



KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- ❑ Driving is on the right.
- ❑ Drivers are required to carry a valid driving license, International Driving Permit (IDP), passport, vehicle documents and proof of insurance.
- ❑ The Dominican Peso (DOP) is the legal currency. US dollars are accepted in many areas; change is given in DOP.
- ❑ Avoid driving at night. Roads are poorly lit or unlit.
- ❑ The Dominican Republic has one of the highest road traffic death rates in the world. Crash rates increase during holiday seasons.
- ❑ Visitors should consider hiring a professional driver from a trusted agency. Many rental car agencies offer driver services with licensed drivers familiar with local road conditions.
- ❑ Drive with windows up and doors locked. Robberies occur at intersections. Pedestrians are also targeted.
- ❑ Crime is widespread and may become violent. If confronted, resistance may increase the likelihood of violence.
- ❑ Serious crashes involving tourists driving mopeds and scooters are increasing.
- ❑ Pedestrians account for approximately 17% of all road fatalities.
- ❑ Riders of motorized two- and three-wheeled vehicles make up approximately 63% of all road traffic deaths.
- ❑ Legal blood alcohol limit is zero for young or novice drivers, and below 0.05 g/dl for all others. Enforcement is low. Drink driving remains a factor in an estimated 19% of all traffic crashes.
- ❑ There are 67.2 road deaths per 100,000 people in the Dominican Republic, compared to 2.2 in Sweden and 2.3 in the UK.



Source: CIA Factbook

ROAD CULTURE

- **Dangerous** and unpredictable driving practices are common. Drivers are often aggressive.
- **Motorists** frequently speed and run through stop signs and traffic lights.
- **Many drivers**, particularly in rural areas, do not use headlights after dark. Vehicles often do not have taillights.
- **Motorists** often drive against traffic.
- **There are** many pick-up trucks on roads with unsecured passengers riding in the open rear area.
- **Women** traveling alone, including women drivers, are subject to harassment and verbal abuse.
- **Motorists and** drivers of motorcycles and motor scooters may drive against traffic or on sidewalks. Pedestrians are often ignored.
- **Drivers of** motorcycles and motor scooters often weave through traffic and disregard traffic rules.

ROAD CONDITIONS

- **There are** 19,705 km (12,244 miles) of roads; 9,872 km (6,134 miles) are paved and 9,833 km (6,109 miles) are unpaved.
- **Road conditions** vary widely. Major highways connecting tourist destinations and large urban areas are generally in good condition.
- **Many roads** have uneven surfaces and lack hard shoulders.
- **Traffic in** urban areas is heavy and undisciplined. There are large numbers of trucks and motorcycles.
- **Many** intersections lack stop signs or traffic lights.
- **There are** few road markings or lane demarcations.
- **Large**, unmarked speed bumps are common in cities.
- **Many highways** are toll roads. Tolls may be paid with local currency at toll booths. Some booths accept USD, but change is given in Dominican pesos.
- **Some toll** roads have lanes marked “Paso Rápido” for prepaid automated toll passes, which may be purchased at Paso Rápido stations, Total gas stations and Carol Pharmacies. A Paso Rápido app is available.
- **Many roads** are missing manhole covers.
- **Deep potholes** are common.
- **Pedestrian** infrastructure is poor. Motorists often disregard those on foot.
- **Pedestrians frequently** step into roads, even where there are no marked crossings.
- **There are many** loose animals, even on highways and main roads.
- **Horse-drawn carts** are common, particularly in rural areas and small towns.
- **Gas stations** may be long distances apart. Most are not open on Sundays.



Road Conditions, continued

- **Demonstrations** and public protests may occur. Avoid all demonstrations, which may become confrontational and disrupt transportation.
- **Military** and police road blocks and checkpoints are common, particularly near the border with Haiti.
- **Motorists** should not approach the border with Haiti. Military situations are unstable. Border crossings often close without notice.
- **On roads** near the border, crimes against visitors have occurred by persons impersonating police officers.
- **The following roads** may present particular challenges to motorists:
 - » **The Northeast Highway** connecting the provinces of Santo Domingo and Samaná is regarded as the country’s most dangerous road. There are multiple sharp curves. Many drivers speed. Loss of control on curves is a leading factor in many crashes.
 - » **The Duarte Highway** connects the capital with Cibao. It is considered a dangerous road, especially along the stretch from Los Alcarrizos to La Vega. Causes include poor lighting, inadequate signage, sharp curves and lack of protective railing. Road improvements are underway. An estimated 56% of serious and fatal crashes on this road involve motorcycles.
 - » **The Sanchez Highway/DR-2** runs south from Santo Domingo to the border, and is the main connecting route to the southwest region. The majority of the road is two-lane. There is heavy traffic. Road expansion is ongoing. Construction zones often lack warning signs or adequate lights. Speeding is common.

REGIONAL AND SEASONAL CONDITIONS

- **There are** frequent power outages.
- **The country is** subject to heavy rains, floods, landslides, strong winds, hurricanes, tropical cyclones and earthquakes.
- **Hurricane season** is generally from June to November. Storms are common during this season, and often include heavy rains, flooding and flash floods.
- **Do not drive** or step into floodwaters, which may obscure deep potholes or other hazards.
- **Flooding** may result in landslides, road closures and interruptions in transportation.
- **High winds** may bring down trees or branches that block roads.
- **Earthquakes** occasionally occur. Initial shocks may be followed by strong aftershocks.
- **Be familiar with emergency procedures.** The Red Cross provides a website and free, downloadable emergency app: <http://www.redcross.org/get-help/prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies>

TRANSPORTATION

- **Transportation** options include cars, taxis, “carrito conchos” (shared taxis), “carros publicos” (shared unregulated taxi cars), motoconchos” (motorbike taxis), buses, “guaguas” minibuses, long-distance coaches, one metro system, e-scooters, water taxis and ferries.
- **Public transportation** is extensive, but not generally regarded as safe.
- **Buses** include city buses, “guaguas” minibuses and long-distance coaches. City buses, guaguas and motoconchos do not meet basic safety standards.

