

SECURITY GUIDELINES FOR DELEGATION TO EL SALVADOR

It is important to be aware of the realities of random violence in El Salvador and to plan accordingly for the safest possible visit. The Salvadoran people are aware of the increases in crimes and speak of it as a major concern for families and communities.

- The majority of El Salvador's population struggles for survival. Poverty is endemic and while there are rich resources in the country, many do not benefit from them.
- El Salvador is considered the most violent country in Central America. Homicide is a daily occurrence. Gangs and organized crime thrive on extortion in certain areas; crime is common both in the city and the countryside. While some crime is planned, much is random and can occur at any time, any where.
- Foreign visitors have been targets of crime.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- **Respect the decisions made by delegation coordinators.** It is important that participants raise any concerns they may have about safety and security. If a group decision is needed, the coordinator will facilitate that process. The final decision will be made by the coordinator always acting in consultation with our Salvadoran hosts who are most familiar with the situation of the country.
- **Secure passport and money** in a money belt or other case that can be worn under clothing.
- **Keep a copy of your guest house address** and phone numbers in El Salvador in your money belt
- **Always be alert and conscious of your surroundings** and keep purse or backpack or traveling bag closed and close to your body when on the street, on a bus, or in a store or restaurant.
- **Stay with the group.** While checking out a local merchant or attraction may be appealing, it can be counter-productive. Stay together.
- **Don't wear jewelry** that you would mind losing (necklaces, earrings, watch, rings, etc.). Many visitors prefer to keep a watch in a pocket.
- **Don't carry other valuables with you.** Keep your camera secure and pocket money at a minimum. If shopping for crafts or souvenirs, the coordinators will choose the most secure place.
- **If you are about to be robbed – DON'T RESIST!** Just quietly hand over what the person is asking for. (One reason not to carry much money or wear jewelry.)
- **NEVER walk or travel alone.** Do not go out at night unless the group is traveling together in a hired van.