

**From:** Online  
**Sent:** Thursday, 22 August 2019 04:59  
**To:** Marie SMITH  
**Subject:** United Kingdom Travel Advisory



## Pre-trip Advisory

Please [click here](#) to acknowledge that you have read and understood the information contained within this Pre-Trip Advisory.

Dear Marie Smith,




The Bureau of Meteorology is committed to the safety and wellbeing of its employees, which extends to those travelling internationally for business.

It is important that you read the following pre-trip advisory from International SOS which contains important security and medical information relevant to your travel.


Additionally, the advisory contains business and cultural information to assist you during your time at your destination.

International SOS provides special knowledge and assistance regarding security, medical or personal issues such as lost passport or prescriptions. Whether you have questions about the information on this advisory, become seriously ill abroad, or need assistance due to a lost or stolen wallet, call any 24-hour assistance centre around the world to speak with a doctor, security specialist or coordinator.

Remember to carry our International SOS card so you always have the phone numbers with you when travelling, which you can download using the link below.

 <b>Call for Assistance</b> <b>Dedicated Assistance Number</b> +61 2 9273 2785	 <b>Membership Card</b> <b>Printable Version</b> Comcover Overseas Medical and Travel Assistance (OMTA) 12ACMA000001	 <b>Download the App</b>
---	---	--

### Links

 [Comcover Portal](#)  
[Sign up for essential pre-travel eLearning here](#)

### Destination at a Glance

 Destination:

# United Kingdom

 LOW MEDICAL RISK

 LOW TRAVEL RISK



## MEDICAL CARE

### Excellent

Good quality care throughout. ([Read more...](#))



## FOOD AND WATER

### Generally safe

Tap water safe to drink. Low risk from food. ([Read more...](#))



## VACCINATIONS

### Routine only

No additional vaccinations recommended. ([Read more...](#))



## DISEASE RISK

**No known Zika** ([Read more...](#))



## MALARIA

**None** ([Read more...](#))



## RABIES

### Avoid bats

If scratched or bitten by a bat, you need urgent treatment. ([Read more...](#))



## CRIME

### Limited to hot spots

Opportunistic and petty crime is more frequent in some areas; foreigners may be affected ([Read more...](#))



## PROTESTS

### Sometimes disruptive or violent

Protests result in disruption and sometimes localised violence but are unlikely to pose a threat to foreign nationals ([Read more...](#))



## TERRORISM / CONFLICT

### Limited indirect risk to foreigners

Terrorism or violence by armed groups is rare and poses only limited indirect risks to foreign nationals ([Read more...](#))



## TRANSPORT

### Reliable and safe

All forms of public transport are reliable and safe ([Read more...](#))



## NATURAL HAZARDS

### Occasionally affect travel

Natural hazards occasionally damage infrastructure or disrupt travel for limited periods ([Read more...](#))



## CULTURAL ISSUES

### No consequences

Non-compliance with cultural norms will have no implications ([Read more...](#))

[^ Back to Top](#)

## Alerts and Updates



21 Aug 2019 - 16:33

Continue to monitor developments over planned Ryanair strikes until 28 September; related walkout halted in Ireland

17 Aug 2019 - 08:34

Liverpool: Anticipate disruption, reconfirm

flights during planned strike by airport workers  
on 22, 24, 29 August

13 Aug 2019 - 14:33

Northern Ireland: Continue to avoid all  
gatherings linked to ongoing marching season  
until end of August

25 Jul 2019 - 02:34

Continue to monitor developments, follow all  
government guidelines related to UK leaving  
EU; deadline extended until 31 October  
(Revised)

14 Jul 2019 - 06:59

Northern Ireland: Avoid all gatherings linked to  
ongoing marching season until end of August  
(Revised)

[^ Back to Top](#)

## Security



### STANDING TRAVEL ADVICE

- Travel can continue with standard security precautions.
- Take basic security precautions against petty and street crime.
- There is a credible risk of terrorist attack by Islamist militants. Be vigilant and follow instructions from the police and security authorities. Be alert to suspicious behaviour and report any suspect packages to the authorities.
- Security alerts or hoaxes can trigger the short-notice evacuation of transport hubs or public locations, which can cause disruption. Follow all directives issued by the authorities during any security operation and do not act on the basis of unverified information.
- There is a residual threat of attacks in Northern Ireland by so-called dissident Irish Republican terrorist groups. Be vigilant in the vicinity of UK state buildings including police stations, army barracks and government offices.

[^ Back to Top](#)

## CRIME

The main threat to members is from pickpockets or bag-snatchers in crowded places such as busy shopping areas, public transport hubs and tourist attractions. Mitigating the risks requires only common-sense security precautions and a degree of vigilance. Serious crime is very rarely random, generally confined to major cities and most frequently linked to personal or domestic issues. Gang related crimes do occur in the lower-income boroughs of major cities, though violence is usually targeted against rival elements and highly unlikely to affect foreign travellers.

Instances of knife crime in recent years have increased in major cities, including the capital London. However, such incidents are generally targeted and occur on the outskirts of cities or in residential neighbourhoods; business travellers are unlikely to be affected.

Electronic crimes and ATM and credit card fraud, such as card skimming and cloning, have increased. Members should be alert to any suspect activity, including overly friendly behaviour by strangers or signs that the device may have been tampered with, while making transactions. Security at major hotel chains is generally good. As a precaution, travellers should leave valuables and passports in the hotel safe.

[^ Back to Top](#)

## TERRORISM



## *Islamist terrorism*

London continues to be a significant potential target for Islamist extremist groups and lone individuals inspired by radical Islamist ideology. Attacks could focus on major public transport facilities, government buildings and prominent tourist and commercial centres. The most significant Islamist terrorist attack in the capital occurred on 7 July 2005, when four bombings of the public transport network killed 52 people and injured more than 700 others; an attempt to carry out a similar attack two weeks later failed. Since 2005, a number of attempted terrorist attacks have been foiled. However, on 22 March 2017, four members of the public were killed and at least 40 injured after a man drove a vehicle into pedestrians on Westminster Bridge before crashing into railings and fatally stabbing a police officer. The attack was claimed by the Islamic State group. This was followed on 3 June by a similar attack, in which three men drove a van into pedestrians on London Bridge before getting out and stabbing several people in nearby Borough Market; at least seven people were killed and 48 others injured. In the northern city of Manchester, a suicide bomber killed 22 people leaving a pop concert on 22 May 2017.

