. Indigenous terrorism is not of major concern in northeast China, and there are no terrorist organizations based in or conducting operations in Shenyang. Criminal organizations (e.g. Japanese, Russian, Chinese, and Korean crime syndicates), however, are represented and plentiful. Other criminal organizations include large fraud and counterfeit rings that operate throughout the northeast.

International or Transnational Terrorism

The threat from transnational terrorist organizations is rated as medium; however, transnational terrorist organizations do not operate in northeast China nor are there indications that any are attempting to start operations here.

Civil Unrest

The threat of political violence is rated as low. Political violence directed at Western organizations is uncommon.

Post-Specific Concerns

Environmental Hazards

Earthquakes, floods, mudslides, and other natural disasters are commonplace throughout China and can occur at any time without warning. However, the largest environmental hazard to affect northeast China is the bitter cold with temperatures remaining below 0 throughout



much of the region for several months, and heavy snowstorms will leave motorists stranded and bring cities to a standstill. One recent snowstorm in Heilongjiang province left motorists stranded on major highways for several days until military and rescue crews could reach them.

Industrial and Transportation Accidents

Industrial and transportation accidents occur, but reports on severity are often conflicting. Drivers of commercial vehicles are often under trained, and drive as if they are operating a much smaller vehicle. Added to this, commercial vehicles are typically overloaded with the load secured poorly, if at all. This leads to many accidents and close calls on major highways throughout China. In addition, there have been several recent incidents involving massive chemical spills and explosions at refineries and chemical plants. Except in the largest and most public incidents, the press is censored and unable to report accurately, making it difficult to estimate the true magnitude of the risks.

Despite outward appearances, many high-rise buildings, hotels, and apartment complexes are poorly constructed and are not in compliance with seismic or fire codes. On Chinese New Year in 2011, for example, Shenyang's newest and most prestigious apartment and office building was severely damaged by fire, which eventually spread to an adjacent 5-star hotel. American citizens affected by the fire report that not only did the fire alarms and sprinkler and fire suppression systems fail to engage, but some fire exits were locked and others completely unmarked. The response by firefighters was also slow and uncoordinated. Fire is not the only concern. Despite the region's high seismic rating, experts question whether many buildings are actually built to withstand even moderate quakes.

Kidnappings

Kidnappings with the intent of extorting money in northeast China is not commonplace. However, the Chinese government will "detain" Chinese citizens who may have status in the United States or who are Chinese-American. This is more of a problem along the North Korean border where many U.S. citizens work and will be detained by the North Korean government if found on the wrong side of the border.

Drugs and Narco-terrorism

Incidents of smuggling illegal substances into China through northeastern ports and borders are on the rise. The media reports that most of these smuggling operations are being orchestrated by Japanese, North Korean, or Russian criminal elements. These substances,



once in China, are distributed throughout the country to feed China's growing drug problem.

Privacy Concerns

All visitors should be aware that they have no reasonable expectation of privacy in public or private locations. The consulate regularly receives reports of human and technical monitoring of U.S. private businessmen and visiting U.S. citizens. The areas around U.S. and other foreign diplomatic facilities and residences are under overt physical and video surveillance; dozens of security personnel are posted outside of facilities and around residences, while video cameras are visible throughout Guangzhou. Overt microphones and video cameras are common in Chinese taxis.

All hotel rooms and offices are considered to be subject to on-site or remote technical monitoring at all times. Hotel rooms, residences, and offices may be accessed at any time without the occupants' consent or knowledge. Elevators and public areas of housing compounds are also under continuous surveillance.

Consulate employees are warned not to discuss sensitive information in their homes, vehicles, or offices. Members of the private sector should take similar precautions to safeguard sensitive, personal, and/or proprietary information, including on personal computers, PDAs, and cell phones.

All means of communication -- telephones, mobile phones, faxes, e-mails, text messages, etc., --are likely monitored. The Chinese government has access to the infrastructure operated by the limited number of internet service providers (ISPs) and wireless providers operating in China. Wireless access to the Internet in major metropolitan areas is becoming more and more common. As such, the Chinese can more easily access official and personal computers.

