

Use caution when driving in the former independent homelands of Transkei and Ciskei (now incorporated into the provinces of Eastern Cape and Kwazulu/Natal). Some areas, such as the "Wild Coast" in the former Transkei, have high crime levels and inadequate medical services. Travel to the townships, or other areas off the normal tourist route, should be undertaken only in organized tours or after seeking the advice of the Canadian High Commission in Pretoria (see below). Consult with a travel agency or hotel staff to plan a safe itinerary if travelling solo.

Traffic drives on the left. Drive defensively. Traffic accidents, a common cause of death and injury, are largely attributed to unsafe driving practices (ignoring red lights, speeding, and drunk driving). Insufficient lighting on rural roads makes it difficult to see pedestrians. Avoid driving at night. It is illegal to carry gasoline other than in built-in gas tanks.

An International Driving Permit (IDP) is recommended. The IDP is a special licence that allows travellers with a valid Canadian driver's licence to drive in over 160 countries without a specific test. The Canadian Automobile Association (CAA) is the sole issuer of the IDP in Canada. Contact your local CAA office to pick up an application or have one mailed to you; you can also download the application from the CAA Web site.

The climate varies from region to region. Flash storms can occur in Gauteng from November to April. There are heavy rains along the south coast from June to September. Dirt roads can become hazardous during these periods. Travellers should keep informed of regional weather forecasts and plan accordingly.

There are a number of groups operating in South Africa offering seemingly attractive business deals that are in fact fraud schemes. The scams usually require the person contacted to deposit a significant amount of money in a bank account, or provide details of his or her own bank account, in anticipation of future large returns. As a result of their involvement in these scams, several foreign businessmen have been kidnapped in South Africa and held for ransom. One such person was killed.

A Value-Added-Tax (VAT) receipt (separate to normal sale receipts) can be requested when purchasing goods. VAT on purchases other than food, accommodation, and travel is refundable at international airports, but the process does not happen automatically. VAT officials may ask to inspect goods and VAT receipts. Banker's drafts are then issued for the VAT amount. VAT reimbursement procedures take a considerable amount of time.

You should:

- a) carry a Canadian passport for all visits outside Canada, including to the USA. It should be valid for at least six months beyond the date of your expected return to Canada;
- b) keep a photocopy of your passport's identification page with you;
- c) carry passports, tickets, and money separately;
- d) keep valuables and passports safe and carry only enough money for anticipated expenses;
- e) leave a copy of your itinerary and proof of citizenship with family and/or friends;
- f) carry certified documentation signed by both parents permitting a child under 18 to travel alone, with an adult, or with one parent. In the latter case, custody documentation may also be