

- Make copies of your credit card and ATM numbers so they can be cancelled quickly.
- Do not drive at night and never pick up hitchhikers.
- If you must use an ATM, do so during business hours at a location inside a bank, super-market or large commercial building.
- Avoid drinking alone in bars, especially at night.
- Avoid the subway during rush hour and hold purses and other valuables securely when using any public transportation.

Outside Mexico City and other locations known to be hazardous, travellers should employ the same precautions they would on any trip to a developing country. Leave a copy of your itinerary with someone who can be contacted in an emergency. Phone home at regular intervals if you do not have a fixed schedule. Keep a record of traveller's cheques, credit card purchases and insurance policy details.

The Justice System

When in Mexico, you are subject to Mexican laws and are not entitled to any special protection or consideration because of your Canadian citizenship.

Where are the toilets?

¿Dónde están los baños?

The check, please.

La cuenta, por favor.

Mexico has a highly evolved legal system that functions reasonably well. Based on Greek, Roman and French traditions, the Mexican justice system is comparable to those elsewhere in Latin America and in continental Europe. It is, however, very different from the Canadian system and those of other countries that follow common-law legal traditions.

For Canadians, the biggest difference concerns criminal law. An accused person is considered guilty until proven innocent. For example, if you are accused of drug smuggling, the system will consider you guilty until such time as you can prove your innocence. When a person is injured in an automobile accident, the driver can be jailed pending the results of the investigation. Also, many aspects of fraud involve imprisonment while awaiting investigation results. Bail is not usually available for foreigners, except for very minor crimes.