



Know
Before
You
Go

CHINA

A Guide to Keep You Safe Abroad

Provided by Sexual Assault Support and
Help for Americans Abroad (SASHAA)

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SASHAA
Sexual Assault Support &
Help for Americans Abroad

Let's be perfectly clear, the number one way to prevent sexual assault is to **not rape**. While the responsibility of ending sexual gender-based violence is on the perpetrators, this guide will offer general safety tips, country-specific information, and resources to help prevent and prepare travelers for the possibility of sexual assault abroad.

GENERAL SAFETY TIPS:

1. Use the **buddy system** and travel with friends!
2. Be aware of **social and cultural norms**. For example, looking at someone in the eyes when you speak to them is perfectly normal in the U.S., but in another country that could signify you're interested in the person.
3. **Recognize controlling behavior** when entering a relationship. Most rape survivors recall feeling "uncomfortable" about some of their partner's behaviors such as degrading jokes/language or refusal to accept "no" as an answer, whether in a sexual context or otherwise.²
4. **Avoid secluded places** where you could be more vulnerable. Meet new people in public spaces and let a trusted friend know where you'll be beforehand.
5. **Trust your gut**. Many victims have a "bad feeling" right before an assault takes place.



ALCOHOL AND DRUG AWARENESS:

- Always watch your drink being poured and carry it yourself, even to the bathroom.
- "Drug-facilitated sexual assault drugs," also referred to as club drugs or roofies may turn your drink slightly salty, bright blue, or cloudy. Effects such as distorted judgment, lost sense of time, sight, sound, identity, and consciousness can be felt within 15 minutes and may last up to 4 hours.³
- China's legal drinking age is 18.⁴ Traditional drinking culture revolves around respect and showing your *jiudan* "drink courage" may do so, but it's A-okay to drink *suiyi* "as you wish," which is signaled by holding your glass so that you touch the other person's cup with the backs of your fingers, rather than clinking.⁵

CULTURAL INFORMATION:

Major Religions: Buddhist 18.2%, Christian 5.1%, Muslim 1.8%, folk religion, 21.9%, Hindu < .1%, Jewish < .1%, other 0.7% (includes Daoist (Taoist)), unaffiliated 52.2%.⁶

Legal System: China's legal system involves statutory law, legal interpretations, and treaties. Criminal cases are heard by adjudicators, and the severity of the crime determines how many adjudicators hear the case.⁷



Social/Cultural Norms: Although traditionally Chinese custom encourages conservative dress and discourages public displays of affection, the younger generations can frequently be seen wearing shorts and t-shirts, and it is not uncommon for good female friends to hold hands. Topics such as Taiwan and Tibet are still very sensitive. Elders are always to be respected.⁸

Gender Equality: A 2015 survey by the World Economic Forum ranked China 91st out of 142 countries in terms of gender equality. Society is still patriarchal. In 2016 China passed one of its first domestic violence laws to protect women.⁹

Sexual Assault and the Law: Chinese Context

During the Qing Dynasty (1644-1912), the law stated that only women could be raped and that if a woman was unable to prove that she fought against her attacker during the entire assault, either through eyewitnesses or physical markings, it was not considered rape.¹⁰ Under current law both women and men can experience sexual assault through non consensual acts, but only by male attackers. Marital rape is still legal in China.¹¹ The stigma against victims caused by previous laws still persists in culture, and frequently those who experience sexual assault are considered “unclean.”¹²

If You Experience Sexual Assault...

Don't blame yourself! **Sexual assault is never the fault of the victim.** You may be unsure of how to proceed, and that's okay. First, consider taking the following actions:

1. If you are in a safe place, **call someone you trust** to be with you. If you are not safe, call someone you trust to come and get you.
2. Do **self-collection of evidence**. Put all of the clothes you were wearing, bed sheets, and so on in a paper bag. If you have any injuries, **take pictures**. If there is semen present, collect what you can in a hotel glass or cup and put it in the paper bag.
3. **Call a SASHAA advocate** internationally toll free, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They can help you through the ordeal, honoring your decisions. (See Resources)

Medical Care and Reporting Sexual Assault in China

Medical examinations are available in hospitals or many local forensic medical examination clinics. The exam generally includes a pelvic exam, biological swabs, fingernail scrapings, and blood testing. Victim blaming has been a very common trend in China in the past, and some of these attitudes may bleed into the present.¹³ You may experience some insensitive questions or comments from doctors or police officers. If you decide to report your assault to the police, the Public Bureau of Safety will require an interview. The victim is allowed to have another person in the room during interviews for support. Cases are more likely to be brought to trial if a medical examination is conducted within five days of the assault.¹⁴