## *Irish republican terrorism*

A number of Irish republican terrorist groups remain active and have steadily increased their activity since mid-2008 in Northern Ireland, particularly against officers of the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). The most prominent dissident republican paramilitary organisations are the Real Irish Republican Army (Real IRA) and Continuity Irish Republican Army (Continuity IRA). The risk from these groups is largely confined to traditional republican strongholds such as western areas of Belfast and Londonderry, as well as Antrim (Co Antrim), Craigavon (Co Armagh) and border regions of the counties of Tyrone and Armagh. Telephoned warnings are generally given for bombings in urban areas, indicating that the primary purpose of such attacks is to cause damage and disruption rather than casualties. Most recently, an explosive device was discovered under the vehicle of a police officer on 1 June 2019 at the Shandon Park Golf Club in Belfast. This follows a car bomb explosion carried out by the Real IRA in Londonderry on 21 January.

Dissident republican groups lack sufficient resources and public support to conduct a major and sustained armed campaign similar to that waged by the Provisional IRA between 1969 and 1997. The risk is further mitigated by the effectiveness of the PSNI.

[^ Back to Top](#)



## **TRAVEL RISK SUMMARY**

The most common risks to travellers result from opportunistic street crime such as pickpocketing, bag-snatching and mugging. Levels of violent crime are higher in major cities, though such activities tend to be concentrated in lower-income areas that short-term visitors are unlikely to frequent.

Protests are normally well policed and remain peaceful; on rare occasions though when they are staged by radical activists they can become confrontational. Urban riots have also occurred. Occasional outbreaks of sectarian violence pose an indirect risk to business travellers in some areas of Northern Ireland.

The UK is exposed to the threat of Islamist militant attacks, though its extensive and effective intelligence and security apparatus largely mitigates associated risks. In July 2005, several suicide bombings hit the capital London's public transport system. In 2017, the country experienced several further high-profile attacks: a car-ramming attack in the Westminster area of London in March; a suicide bombing at a concert venue in Manchester in May, and a vehicle-ramming and stabbing attack in the London Bridge area in June.

This information is intended as a summary of the travel security environment; however, the risks can change at short notice during a crisis or evolving situation. Please refer to our alerts to ensure you are informed of the most recent developments.

[^ Back to Top](#)

## **RULE OF LAW**

The rule of law is well established in the UK. Concerns remain about the operational effectiveness of policing in some inner cities, particularly in areas affected by low levels of social cohesion, though business travellers are unlikely to be affected directly unless they visit such areas. The police are generally helpful and courteous, though few will speak any language other than English fluently. Most police officers are unarmed, though armed officers are routinely deployed at government buildings and embassies in the capital, as well as airports.

[^ Back to Top](#)

## CORRUPTION

Business personnel and expatriates are unlikely to experience instances of corruption in their everyday activities.

[^ Back to Top](#)

## RECENT HISTORY

A member of NATO and a permanent member of the UN Security Council, the country was part of the first US-led war on Iraq in the early 1990s, the UN and NATO deployments in Bosnia from 1992 to 2007, and NATO's bombing campaign against Serbian forces in Yugoslavia in 1999. The UK joined the US in the so-called 'war on terror', which started in October 2001, with the intent to oust the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. It was also the second-largest contributor to the US-led coalition that invaded Iraq in 2003. This unpopular conflict claimed the lives of more than 170 British soldiers, and tarnished then-prime minister Tony Blair's record. It also hastened his succession by his former chancellor of the exchequer, Gordon Brown, who lost his post to Conservative Party leader David Cameron in the May 2010 elections. However, Cameron resigned after the UK voted to leave the EU in the historic, so-called 'Brexit' referendum in June 2016; he was replaced by Theresa May. Uncertainty over the Brexit process since the end of 2018 continues to strain relations with the EU. With May standing down on 7 June, a 'No Deal' scenario remains likely.

[^ Back to Top](#)

## SOCIAL UNREST

Most demonstrations are non-violent, though clashes occur occasionally and can cause travel disruption, particularly during major rallies in city centres. With the exception of successive days of widespread rioting in London and other major cities in the summer of 2011, significant unrest is an unusual occurrence. Where it does occur, as in London and some other British cities, business travellers are not a direct target; participants mainly focus on opportunistic looting of commercial premises and high street shops, or confrontations with police officers.

### *Sectarian conflict – Northern Ireland*

Sectarian tensions between the Unionist and Nationalist populations of Northern Ireland persist, and lead to sporadic low-level disorder, such as fist-fights and bottle- and stone-throwing between rival groups. Such unrest typically takes place in the early evenings in lower-income residential areas, typically at sectarian interfaces (where Unionist and Nationalist communities exist alongside each other), principally in the western and northern areas of Belfast and in western Londonderry (Derry, County Londonderry). Violence is usually directed at police patrols or stations, or occurs on the fringes of politically contentious events such as the annual marches by the Unionist Orange Order organisation. Disturbances between rival groups may occur during the annual 'marching season' commemorating various historical events, which runs from April until September.

Disturbances are likely to focus on working-class neighbourhoods in Northern Ireland's main urban centres, including around Ardoyne and Ormeau roads in Belfast, parts of Londonderry and the suburbs of Portadown and Craigavon (both Co Armagh). Although most of these areas are not located close to central business districts, rallies can take place in more central locations such as Belfast's Donegall Square.

[^ Back to Top](#)

## Entry & Departure Requirements

Passport and visa requirements are subject to change and vary depending on the length of stay and visa type (business or tourist). Check with your travel advisor, embassy or consulate in your home country. Passports must be valid for at least six months from the date of entry.