The Chinese government has publicly declared that it regularly monitors private e-mail and Internet browsing through cooperation with local ISPs. Some bloggers are subject to particular scrutiny in China where such activity is often carefully monitored and in some cases blocked. Common western social media websites, including Youtube, Facebook, and Twitter, are blocked in China.

Police Response

Police response for foreign victims of crime depends upon the type of infraction, where it transpired, and the social status of the victim. Urban forces are better trained and equipped,



especially in Beijing and other first-tier cities, where authorities spend millions of dollars on security-related infrastructure. Local police are semi-effective at deterring crime; most responses to alarms/emergency calls are sufficiently prompt if the police are informed that the victim is a Westerner or person of importance. In some cases, local police authorities will serve as a mediator between the victim and criminal to agree upon financial compensation (sometimes in lieu of jail time).

Investigative training and forensic equipment are improving but remain substandard in comparison with those of Western countries. Reports of investigations are never provided to RSO, despite repeated, formal requests.

If private U.S. citizens become the victim of a crime anywhere in China, they should contact the police by dialing 110 regardless of location (English-language capabilities will vary significantly). They may also contact American Citizen Services (ACS) at the embassy or nearest consulate for assistance. ACS officers can recommend appropriate medical facilities, provide contact information for local attorneys, notify family members, and explain how to transfer funds to China.

Medical Emergencies

Medical care continues to improve in many urban areas, though it continues to lag in the northeast. Because Western medical centers are not available in the northeast, U.S. citizens are advised to seek out the VIP section ("gao gan bing fang") at large public hospitals where there are more likely to be Western-trained physicians and more modern medical equipment.

International SOS maintains a 24-hour alarm center for visitors to China. While SOS is not present in Shenyang, SOS representatives can advise on the availability of care in most urban areas. Collect calls are accepted. Contact information is as follows:

Beijing: 86-10-6462-9000
Hong Kong: 852-2528-9900
USA: 215-942-8226

Both municipal and private ambulance service in China remain substandard. Response time is typically very slow, and transport to the nearest hospital can take a considerable amount of time due to congested traffic conditions. Most ambulances are poorly equipped and staffed by individuals lacking EMT training akin to that found in the U.S. or Western Europe.



Global Doctor

Global Doctor is the primary emergency medical assistance firm in Shenyang. This facility has a 24-hour alarm center and has expertise in arranging for emergency medical assistance (anywhere in China) including ambulance service, hospitalization, and/or evacuation by commercial or charter aircraft. Assistance is provided on a pay per service basis. The clinic accepts credit cards and cash in the form of Chinese Yuan (RMB).

Address: No. 54 Bangjiang Road, Dadong District, located in the Deji Hospital
Tel: 2433-0678
Emergency Calls: 2433-0678
Medical Director: Peter Burgos, MD

SHENGJING HOSPITAL OF CHINA MEDICAL UNIVERSITY

This hospital is close to the consulate and is able to provide limited VIP care. The amount of paperwork is overwhelming, and facilities may not meet Western expectations for cleanliness. Patients must pay cash prior to receiving care. Mr. Nao is the hospital's medical liaison and can help U.S. citizens navigate the system. This is the hospital designated for pediatric and gynecology care. The hospital is located on Wenhua Lu and just west of Nan San Jing Jie (the street located east of the consulate). The emergency room is in the building to the right as you face the main building.

Address: No. 36, Sanhao Street, Heping District, Shenyang, Liaoning
Telephone: 024-96615
POC: Dr. Wu

THE FIRST HOSPITAL OF CHINA MEDICAL UNIVERSITY

This hospital is across the street from the Zhongshan Crown Plaza Hotel. The emergency entrance is on the north side near Mao circle.

Address: No. 155 North Nanjing Street, Heping District, Shenyang, Liaoning
Telephone: 024-961200
POC: Dr. Pan Bochen

THE PEOPLE'S HOSPITAL OF LIAONING PROVINCE

This is the hospital designated for cardiac emergencies.