LGBTQ VICTIM CONCERNS



While it is legal for a person in China to change gender, the change requires surgery for a person to be considered legally transgender. Homosexuality was decriminalized in 1997, but the government has remained silent on any other legislation that could protect members of the LGBTQ community. Discrimination based on gender and sexual orientation is legal to varying degrees in different regions, and many LGBTQ people lack basic support systems as education and advocacy groups are few and far between.¹⁵

POST EXPOSURE PROPHYLAXIS, EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION, AND ABORTION

Q. Are post exposure prophylaxis and emergency contraception available?

A: Emergency contraceptive is available in pharmacies and should be offered during medical examinations. It is okay to ask for EC if it is not offered. HIV PEP is not available in China; you will not be able to receive PEP in the event of a sexual assault.¹⁶

Q: Is abortion legal in China?

A: Abortions are legal and are a government-provided service. They are available regardless of reason, with the exception of sex-selective abortion, and can be performed at most clinics.¹⁷

Resources

SASHAA

SASHAA International Crisis Line:

To call our confidential, toll-free, International Crisis Line first dial the country specific AT&T access code for **China (Shanghai):10-811, (Beijing): 108-888**. Then, at the prompt, enter our phone number: **866-USWOMEN (866-879-6636)**.

Crisis Email:

To reach a SASHAA advocate, you can email us at crisis@866uswomen.org. All crisis emails will be responded to within 24 hours. However, if you need to get in touch with us immediately, please call the international toll-free crisis line.

Live Chat:

SASHAA online chat services are available 24/7 at our website <https://sashaa.org>.

ANTI-VIOLENCE CENTERS

Women's Hotline in Beijing

No. 93, Dong Si Shi Si Tiao, Beijing
Hotline: 86-10-6404 8187

China Helpline:

Helpline: 0800-810-1117

All China Women's Federation

Report Crimes against women: 12388

Hong Kong Federation of Women's Centres

Helpline: 2386 6255

Website: <http://womenscentre.org.hk/en/services>

Lifeline Shanghai

Helpline: (021) 6279 8990

Website: <http://www.lifeline-shanghai.com>

US EMBASSIES/CONSULATES

Beijing (Embassy):

No. 55 An Jia Lou Lu 100600
Tel: (86-10) 8531-3000

Chengdu (Consulate):

4 Lingshiguan Road, Chengdu, Sichuan 610041
Tel: (86-28) 8558 3992

Guangzhou (Consulate):

43 Hua Jiu Road, Zhujiang New Town
Tianhe District, Guangzhou 510623
Tel: 020-3814-5000

Shanghai (Consulate):

1469 Huai Hai Zhong Road, 200031 Shanghai China
Tel: (86-21) 6433-6880

Shenyang (Consulate):

52, 14th Wei Road, Heping District, 110003 China
Tel: (86-24) 2322-1198

Wuhan (Consulate):

New World International Trade Tower I
No. 568, Jianshe Avenue, Hankou, Wuhan 430022
Tel: 027-8555-7791

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Police: 110;

Emergency Texting Line for Police: 12110;

Ambulance/First-Aid: 120; **Fire:** 119.

HOSPITALS

BEIJING:

Beijing United Family Hospital

2 Jiangtai Road, Chaoyang District, Beijing
Tel: 4008-919-191 (Emergency) 010-5927 7120

Peking Union Hospital

#1 Shuaifuyuan, Dongcheng District, Beijing
Tel: 010-6915 6114

CHONGQING: Chongqing Southwest Hospital

#30, Gao Tan Yan Zheng Street, Sha Ping Ba District
Tel: 023-65318301, 023-68754000

SHANGHAI:

Shanghai East International Medical Center

551 Pu dong Nan Lu, Shanghai
Tel: 021-5879 9999

Huashan Worldwide Medical Services

12 Middle Wulumuqi Road, Shanghai
Tel: 021-6248 3986, 021-6249 9295

SHENYANG: American Medical Center, Global Doctors

No. 54, Pangjiang Rd., Dadong Dist, Liaoning
Tel: (024) 2433-0678

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