	Passport Required?	Visa Required?	Return Ticket Required
Australia	Yes	No/2	No
United Kingdom	N/A	N/A	N/A
Canada	Yes	No/2	No
Europe	No/1	No	No
United States	Yes	No/2	No

[^ Back to Top](#)

## Departure Tax

- Departure tax is included in the air fare; it depends on the class of travel and the distance between London and the capital city of the destination country/territory.

[^ Back to Top](#)

## BY AIR

There are internal flights between London and most major cities, including Edinburgh, Glasgow, Liverpool, Manchester and Newcastle. The network of flights between cities other than London has increased rapidly with the expansion of low-cost airlines. [British Airways](#) is the flag carrier. A valid passport is required for internal flights.

[^ Back to Top](#)

## BY TAXI

Taxis are plentiful in all major cities. Most taxis can be hailed on the street if they have a lit orange 'for hire' sign, but can also be found at taxi ranks. Most taxis are metered, but if the destination is outside Greater London, the fare can often be negotiated. This is particularly the case for so-called 'minicabs'; travellers should ensure that they use the services of licensed cab companies and do not flag down 'anonymous' drivers operating illegally. Taxis are not normally shared with strangers and drivers do not stop if they are already carrying passengers.

Normally, a maximum of five passengers can ride in a 'Hackney cab' (the colloquial name for the black cabs found in London and other UK cities) and four in a saloon or sedan car, though some taxi firms operate larger vehicles. Fares are charged depending on the time of the day and distance driven, and tend to be higher in the evenings, at weekends and during public holidays. Travellers should avoid using shared taxi services, offering to share a vehicle with unknown additional passengers.

[^ Back to Top](#)

## BY TRAIN

The [rail](#) system is extensive and express intercity trains run between major towns, though these can be subject to delays. Services are sometimes disrupted during bank holidays and over the weekends when the authorities undertake repair and maintenance works, so it is worth confirming schedules before travelling. Fares are high by European standards, particularly if travel is not booked in advance.

There has been no terror attack on the railway network, but three bombs exploded on the London Underground (LU) system on 7 July 2005. Travellers are advised to be vigilant and to report any suspicious



persons or packages to the authorities.

Travellers can encounter drunkards or muggers at night, especially on late night trains. Although stations are well policed, remain alert for possible pickpockets and bag-snatchers.

Members, especially women travelling alone, should avoid sitting in empty carriages late at night, particularly on trains with no interconnecting doors between carriages. Middle- and long-distance trains generally have guards.

[^ Back to Top](#)

## BY OTHER MEANS

There is an extensive bus network in major cities. Inter-city coaches operate between several cities, though take longer than trains. Ferry services are also available to the Channel Islands, Ireland, the Isle of Man and other destinations.

[^ Back to Top](#)

## LANGUAGE

English is the official language and is spoken throughout the UK, though there are areas (such as north-western Wales and remote parts of Scotland) where it is the second language.

[^ Back to Top](#)

## Tipping

A 10% tip is customary at restaurants for good service. Some establishments incorporate a service charge into the bill. It is worth checking whether this is suggested or mandatory, as the former does not need to be paid if the customer feels the service was not good. Also check that the staff member will receive the service charge; some restaurants do not pass on the full amount to the server, in which case you might wish to not pay the service charge and leave a cash tip to your server instead. Tipping taxi drivers is not common, though if paid, is usually 10% of the fare.

[^ Back to Top](#)

## WORKING WEEK

- Working week: Monday-Friday
- Office and Bank hours: 09.00-17.00/18.00
- Some banks may open on Saturdays until 12.30

[^ Back to Top](#)

## Climate

Mean temperatures in southern England are 4.5°C (40°F) in January and 18°C (64°F) in July. Temperatures rarely dip far below freezing in winter (December-February), or exceed 26°C (80°F) in summer (May-August). The north of England and Scotland can be significantly colder in winter. Western areas are wetter than eastern ones, particularly in the north. The weather is famously changeable, most notably in the spring months of March and April, and rain is possible throughout the year. For current weather conditions, travellers should consult the [Met Office](#).

[^ Back to Top](#)

## GEOGRAPHY

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (the UK) comprises England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, located on the British Isles. The British Isles are surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean, the North Sea and the English Channel. The Irish Sea separates England, Wales and Scotland from Ireland. The

Channel Islands are located just off the northern coast of France. The Channel Tunnel connects England with France. The Severn is the longest river, while the Thames, which flows through London, the Trent and the Mersey are other important waterways. The United Kingdom is administratively divided into 27 counties.

[^ Back to Top](#)

## POLITICAL SITUATION

The UK is a parliamentary democracy with a constitutional monarchy. Traditionally, power has alternated between the centre-right Conservative and centre-left Labour parties. Parliament consists of the House of Commons and the less influential upper chamber (House of Lords). The Conservative Party led by then-prime minister David Cameron won the general election in May 2015. However, Cameron resigned after the 'no' vote prevailed in the June 2016 referendum on whether the UK should remain part of the EU (Brexit) and he was replaced by Theresa May. While the next general elections were due in May 2020, May called for a snap election, which was held on 8 June 2017, hoping to secure a larger majority for the Conservative Party ahead of the forthcoming Brexit negotiations with the European Union. However, the Conservative party lost its overall majority in parliament and formed a coalition government with the Democratic Unionist Party of Northern Ireland.

The Brexit deadline has been extended until 31 October 2019 after several negotiations. Uncertainty continues to mark the process as a 'No Deal' scenario remains likely. Prime Minister Theresa May will step down on 7 June as prime minister and leader of Conservative Party. Divisions within the Conservative Party and parliament over Brexit are likely to deepen in the coming months, increasing the likelihood of the government pursuing a no-deal EU exit in October.

[^ Back to Top](#)

## Visas and Procedures

### Passport Note

Passport valid for at least three months beyond length of stay required by all nationals referred to in the chart above except:

1.
  - a.) EU nationals holding a valid national ID card.
  - b.) A passport is not required for travel between Great Britain and Ireland (an official form of identification, such as a driver's licence, is required), Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man. Passengers transiting the UK destined for the Republic of Ireland should hold return tickets to avoid delay and interrogation.