Address: No. 33 Wenyi Road, Shenhe District, Shenyang, Liaoning
Telephone: 2401-6628
Deputy Medical Director: Dr. Christy Feng

EYE DOCTOR – THE NO 4 PEOPLE’S HOSPITAL OF CHINA MEDICAL UNIVERSITY

Address: No.11 Xinhua Road, Heping District, Shenyang
Telephone: 024-6203-7317

TAGAMI DENTAL CLINIC

Address: Gate 4, No.99 Nan Ta Street, Dongling District, Shenyang
Telephone: 2456-1295

Air ambulance Services

Air ambulance service varies by city. In addition to services provided by Global Doctor, International SOS is the main Western air ambulance provider along China's east coast. MEDEX also provides regional air ambulance services; its representatives can be contacted via <http://www.medexassist.com/>.

Medical evacuation by air is expensive: \$60,000 - \$100,000 per flight depending upon the patient's condition and final evacuation destination. Visitors are strongly encouraged to purchase medical evacuation insurance prior to traveling to China.

Tips on How to Avoid Becoming a Victim

For the latest security and other information, Americans living and traveling abroad should regularly monitor the Department’s Bureau of Consular Affairs at <http://travel.state.gov>, where the current Emergency Messages to U.S. Citizens can be found, as well as important information for Americans who face emergencies abroad. U.S. citizens residing or traveling in China are reminded to sign up in the Department’s Smart Traveler Enrollment Program by entering their travel itinerary and contact information at: <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui>. In case of difficulties registering online, please contact the closest U.S. embassy or consulate for assistance.

Travelers are strongly encouraged to be aware of their surroundings while in China. Continued vigilance is necessary to reduce the likelihood of becoming a victim of crime. As a



general rule, lesser developed areas in major cities have a higher rate of crime. Statistically, more crimes of opportunity transpire during early morning hours; for example, individuals who frequent bars, nightclubs, and similar establishments are more likely to be involved in physical altercations after midnight.

Visitors should disperse money in more than one location on their person, taking care to separate small and large denominations. Men should place their wallets in front pockets, while women should drape the shoulder straps of purses across their body, keeping them in view and under positive control at all times. If you use a backpack, do not place items of worth inside.

Travelers are encouraged to make copies of their passport photo page and visa, as well as credit card numbers (to include telephone contact information in the event the card is stolen); these copies should be stored in their hotel or residence in the event the actual items are stolen.

Public payphones are becoming less common in urban areas. Long-term visitors should purchase cellular telephones, and short-term travelers should contact their cellular phone provider to determine if it provides coverage in both mainland China and Hong Kong.

Individuals are encouraged to use official taxis that employ meters. If a driver refuses to use a meter, exit the vehicle and use another taxi.

Counterfeit products are readily available, but it is illegal to import them into the U.S. U.S. customs officials have the authority to seize suspect goods and impose fines on travelers caught attempting to enter the U.S. with counterfeit items.

Further Information

Regional Security Officer: 86-24-2322-2047
Consulate Operator: 86-24-2322-1198
Medical Unit: 86-24-2322-1198 ext. 8155
Consular Affairs (ACS): 86-24-2322-1198 ext. 5132
Political/Economic Section: 86-24-2322-1198 ext. 5104

OSAC Country Council Contact Information

An OSAC Country Council does not exist in Shenyang or northeast China. However, the Regional Security Officer is available to address the security concerns from the U.S. business



community. Questions should be directed to the U.S. Consulate General Shenyang Regional Security Office at 86-24-2322-2047 or to RSO Patrick Newell at NewellPV@state.gov.

Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou all have active OSAC Country Councils. The initial point of contact for each Council is the Regional Security Officer who can be reached via the numbers listed above. E-mail addresses for each RSO are as follows:

RSO James Lemarie (Beijing): LemarieJD@state.gov
RSO Daniel Wilhelm (Guangzhou): WilhelmDJ@state.gov
RSO William Gannon (Shanghai): GannonWB@state.gov