

## **PERSONAL SAFETY IN SAO PAULO**

Sao Paulo is less safe than US cities, so please read the State Department's information on the subject, which is available at <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/country/brazil.html>. To give you the flavor of the State Department's advice, here is an extract:

### **About Brazil generally:**

Brazilian police and media report that the crime rate remains high in most urban centers, including the cities of Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo

Brazil's murder rate is more than four times higher than that of the United States, and rates for other crimes are similarly high.

Street crime remains a problem for visitors and local residents alike. Foreign tourists, including U.S. citizens, are often targets, especially in Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Salvador, and Recife. Although the risk is greater during the evening and at night, street crime also occurs during the day, and safer areas of cities are not immune. Incidents of theft on city buses are frequent.

The incidence of crime against tourists is greater in areas surrounding beaches, hotels, discotheques, bars, nightclubs, and other tourist destinations.

Robberies and "quicknappings" outside of banks and ATMs occur regularly. In a "quicknapping," criminals abduct victims for a short time in order to receive a quick payoff from the family, business, or the victim's ATM card. Some victims have been beaten and/or raped. You should also take precautions to avoid being carjacked, especially in Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Recife, and other cities.

In airports, hotel lobbies, bus stations, and other public places, pick pocketing and the theft of hand-carried luggage and laptop computers is common. You should "dress down" when in public and avoid carrying valuables or wearing jewelry or expensive watches. "Good Samaritan" scams are common. If a tourist looks lost or seems to be having trouble communicating, a seemingly innocent bystander offering help may actually be a participant in a scam. Take care at and around banks and ATMs that accept U.S. credit or debit cards. Travelers using personal ATM or credit cards sometimes receive billing statements with unauthorized charges after returning from a visit to Brazil, or discover that their cards were cloned or duplicated without their knowledge.

### **About Sao Paulo specifically:**

All areas of Greater Sao Paulo have a high rate of armed robbery of pedestrians and drivers at stoplights and during rush hour traffic. The downtown area and outskirts of the city are subject to higher levels of crime. The "red light districts" of Sao Paulo, located on Rua Augusta north of Avenida Paulista and the Estacao de Luz metro area, are especially dangerous. There are regular reports of young women slipping various drugs into men's drinks and robbing them of all their belongings while they are unconscious. Armed holdups of pedestrians and motorists by young men on motorcycles ("motoboy") are a common occurrence in Sao Paulo. Criminals have also begun targeting restaurants throughout the city, frequently between the hours of 10:00 pm and 4:00 am, at establishments in the upscale neighborhoods of Jardins, Itaim Bibi, Campo Belo, Morumbi and Moema. Victims who resist run the risk of violent attack. Laptop computers, other electronics, and luxury watches are the targets of choice for criminals in Sao Paulo.