### Visas

Not required by nationals referred to in the chart above for the following period:

2. Nationals of Australia, Canada and US for stays less than six months.

Nationals of Iceland, Norway and Switzerland also do not require a visa to enter the UK. Biometric passport holders of Venezuela and Taiwanese nationals with an identification card number issued by Taiwanese authorities can travel and stay visa-free in the UK for up to six months. In addition, nationals of Andorra, Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, Dominica, East Timor, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Honduras, Hong Kong (SAR), Iceland, Israel, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Mexico, Namibia, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Seychelles, Singapore and Uruguay do not need visas for stays up to six months.

Nationals of Oman, Qatar and United Arab Emirates (UAE) do not require a visa for visits of up to six months, but must register through the Electronic Visa Waiver (EVW) system at least 48 hours before departure. The EVW document is valid for a single entry and a copy should be presented on arrival and departure. The information on the EVW document should correspond with the holder's passport.

Nationals of countries that do not require a visa should be in possession of either a return ticket or, if arriving



on a one-way ticket, proof of sufficient funds to accommodate and support themselves for the duration of stay. All other nationals should apply for a visa in advance from their local British embassy or consulate.

A UK Visitor's Visa allows a person to travel and stay in the UK for up to six months. It also covers those travelling to the UK for business trips or medical treatment, or those travelling to other countries via the UK. A Business Visitor Visa can be granted for a single entry or for multiple entries with a validity of two years. Transit visas are required if the traveller is a visa national who wishes to stay in the country longer than 48 hours, a Direct Airside Transit Visa (DATV) national, or a non-national. Travellers intending to stay longer than six months, or to work, will require the relevant visas. In addition, when applying for a visa for stays of more than six months, nationals of Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cote d'Ivoire, Congo (DRC), Eritrea, Ghana, India, Kenya, Laos, Niger, Pakistan, Rwanda, Somalia, Tanzania, Thailand, Togo and Uganda are required to submit a certificate confirming that they are free from Tuberculosis (TB) at the time of application; this certificate should be obtained after undergoing a pre-entry screening and before applying for the visa.

Visitors, who have been refused entry to the country previously, will have to get an entry clearance from the British Diplomatic Commission before planning a visit to the country.

### Entry/Exit requirements

Visitors must possess a valid passport during their stay. Travellers may be required to present onward/return ticket and proof of sufficient funds to support their intended stay. Nationals of European Economic Area (EEA) member states are not required to complete a landing card on arrival. Travellers arriving from, or going to, a country outside the EU must complete a cash declaration form if carrying cash in excess of 10,000 euros.

Travellers arriving on direct flights from the following countries need to check large electronic items - including laptops, tablets and devices larger than 16cm x 9.3 cm - in their hold baggage: Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. Previous restrictions on UK-bound flights from Tunisia were lifted in August 2017. Consult the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO)'s [website](#) for more information.

### Procedures

Passengers travelling through London Heathrow Airport around Christmas, Easter or the major public holiday weekends in early May, late May and August should expect long queues and allow at least three hours to negotiate check-in and security.

Passengers travelling to the US can be subjected to additional security measures, such as rigorous inspection of electronic devices. They may be asked to switch on their devices to prove its authenticity.

Customs and immigration checks are as strict as in most other Western countries. The usual green (nothing to declare) and red (goods to declare) channels are in operation, plus a blue channel for arrivals from within the EU. Passengers are more likely to be stopped and searched if arriving from countries where there is large-scale cultivation or trafficking of illicit drugs, or which are a source of significant numbers of illegal immigrants.

[^ Back to Top](#)



## NATURAL DISASTERS

Disruption to the public transport network caused by adverse weather conditions – including high winds, flooding and snowfall - is a common occurrence during the winter months. Coastal areas of England, Scotland and Wales are considered to be the most vulnerable to high speed winds. The most flood-prone parts of the country include low-lying areas of the West Country, the southwest coast, the border regions between England and Wales and the Midlands.

[^ Back to Top](#)



## BY ROAD

Driving in the UK is considered safe. Traffic drives on the left. Cars can be hired at numerous outlets, including at all international airports. Drivers from within the EU need a valid driving licence from their home country, while drivers from most other countries need an international driving licence. All foreign drivers must

be over 17 (or over 25 for some types of vehicle). Standards of driving are generally good and road signs are clear. Roads can often be narrow in urban areas. Speed limits are 30 miles per hour (48kph) in urban areas and 60-70mph (96-112kph) on highways; enforcement cameras are common, though signs warning of their location are prominent. It is prohibited to use car horns in built-up areas between 23.00 and 07.00. Driving conditions in some parts of the country deteriorate during winter months (December-February) due to snow and icy conditions. Drivers should use the emergency call boxes found along the motorway for any breakdown. These emergency boxes are directly linked to the motorway centre and therefore one of the best options.

[^ Back to Top](#)

### Paying for Health Care

Most providers will expect payment at the time services are rendered. Private hospitals and physicians usually accept major credit cards and cash.

Do not defer medical treatment because of financial concerns. Contact International SOS, and if our terms allow, we will make financial arrangements on your behalf.

[^ Back to Top](#)



### General Tips

- Upon introductions, people usually shake hands with each other.
- Avoid discussing controversial topics, such as politics and religion. The weather, sports and music/the arts are better opening conversational choices.
- British social interactions, particularly in a business setting, tend to be of a more formal character than in other European countries. Speaking at a moderate volume, using hand gestures in a conservative way, and respecting the personal space of others will help you fit in.
- When invited to a home, bring flowers or chocolates. Avoid giving red roses or white lilies, which have a particular significance attached.
- Do consider sending a handwritten thank-you note after being a guest in someone's home.
- Although casual wear is generally accepted, some nightclubs or restaurants expect patrons to wear more formal clothing such as jackets, ties, trousers and smart shoes. If uncertain, ask your host what is appropriate or telephone the establishment to ask what the suggested dress code is.

