



Know  
Before  
You  
Go

## IRELAND

# 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.<sup>2</sup>
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.<sup>3</sup>
- Ireland's legal drinking age is 18. In 2013, the OECD found that 75% of alcohol was consumed as part of binge drinking sessions. Many larger pubs in cities are focusing more on the consumption of drinks and less on traditional Irish pub culture.<sup>4</sup>

## CULTURAL INFORMATION:

**Major Religions:** 84.7% Roman Catholic, 2.7% Church of Ireland, 2.7% other Christian, 1.1% Muslim, 1.7% other, 1.5% unspecified, 5.7% none.<sup>5</sup>

**Legal System:** The Irish legal system is made up of common law and a written constitution that establishes a parliamentary democracy based on the British Parliamentary System.<sup>6</sup>

**Social/Cultural Norms:** Religion still very much has a say in society's view of family, marriage, and abortion. It is common for the Irish to trade insults and tease one another (called "slagging") with people to whom they are close.<sup>7</sup>

**Gender Equality:** Ireland is one of the highest ranked countries in terms of gender equality worldwide. In a 2015 survey by the World Economic Forum, Ireland ranked 5th out of 145 countries.<sup>8</sup> The status of women is similar, if not better, than the status of women in the U.S.



## Sexual Assault and the Law: Irish Context

Rape was initially defined under the 1981 Criminal Law Rape Act as “unlawful sexual intercourse with a woman who at the time of the intercourse does not consent to it.”<sup>9</sup> This definition was broadened by the 1990 Criminal Law Rape Amendment Act to include both male and female victims as well as victims of marital rape. Additionally, the 1990 amendment specifically outlines that: “any failure or omission by that person to offer resistance to the act does not of itself constitute consent to the act.”<sup>10</sup> In other words, lack of consent does not equal consent.

### 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 Ireland

If you decide to report your assault to the Irish police (also known as the Garda Síochána), you should report your assault at the closest Gardaí station. At the station you will be given the option to be interviewed by a female garda. Questions will likely include the following: the identity of the assailant if known, a description of the assailant, a description of where and when the incident happened, precisely what was done by the assailant, the circumstance of the assault, and if there were any witnesses. Once you have finished making your statement, you will be asked to sign the document and can ask for a copy of the report. After making the report you will be asked to receive a forensic medical examination (FME) and medical care at the closest sexual assault treatment unit (SATU). If you choose not to report your assault to the police, you can go directly to a SATU and independently obtain an FME and medical care. In Ireland, sexual assault is a criminal offense meaning that if the Deputy Public Prosecutor (DPP) decides that a report of sexual assault contains sufficient evidence to pursue prosecution, the victim is simply considered a witness.<sup>14</sup>

#### LGBTQ VICTIM CONCERNS



Despite tremendous progress made in 2015 when Ireland became the first country to legalize same-sex marriage by popular vote, some institutionalized LGBTQ discrimination remains such as the ban against men who have sex with men from donating blood.<sup>11</sup> However, it is important to note that the legal definitions of rape and sexual assault were amended in 1990 to specifically include male victims of rape as well as sexual violence beyond vaginal penetration. Overall, it is safe for LGBTQ victims to report their assault.

#### POST EXPOSURE PROPHYLAXIS, EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION, AND ABORTION

##### Q. Are post exposure prophylaxis and emergency contraception available?

**A:** Yes, both are given at Sexual Assault Treatment Units.<sup>12</sup> Additionally, progesterone and ulipristal EC pills (under the brand names Norlevo and Prevenelle, and ellaOne respectively) can be obtained from pharmacies without a prescription.<sup>13</sup>

##### Q: Is abortion legal in Ireland?

**A:** No, abortion is illegal in Ireland except in cases where the pregnancy endangers the life of the mother. Women in all other circumstances must travel abroad to receive a safe and legal abortion, most commonly to Great Britain where abortion is legal in most cases up to 24 weeks of pregnancy. While pro-choice organizations in Ireland cannot provide information about abroad abortion services over telephone helplines, they can supply this information through face-to-face counseling sessions.<sup>13</sup>

## 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 **Ireland (1-800-550-000 or 00-800-222-55288)**.

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](mailto: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>.

### US EMBASSIES/CONSULATES

#### U.S. Embassy Dublin

42 Elgin Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4

Tel: +(353) (1) 668-8777

Emergency After-Hour: +(353) (1) 630-6200

### EMERGENCY POLICE

The equivalent of 9-1-1 in Ireland is **9-9-9**

### TOURIST ASSISTANCE SERVICE

Tel: 1890 365 700

Email: [info@itas.ie](mailto:info@itas.ie)

### PRO-CHOICE ORGANIZATIONS

#### Irish Family Planning Association (ifpa)

Solomons House, 42a Pearse Street, Dublin 2

National Pregnancy Helpline: 1850 49 50 51

E-mail: [info@ifpa.ie](mailto:info@ifpa.ie)

### NATIONAL RAPE CRISIS HOTLINE

24-Hour Helpline (Dublin Rape Crisis Centre)

Tel: 1800 77 88 88

### RAPE CRISIS CENTERS

*\*Note this is a small selection of sexual assault treatment units in Ireland. For a complete list visit Rape Crisis Help at <http://www.rapecrisishelp.ie>.*

#### Dublin Rape Crisis Centre (DRCC)

70 Lower Leeson Street, Dublin 2

Email: [info@rcc.ie](mailto:info@rcc.ie)

Services: Helpline, one-on-one counseling, accompaniment to SATU and court appointments

#### Galway Rape Crisis Centre (GRCC)

Services: helpline, counseling services, legal clinic, victim advocacy and accompaniment to services

The Lodge, Forster Court, Galway

Helpline: 1800 355 355

Email: [admingrcc@gmail.com](mailto:admingrcc@gmail.com)

### TREATMENT UNITS

*\*Note this is a small selection of sexual assault treatment units in Ireland. For a complete list visit Rape Crisis Help at <http://www.rapecrisishelp.ie>*

#### Dublin Sexual Assault Treatment Unit (SATU)

Located in Rotunda Hospital

Parnell Square, Dublin 1, Ireland

Tel: 01 8171736, After hours: 018171700

#### Cork Sexual Assault Treatment Unit

Located in South Infirmary, Victoria University Hospital

Old Blackrock Road, Cork City, Co. Cork, Ireland

Tel: 021 4926297, After hours: 021 4926100

#### Donegal Sexual Assault Treatment Unit

Located in NoWDOC premises, Letterkenny General

Tel: 0870681964 or 0749104436

After hours: 074 9125888 ext. 3595

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