



Know
Before
You
Go

ECUADOR

A Guide to Keep You Safe Abroad

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

Updated June 2017



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 be sure to watch your drink being poured and carry it yourself, even to the bathroom.
- Be aware of "drug-facilitated sexual assault drugs," also referred to as 'roofies' or 'club drugs,' which may turn your drink bright blue, cloudy, or slightly salty. Effects such as impaired judgment, lost sense of sight, sound, or consciousness can be felt within 15 minutes and up to 4 hours.³
- The legal drinking age in Ecuador is 18, though in some places this is less enforced. Ministerial Agreement 7231 allowed alcoholic beverages to be sold on Sundays in stores as drinking is very common at almost all occasions.⁴

CULTURAL INFORMATION:

Major Religions: Catholic 74%, Evangelical 10.4%, Jehovah's Witness 1.2%, atheist 7.9%, other 6.4% ('Other' includes: Buddhist, Jewish, Spiritualist, Muslim, Hindu, indigenous religions, and agnostic).⁵

Legal System: Ecuador has a presidential republic with a three branch Civil Law system based on the Chilean Civil Code. Traditional law applies to indigenous communities and in varies region to region.⁶

Social/Cultural Norms: Ecuadorians are generally warm and polite. Greetings range from handshakes with eye contact to more intimate, tactile gestures depending on familiarity. They also tend to stand much closer in conversation than in other cultures.⁷

Gender Equality: A 2016 survey by the World Economic Forum ranked Ecuador 40th out of 144 countries in terms of gender equality.⁸ Most Ecuadorian woman are not encouraged to be independent; they are expected to take care of the home. This discrimination is especially prevalent for women between 45-60 because they are considered less valuable to society.⁹

Sexual Assault and the Law: Ecuadorian Context

Laws regarding sexual assault are included in the 2008 Ecuadorian Constitution; Chapter 3 Article 35 specifies that victims of domestic and sexual violence are given priority of care in the eyes of the law. However, Ecuador also has incredibly complex bureaucratic systems in place regarding sexual assault which usually means cases take a while to prosecute. Furthermore, while spousal rape, acquaintance rape, and rape perpetrated against a male victim are considered crimes, authorities do not always take them as seriously when investigating.¹⁰

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 Ecuador

If you decide to report your assault to the police, a forensic exam will be conducted by a police authorized medical examiner. The exam will include an external pelvic exam, genital swabs, blood and semen sampling, and photos of any trauma. The victim is usually allowed to bring one or two people with them for moral support and/or translation. This exam is conducted solely for the purpose of gathering evidence, so it is important to seek a separate medical exam to address any injuries and investigate options for pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. Ecuadorian doctors are obligated to report any cases of sexual or domestic abuse they see, though they may not if the victim does not want to report. If the victim is a minor, medical professionals usually adhere to this obligation. After a rape is reported, victims will be interviewed many times by many different people about what occurred; this includes the medical examiner, a public prosecutor, police officers, a psychologist, and judges. Because of the bureaucracy involved with trying such cases, they generally take a long time to prosecute so it is important to file a report with the police as soon as the victim is able.¹⁵

LGBTQ VICTIM CONCERNS



As of 1998, homosexual activity is legal in Ecuador, however same-sex marriage is still illegal; same-sex partners can enter civil unions. The 1998 constitution made discriminating against people of any sexual orientation illegal and LGBTQ individuals are allowed to serve openly in the military. Transgender persons can legally change their name and gender identity on legal documents without surgery.¹¹ While most Ecuadorians see gay rights as a non-issue politically, there is still anti-gay bias in the country, so while it is most likely safe to report any crimes, it may be more difficult to prosecute.¹²

POST EXPOSURE PROPHYLAXIS, EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION, AND ABORTION

Q. Are post exposure prophylaxis and emergency contraception available?

A: Yes; Ecuadorian law mandates emergency contraceptive be made available for free in all public health clinics. There is no age restriction and it can be purchased without a prescription in most clinics.¹³

Q: Is abortion legal in Ecuador?

A: Sections 441-447 of the 1971 Penal Code of Ecuador prohibit abortion except in cases where there is a threat to the health or life of a pregnant woman, or when the pregnancy is a result of a rape of a woman with a mental disability. A woman who seeks an abortion can be sentenced to two years in prison on the testimony of a medical professional.¹⁴

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 **Ecuador (1-800-225-5288)**. 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>.