### Business Tips

- If in doubt, it is best to be more formal than informal. For example, do not use first names on first acquaintance unless your British counterpart signals that this is agreeable.
- Schedule appointments a few days in advance, and confirm upon arriving in the UK.
- It is important to be punctual for business appointments, especially if several people are involved. It is generally acceptable to be a few minutes late for social occasions.
- Business cards are usually exchanged.
- Business lunches are common. Working breakfasts have increased in popularity.
- Business clothing is formal: suits and ties for men, suits for women.
- Although it is not customary to give gifts in a business setting, inviting a host out for a meal or a show is acceptable. Hosts providing unpaid accommodation should receive a small gift; something from the donor's own country is usually best.
- Business may be slower in July and August, as people with children often take their holidays during these months. Other slower times for business include the days around Easter, May bank holidays and the week between Christmas and New Year's Day.

[^ Back to Top](#)

### Holidays & Security Dates

**2019**

**30 Nov** St. Andrew's Day  
Scotland only.

**25 Dec** Christmas Day

In some countries, if this holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, a public holiday is declared for the following Monday.

## 26 Dec Boxing Day

In many countries, if this holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, a public holiday is observed on the following Monday or Tuesday respectively.

## 2020

### 01 Jan New Year's Day

In many countries, if this holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, a public holiday is declared for the following Monday.

### 02 Jan New Year's Day (second day)

Second day of holiday.

### 08 Mar International Women's Day

Members should avoid all related gatherings as a precaution and to minimise travel delays.

### 17 Mar St Patrick's Day

### 01 May Workers' Day/Labour Day/May Day/Spring Day

Student/labour demonstrations can be expected. If the holiday falls on a rest day, it may be observed on the next working day.

[^ Back to Top](#)

## United Kingdom Telecommunications

### City Codes

#### Emergency Numbers

Ambulance 999

Fire 999

Police 999

#### Dialing Codes

Country Code 44

IDD Prefix (International Direct Dialing) 00

NDD Prefix (National Direct Dialing) 0

[^ Back to Top](#)

## United Kingdom Electricity

### Additional Electrical Information

Voltage: 230 volts

Frequency: 50 Hz

This is the most common plug type used:



[^ Back to Top](#)

## Financial

The pound sterling is the national currency. Regional banks issue notes in Scotland and Northern Ireland. These notes are legal tender elsewhere in the UK, though it is best to exchange them for the more common Bank of England notes because they may not be accepted by retailers outside their region who are unfamiliar with their design.

The Channel Islands have their own currency (notes and coinage), which has the same value as and is also called the pound. While pound sterling is accepted in the Channel Islands, the Channel Islands' pound is not

legal tender in the rest of the UK; however, banks will exchange it for pound sterling.

Traveller's cheques can be exchanged at banks and bureaux de change, but are not usually accepted at retail outlets. ATMs are common and accept the major international credit and bank cards such as Visa, MasterCard and American Express. Commercial establishments may use 'chip-and-PIN' technology for credit card transactions. Bureaux de change in central London, at airports and in other tourist areas are often open until very late, at weekends and on public holidays. Travellers should exercise caution when withdrawing money from ATMs and check if any suspicious devices are attached to the machine or placed over the card slot due to the risk of skimming.

[^ Back to Top](#)

## BUSINESSWOMEN

There are no specific security concerns for female travellers or businesswomen, who are advised to follow commonsense security precautions.

[^ Back to Top](#)

### City Information for London, United Kingdom

## CITY RISK RATING

**L** LOW TRAVEL RISK

[^ Back to Top](#)

## CITY SECURITY OVERVIEW

Visitors in London risk falling victim to petty crime – such as pickpocketing – in crowded central areas, though most incidents are concentrated in peripheral low-income districts. The East End, a little further out from the City of London business district, carries higher crime risks after dark, as can some housing estates to the north and south of the city centre; however, business travellers are unlikely to need to visit such areas. Instances of knife crime in recent years have increased in the city. However, such incidents are generally targeted and confined to peripheral and/or residential neighbourhoods; business travellers are unlikely to be affected.

The most significant terrorist attacks in the city's recent past took place on 7 July 2005, when four bombings on the transport system killed 52 people and injured more than 700 others. Several attacks involving assailants using vehicles and knives in the first half of 2017 highlighted the continuing risk of terrorist incidents in the city.

[^ Back to Top](#)

## ORIENTATION

London is the largest city in Europe and one of the world's main business destinations. The city is built along both banks of the Thames river. The City of London (locally known as 'the square mile' or 'the City') houses most financial businesses, including the London Stock Exchange. The West End (west of the City) and Docklands, specifically Canary Wharf, are also important business districts, though businesses are located across London. Belgravia, Trafalgar Square, the Grosvenor Square area and Kensington ('Embassy Row') are home to most countries' embassies and high commissions in the city. Traffic congestion can be a problem, especially at peak hours. Occasional protests or terrorist-related security alerts cause delays to travel by Underground ('tube'), railway and roads around the city.

[^ Back to Top](#)

## CRIME

London is generally safe, though precautions should be taken after dark.. As in all large cities, crime rates vary greatly from area to area. In some locations (especially poorer neighbourhoods in the north and east of the city

and elsewhere on its fringes), gun crime, mugging and vehicle theft pose a problem. Instances of knife crime in recent years have increased in the city. However, such incidents are generally targeted and confined to peripheral and/or residential neighbourhoods; business travellers are unlikely to be affected. However, petty and opportunistic crime remains the main risk to business travellers; in particular, pickpockets operate in popular tourist spots.

[^ Back to Top](#)

## **TERRORISM**

As the capital and the most populous city in the UK, London remains a potential target for Islamist extremist groups and lone, radicalised individuals. Possible targets include public transport, government buildings, financial institutions (the City of London and Canary Wharf) as well as tourist and commercial centres. The threat of such attacks to the capital was demonstrated in July 2005, when three bombs exploded on the London Underground ('tube') and another bomb detonated on a bus in the central Bloomsbury district. In addition to the four suicide bombers, 52 people were killed in the explosions, while more than 700 others were injured. These events are to this date the most significant attacks in London's recent past. Levels of security remain high and disruption to travel can occur occasionally in the event of security alerts, such as bomb hoaxes.

An improvised explosive device discovered and subsequently defused on a London Underground train on 20 October 2016 has since been attributed to a lone individual with a history of mental health issues. Both the discovery of the device by a member of the public and the police response serve to highlight a high level of awareness amongst the public and the capabilities of the emergency services to respond effectively to such incidents. On 22 March 2017, four people were killed and at least 40 injured after a man drove a vehicle into pedestrians on Westminster Bridge before crashing into railings and stabbing a police officer. The attack was claimed by the Islamic State group. On 3 June 2017, a similar attack occurred, in which three men drove a van into pedestrians on London Bridge before getting out and stabbing several people in nearby Borough Market; at least eight people were killed and 48 others injured. The most recent attack took place on 14 August 2018, when a man drove a vehicle into cyclists and pedestrians outside the Houses of Parliament, injuring three people.

The Irish Republican Army (IRA) ceasefire of 1997 has reduced the risk of Irish republican terrorism, though there is a residual risk from dissident republican groups. However, these organisations have a restricted freedom of action even within Northern Ireland and their capability to mount attacks in London is likely to be very limited, even if the intent remains.

Incidents involving other extremist or single-issue groups are rare. The last such noticeable incident occurred in October 2012, when five individuals with links to Sikh-extremism attempted to assassinate a retired Indian army officer in a pre-planned attack in the city's West End.

[^ Back to Top](#)

## **SOCIAL UNREST**

Demonstrations are relatively common in central London, especially in Parliament Square and Whitehall (Westminster) and outside embassies and high commissions located in Belgravia, Trafalgar Square, the Grosvenor Square area and Kensington ('Embassy Row'). These events can cause localised traffic disruption, but violence is rare because they are usually small and well-policed.

Significant unrest is an unusual occurrence, though looting and rioting broke out in several London boroughs in early August 2011 following a peaceful protest against the fatal shooting of a local resident by the police in disputed circumstances. Areas affected by the violence included Tottenham, Hackney, Enfield, Brixton, Ealing, Lewisham and Clapham. Business travellers are not a direct target during such incidents, as the main focus of the violence is property and police personnel and vehicles around shopping districts in residential areas. Such incidents usually result in the rapid deployment of a significant police presence to the affected areas, though this may lead to disturbances between the police and rioters.

[^ Back to Top](#)

## TROUBLE SPOTS

The East End, adjacent to the City financial district, can be hazardous after dark, as can some areas around housing estates in north and south London, though business visitors are unlikely to have a reason to visit these locations. The areas around King's Cross and Paddington railway stations are notorious for prostitution and drug-dealing, but are well policed at night. Pickpockets can be a problem in the West End area of central London (particularly Oxford Street, Bond Street, Regent Street, Piccadilly, Leicester Square and Covent Garden). Beggars and homeless people are particularly numerous along the Strand and around Underground (tube) stations. Although some may appear threatening or even verbally abuse passers-by, they are rarely dangerous.

[^ Back to Top](#)

## SEEKING HELP

There are three different police forces in London: the Metropolitan Police, the City of London Police and the British Transport Police. Armed Ministry of Defence police officers, who have the same powers and uniforms as other forces, patrol the Government area of Whitehall. Uniformed Community Support Officers have a limited range of powers, but can also be approached for help.

[^ Back to Top](#)

## EMERGENCY NUMBERS

All emergencies: 999

The number 112 can be used to call emergency services throughout the EU and supplements the local emergency numbers. Contact **International SOS** for help with your medical situation.

[^ Back to Top](#)

## PORT OF ENTRY

Airport codes: **LHR**, **LGW**, **LTN**, **STN**, **LCY**

Heathrow is 19 miles (30km) west of the **city centre**. It is London's main airport and one of the world's busiest international hubs. It is easy to travel between the airport's five terminals. The airport has restaurants, currency exchange counters, shops, executive lounges, ATMs and car hire outlets.

Gatwick (30 miles (49km) south of the **city centre**) is London's second airport and serves long-haul and short-haul business and holiday destinations. Luton (36 miles (58km) **north**) and Stansted (37 miles (60km) **north-east**) cater mostly for low-cost, short-haul and charter flights to Europe and other British destinations. These airports have a wide range of modern facilities. Services at London City Airport (seven miles (12km) east of the **City of London** business district or nine miles (15km) from the **West End**) are aimed at short-stay business visitors and flights are restricted to European and British destinations.

Customs and immigration checks are strict. The usual green (nothing to declare) and red (goods to declare) channels are in operation, plus a blue channel for arrivals from within the EU. Passengers are more likely to be stopped and searched if arriving from countries with a reputation for the large-scale cultivation or trafficking of illicit drugs, or those that are a source of significant numbers of illegal immigrants. Passengers are reminded to pack their **hand luggage** in accordance with the EU regulations on liquids enacted in 2006.

### *Eurostar services*

**Eurostar** services arrive at St Pancras International railway station, in the north of the city. The new terminus connects with Kings Cross St Pancras Underground station, which is served by the Circle, Hammersmith & City, Metropolitan, Northern, Piccadilly and Victoria lines. It is also within walking distance of Kings Cross and Euston mainline stations. Increased security requires that travellers check in 30 minutes before departure. Long queues form at security controls because all luggage is screened. The Eurostar takes a minimum of two hours and 15 minutes to Paris and two hours to Brussels. Taxis can be found outside the arrivals hall.



Frequent train, bus and coach services are available from other British cities, such as Birmingham, Cardiff, Manchester and Liverpool.

[^ Back to Top](#)

## TO CITY CENTRE

Comprehensive details on transport links from all five London airports to the city centre, including timetables and prices, can be found on the Transport for London ([TfL](#)) website.

### Heathrow

Train, London Underground (tube), bus and taxi services operate between Heathrow and central London. Heathrow Express trains leave every 15 minutes for Paddington station in west London, with a journey time of 15 minutes. A cheaper option is the Heathrow Connect service which runs approximately every half-hour and takes 25 minutes to reach Paddington. The LU Piccadilly Line service takes about 45 minutes to reach the city centre. Taxis are available at ranks outside the arrivals hall of each terminal; the journey to most city-centre destinations takes around one hour. The [National Express](#) bus service runs to Victoria and Euston railway stations, with stops near all of London's major hotels. It takes around one hour. Further information on travelling to and from the airport is available on the airport's [website](#).