U.S. EMBASSIES/CONSULATES

U.S. Embassy Quito

E12-170 Avigiras Ave. and Ave. Eloy Alfaro
Tel: (02) 398-5000 / From abroad: 593-2-398-5000

U.S. Consulate General Guayaquil

Calle Santa Ana y Av. José Rodríguez Bonin
Tel: (04)-371-7000, (From Abroad) 593-4-371-7000
American Citizen Services: acsguayaquil@state.gov

HOSPITALS

Hospital Metropolitano - Quito

Avenue Mariana De Jesus
Tel: +593-2-399-8000 x. 2193

Hospital De los Valles in Cumbaya - Quito

Av. Interoceánica km 12.5 y Av. Florencia
Tel: +297-7900 Ext. 1911 / 1912

Hospital Eugenio Espejo - Quito

Av. Gran Colombia
Tel: +593 2-250-7920

Hospital Monte Sinaí - Cuenca

Av. Miguel Cordero 6-111 y Av. Solano,
Emergencies: 07-409-6000 / (593) 07 288 5595

GUAYAQUIL HOSPITALS:

Clinica Kennedy

Av. San Jorge entre la Novena y la Decima
(close to Polycentro Mall)
Tel: +593-4-228-6963 / 2289-666

Clinica Alcivar (Trauma specialty)

Idelfonso Coronel y Mendez 2301
Tel: +593 4-372-0100

Doctora Ma del Carmen Escolano

Tel: +593-9-948-0305

Doctor Marlon Alarcon

Cell: +593-9-961-5960

CENTERS FOR VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

Fundacio Casa de Refugio Matilde - Quito

Tel: 011-593-2-625-316

Centro de Estudios e Investigaciones Multidisciplinarias del Ecuador (CEIME)

Tel: (593-2) 254-4662, 254-3442
Email: ceime@andinanet.net
Website: <http://www.ceime.org>

Judiciary of Violence Against Women & Family Guayaquil:

Av. 25 de Julio and Calle Los Esteros

POLICE

Emergency: Dial 911

Operators typically only speak Spanish, but an English speaker may be available if requested.

Tourist Police:

Bicentenario Park; Terminals of the old Quito airport
Tel: (+593 2) 2993-300 to 2993-300

The information in this guide has been gathered from public sources, is for informational purposes only, and is not vetted, endorsed or guaranteed by AODVC. AODVC is not rendering legal advice by making this guide available, is not a law enforcement agency, and does not engage in law enforcement activity. If you have any legal questions or concerns, you should consult a qualified legal or other professional that can consider the particulars of your specific case. AODVC reserves the right to change or make corrections to this guide at any time, and will not be liable for any errors, inaccuracies or omissions contained herein.

References

- ¹ Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN). "Perpetrators of Sexual Violence: Statistics." RAINN. Accessed June 27, 2016. <https://www.rainn.org/statistics/perpetrators-sexual-violence>.
- ² West Virginia University. "Some Tips on Acquaintance Rape Prevention." WELLWVU: The Student's Center of Health. May 20, 2016. Accessed June 28, 2016. http://well.wvu.edu/sexual_assault/some-tips-on-acquaintance-rape-prevention.
- ³ U.S. Department of Women's Health. 'Date rape drugs fact sheet.' Accessed on December 22, 2016. <https://www.womenshealth.gov/publications/our-publications/fact-sheet/date-rape-drugs.html>
- ⁴ "Alcohol On Sundays..." EcuaAssist. June 2, 2016. Accessed: May 25, 2017. <http://www.ecuaassist.com/single-post/2016/06/02/ALCOHOL-ON-SUNDAYS>.
- ⁵ "Ecuador Demographics Profile 2016". Index Mundi. 2016. Accessed on December 9, 2016. http://www.indexmundi.com/ecuador/demographics_profile.html
- ⁶ "South America :: Ecuador." cia.gov. May 21, 2017. Accessed: May 23, 2017. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-fact-book/geos/ec.html>
- ⁷ "Ecuador Guide". Commisceo Global. Accessed on December 9, 2016. <http://www.commisceo-global.com/country-guides/ecuador-guide>
- ⁸ "The Global Gender Gap Report". World Economic Forum. October 20, 2016. Accessed May 23, 2017. <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2016/rankings/>
- ⁹ Davilla, Sheyla Ibarra. "Gender Inequality in Ecuador." Manna Project International. September 2016. Accessed January 11, 2017. <http://www.mannaproject.org/ecuadorblog/gender-inequality>.
- ¹⁰ "Constitución Del Ecuador." Asamblea Nacional. 2008. Accessed: May 21, 2017. http://www.asambleanacional.gov.ec/documentos/constitucion_de_bolsillo.pdf.
- ¹¹ "LGBT Rights in Ecuador." Equaldex. 2016. Accessed: May 20, 2017.
- ¹² "Gay and Lesbian Travellers." Lonely Planet. 2017. Accessed: May 20, 2017. <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/ecuador/gay-and-lesbian-travellers>.
- ¹³ "EC Status and Availability." International Consortium for Emergency Contraception. 2017. Accessed: May 20, 2017. <http://www.cecinfo.org/country-by-country-information/status-availability-database/countries/ecuador/>.
- ¹⁴ "Ecuador: Events of 2015." Human Rights Watch. 2016. Accessed: May 20, 2017. <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2016/country-chapters/ecuador>.
- ¹⁵ "Help for American Victims of Crime in Ecuador." US State Department. October 12, 2010. Accessed: May 21, 2017. <http://photos.state.gov/libraries/quito/153436/ACS/Ecuador%20Victim%20Assistance%20Handout%20-%20FINAL.pdf>