### Gatwick

The [Gatwick Express](#) train is the quickest way to the city centre; trains leave every 15 minutes for the 30-minute journey to London's Victoria mainline station (35 minutes on Sundays) and tickets can be purchased on board. Trains to London Bridge (which is closer than London Victoria to the City of London business district) are also available, though journeys can take from 30 to 50 minutes and prices may vary depending on the service; it is advisable to seek additional information when you arrive at the station. Gatwick also has an official concessionaire taxi company, [Checker Cars](#), with a quoted fare system; the journey to central London takes approximately 65 minutes. Journeys can be pre-booked and paid for either in advance or at the end of the journey by cash or credit card. Checker Cars has booking offices at the exits from both the North and South Terminals. The [National Express](#) bus service runs to Victoria railway station. For further information, visit the airport's [website](#).

### Luton

A free shuttle-bus service operates between the airport terminal building and the nearest railway station, Luton Airport Parkway. The station is located just over a mile away (1.8km) and the shuttle bus takes five minutes. Trains operate between 05.00 and midnight and take about 35 minutes to St Pancras mainline station in the north of central London, and a further ten minutes to City Thameslink and Blackfriars stations in the City of London business district. [Green Line](#) route 757 is an express coach link to the city centre. Further information on getting to and from the airport is available in the Airport Guide section of the airport's [website](#).

### Stansted

The [Stansted Express](#) railway service is the easiest way to travel to and from Stansted Airport. Trains depart every 15 or 30 minutes and the journey takes about 45 minutes to Liverpool Street station, adjacent to the city's financial district. Most trains stop at Tottenham Hale, which connects with the Victoria Line of the Underground; the subsequent journey to central London takes less than 20 minutes. Several coach services connect the airport with central London. Tickets can be purchased in the arrivals area, at the coach station (situated in front of the terminal building) or on the coach. Metered taxis are easily available outside the terminal building. Further information on travel to Stansted can be found on the airport's [website](#).

### London City

The Docklands Light Railway ([DLR](#)) links the airport directly to the city's business district (in around 22 minutes) and the rest of the underground metro network. Taxis to the centre take 20-30 minutes. Further information on transport to and from the airport can be found at the airport's [website](#).

[^ Back to Top](#)

## WALKING

Walking is the best option if business appointments are relatively close to each other (for example, within the City). However, London's size means that this is not practical in most other cases.

[^ Back to Top](#)

## CAR HIRE

Car hire is unnecessary for visitors who are planning to stay in central London, as other modes of transport are readily available and parking can be expensive and difficult to find. However, international car hire companies are well represented and traffic drives on the left.

Visitors planning to hire a car should familiarise themselves with the [Congestion Charging scheme](#), which requires drivers to pay congestion charge if they wish to drive in central London between 07.00 and 18.00 on weekdays (excluding public holidays). Payment can be made in advance, on the day of travel or on the next day. However, an additional surcharge will apply for payment made on the day after travel. Payment is fairly convenient and can be made online; at selected shops, petrol stations and car parks; by post; by telephone; or by SMS text message. The charging zone includes the areas of Westminster, Soho, Marylebone, Finsbury, the City of London, Southwark and Lambeth. Road traffic signs with a large letter 'C' in a red circle indicate where the charging zone begins. The congestion charge is not usually included in the price of car rental.

[^ Back to Top](#)

## PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The London Underground ('tube') is safe, though delays and disruption to services on individual lines, including at peak times, can be relatively frequent due to a variety of factors, including mechanical failure and planned engineering work. Stations and trains can also be hot, crowded and uncomfortable, especially at peak times. Late at night (and particularly on weekends) there is an increased likelihood of alcohol-related verbal abuse and confrontational behaviour. In such instances, it is best to maintain a low profile and avoid arguments and altercations. In addition, lines can be subject to occasional delays due to congestion, signal failures and the breakdown of trains.

Buses are safe and comfortable, though journey times can be unpredictable because of traffic congestion. More information on public transport, including a map of the tube, as well as bus and tube service updates, is available on the [Transport for London](#) (TfL) website.

[^ Back to Top](#)

## TAXIS

Taxis can be the most convenient way to travel around central London, though they are expensive. Licensed taxis (referred to as 'black cabs', irrespective of their colour) can be hailed on the street: a light in or above the front windscreen indicates availability. Visitors should not use unlicensed taxis. The taxi queue at mainline railway stations can be long at peak hours. Taxi [fares](#) are charged based on time taken as well as distance travelled, which means that even a short journey in congestion may be very expensive. Fares may be higher during the weekend. The fare table is displayed in the passenger area. However, for travel outside Greater London, travellers should negotiate the fares before the start of the journey. There are several companies that provide women-only minicab and driver services.

[^ Back to Top](#)

## Diplomatic representation

### High Commission of Australia

The Strand  
London WC2B 4LA

## United Kingdom

Phone: +44 20 73794334

Second phone: +44 20 78875776

Fax: +44 20 72405333

Email: [consular.lhlh@dfat.gov.au](mailto:consular.lhlh@dfat.gov.au)

Website: <http://www.uk.embassy.gov.au/lhlh/home.html>

## Embassy of Belgium

17 Grosvenor Crescent

London SW1X 7EE

United Kingdom

Phone: +44 20 74703700

Second phone: +44 7710703639 (emer

Fax: +44 20 74703795

Email: [london@diplobel.fed.be](mailto:london@diplobel.fed.be)

Website: [http://countries.diplomatie.belgium.be/en/united\\_kingdom/](http://countries.diplomatie.belgium.be/en/united_kingdom/)

## High Commission of Canada

Canada House, Trafalgar Square

London SW1Y 5BJ

United Kingdom

Phone: +44 207 004 6000

Fax: +44 20 7004 6053

Email: [ldn.consular@international.gc.ca](mailto:ldn.consular@international.gc.ca)

Website: [http://www.canadainternational.gc.ca/united\\_kingdom-royaume\\_uni/index.aspx?view=d](http://www.canadainternational.gc.ca/united_kingdom-royaume_uni/index.aspx?view=d)

## Embassy of China

49 Portland Place

London W1B 1JL

United Kingdom

Phone: +44 20 76311430

Fax: +44 20 76369056

Email: [zj\\_uk@mfa.gov.cn](mailto:zj_uk@mfa.gov.cn)

Website: <http://www.chinese-embassy.org.uk/eng/>

## Embassy of Finland

38 Chesham Place

London SW1X 8HW

United Kingdom

Phone: +44 20 78386200

Fax: +44 20 78389703

Email: [sanomat.lon@formin.fi](mailto:sanomat.lon@formin.fi)

Website: <http://www.finemb.org.uk/public/Default.aspx?culture=en-US&contentlan=2>

## Embassy of France

58 Knightsbridge  
LondonSW1X 7JT  
United Kingdom

Phone: +44 20 70731000  
Fax: +44 20 70731042  
Email: [Presse.LONDRES-AMBA@diplomatie.gouv.fr](mailto:Presse.LONDRES-AMBA@diplomatie.gouv.fr)  
Website: <http://www.ambafrance-uk.org/-French-Embassy,2->

### **Embassy of Germany**

23 Belgrave Square  
LondonSW1X 8PZ  
United Kingdom

Phone: +44 20 78241300  
Fax: +44 20 78241449  
Website: <http://www.london.diplo.de/>

### **High Commission of India**

India House, Aldwych  
London  
United Kingdom

Phone: +44 02086295950  
Second phone: +44 020 7632 3035  
Fax: +44 (0) 20 8629 5950  
Website: <https://www.hcilondon.in/>

### **Embassy of Italy**

14 Three Kings Yard  
LondonW1K 4EH  
United Kingdom

Phone: +44 20 73122200  
Fax: +44 20 73122230  
Email: [ambasciata.londra@esteri.it](mailto:ambasciata.londra@esteri.it)  
Website: [http://www.amblondra.esteri.it/Ambasciata\\_Londra](http://www.amblondra.esteri.it/Ambasciata_Londra)

### **Embassy of Japan**

101-104 Piccadilly  
LondonW1J 7JT  
United Kingdom

Phone: +44 20 74656565  
Fax: +44 20 74919328  
Email: [info@ld.mofa.go.jp](mailto:info@ld.mofa.go.jp)  
Website: <http://www.uk.emb-japan.go.jp/>

### **Embassy of Netherlands**

38 Hyde Park Gate

LondonSW7 5DP  
United Kingdom

Phone: +44 20 75903200  
Email: [lon@minbuza.nl](mailto:lon@minbuza.nl)  
Website: <http://www.dutchembassyuk.org/home/>

### **Embassy of Norway**

25 Belgrave Square  
London  
United Kingdom

Phone: +44 (0) 20 7591 5500  
Email: [emb.london@mfa.no](mailto:emb.london@mfa.no)  
Website: <http://www.norway.org.uk/>

### **High Commission of South Africa**

South Africa House, Trafalgar Square  
LondonWC2N 5DP  
United Kingdom

Phone: +44 20 74517299  
Fax: +44 20 78395670  
Email: [london.general@foreign.gov.za](mailto:london.general@foreign.gov.za)  
Website: <http://southafricahouseuk.com/>

### **Embassy of Spain**

39 Chesham Place  
LondonSW1X 8SB  
United Kingdom

Phone: +44 20 72355555  
Fax: +44 20 72595392  
Email: [Emb.Londres@maec.es](mailto:Emb.Londres@maec.es)  
Website: <http://www.exteriores.gob.es/Embajadas/Londres/es/Paginas/inicio.aspx>

### **Embassy of Sweden**

11 Montagu Place  
LondonW1H 2AL  
United Kingdom

Phone: +44 20 79176400  
Fax: +44 20 77244174  
Email: [ambassaden.london@gov.se](mailto:ambassaden.london@gov.se)  
Website: <http://www.swedenabroad.com/en-GB/Embassies/London/>

### **Embassy of Switzerland**

16-18 Montagu Place  
LondonW1H 2BQ  
United Kingdom

Phone: +44 20 76166000  
Fax: +44 20 77247001  
Email: [lon.vertretung@eda.admin.ch](mailto:lon.vertretung@eda.admin.ch)  
Website: <http://www.eda.admin.ch/london>

## Embassy of United States

33 Nine Elms Lane  
LondonSW11 7US  
United Kingdom

Phone: +44 20 74999000  
Email: [londonpassports@state.gov](mailto:londonpassports@state.gov)  
Website: <https://uk.usembassy.gov/address-new-u-s-embassy-london/>

[^ Back to Top](#)

## Calendar

### 2019

**30 Nov** St. Andrew's Day  
Scotland only.

**25 Dec** Christmas Day  
In some countries, if this holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, a public holiday is declared for the following Monday.

**26 Dec** Boxing Day  
In many countries, if this holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, a public holiday is observed on the following Monday or Tuesday respectively.

### 2020

**01 Jan** New Year's Day  
In many countries, if this holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, a public holiday is declared for the following Monday.

**02 Jan** New Year's Day (second day)  
Second day of holiday.

**08 Mar** International Women's Day  
Members should avoid all related gatherings as a precaution and to minimise travel delays.

**17 Mar** St Patrick's Day

**01 May** Workers' Day/Labour Day/May Day/Spring Day  
Student/labour demonstrations can be expected. If the holiday falls on a rest day, it may be observed on the next working day.

[^ Back to Top](#)

This email contains confidential information intended for the addressee(s) named above. If you are not the intended recipient please notify the sender immediately and delete this email and its attachments.

Advice provided in this email represents the best judgment of AEA International Holdings Pte. Ltd. and Control Risks Group Holdings Ltd. Advice in this email does not however provide a warranty of future results nor a guarantee against risk.

© 2019 AEA International Holdings Pte. Ltd. and Control Risks Group Holdings Ltd. All rights reserved. Reproduction (other than for authorised internal



purposes) is prohibited except with the prior written consent of the copyright owners.