Maximum Speed Limits

Type of road	Maximum speed
Urban areas	60 to 80 kph (37 to 50 mph)
Rural roads	40 to 60 kph (25 to 37 mph)
Highways	120 kph (74 mph)

Always adjust speed according to signage, hazards and weather conditions.

Signs are generally pictorial and may not follow European Union conventions.

No entry	Narrow bridge	Example of highway sign	School children in area: use caution	Road construction ahead	No overtaking	Animal crossing	Divided highway ahead	Pedestrian crossing



Transportation, continued

- **Guaguas minibuses** are privately owned. Routes include local and long-distance destinations.
- **“Carros publicos”** are shared vehicles that function in the same way as guaguas.
- **Vehicles used** as guaguas and carros publicos are often in poor condition. Many do not have doors.
- **Guaguas** marked “expreso” do not stop to pick up additional passengers.
- **Inner-city** guaguas are generally white vans running along designated routes. Vehicles have a driver, and a conductor who collects fares and calls out stops requested by passengers. Fares are in cash. Drivers may not make change.
- **Many** inner-city guaguas are overcrowded; drivers stop along the route to pick up passengers.
- **Motoconchos** motorbike taxis are popular, particularly in cities. Motoconchos are regarded as dangerous.
- **Most motoconchos** do not provide helmets for passengers. Drivers speed and weave through traffic and pedestrians. Drivers usually wear neon-colored vests to identify themselves.
- **Modern**, air-conditioned coach buses link all major regions of the country. Major companies are Metro Tours, Caribe Turs and Expreso Bávaro.
- **Taxis are** operated by multiple companies. Condition of vehicles varies widely. Some taxis may be in poor condition. Verify that there are working seatbelts before agreeing to service.
- **Use only** regulated taxis. Do not hail taxis on the street. Order a taxi through a reputable hotel; many unregulated taxis do not have standard safety features including seat belts, turn signals, headlights, taillights, windscreen wipers or good tires.
- **Taxis include** private cars, carrito conchos shared taxis and motoconcho motorbike taxis.
- **Taxi queues** can be found near main bus stations, large hotels and in tourist areas.
- **City taxi rates** are set by municipality associations.
- **Shared “carrito conchos”** taxis (generally called “conchos”) are usually four-door sedans. Many are in poor repair and are overcrowded.
- **Conchos** provide a service similar to Inner-city guaguas, and run along specific routes. Drivers stop to pick up passengers along the way.
- **Unregulated** carros publicos taxis should be avoided.
- **Rideshares** are available in major urban centers including Santo Domingo, Santiago and Puerto Plata. Use only services that have a dispatch app providing vehicle description, license plate number and driver’s name. Verify information before entering vehicle.
- **Motoconcho** ride-hailing apps are also available. Motoconchos are not regarded as safe.
- **There is** one subway network, located in Santo Domingo. There are two lines.
- **Passenger train** service is unavailable.
- **E-scooters** are popular, but have been banned in many areas. Drivers often disregard road safety rules and endanger pedestrians.
- **Water taxis** and ferries provide services in multiple areas. Overnight ferries connect Santo Domingo and ports in Puerto Rico.
- **Safety records** of ferry and boat operators vary. Life boats and life-saving equipment may be inadequate. If traveling by boat, bring your own life preserver.

TRAFFIC REGULATIONS

- **Traffic laws** are not regularly enforced.
- **Drivers must** be at least 16 to drive, and 21 to rent a car. Some rental agencies may have additional restrictions.
- **Pedestrians** do not have right-of-way.
- **Seat belt** use is compulsory for drivers and passengers. Adherence to seat belt laws is low.
- **Children** up to 12 years of age are prohibited from riding in front seats, and must be secured in a child safety restraint. The front seat law does not apply to pick-up trucks.
- **Taxis are** exempt from child safety restraint rules.
- **Helmets are** mandatory for motorcycle drivers and passengers, and must meet national standards. Compliance is low.
- **Laws** do not require helmets to be fastened; for safety, helmets should be fastened.
- **Children** younger than 8 years are prohibited from being passengers on motorcycles.
- **At intersections** without traffic lights, right-of-way should be given to the vehicle approaching from the larger street.
- **Trucks have** priority over passenger cars.
- **Right turns** on red are allowed after coming to a full stop and checking for other traffic.
- **Police may** carry out random breath tests.
- **Individuals impersonating** police officers may demand cash payment for made-up traffic offences. Request a ticket detailing infraction and ask to see officer’s identification.



Santo Domingo (Capital)

- » Largest city. The center is divided by the Ozama River.
- » Driving is not recommended. Road lighting is inadequate. Traffic is unruly. Drivers are undisciplined. Many streets lack signs. Few buildings have addresses, and some locations may be identified by occupant's name.
- » Many street surfaces are poorly maintained and have large potholes.
- » Transportation options include cars, taxis, carrito conchos/shared taxis, carros publicos (unregulated taxis), motoconchos/motorbike taxis, buses, "guaguas" minibuses, long-distance coach buses, a metro system, water taxis and ferries.
- » City buses/guaguas, carrito conchos and motoconchos do not meet acceptable safety standards. Buses should be avoided. Many vehicles are unsafe.
- » Buses include city buses, guaguas/minibuses and long-distance coaches.
- » Bus vehicles and bus stops do not display routes, arrival or departure times.
- » Guaguas are privately owned. Some are old school buses. Routes include local and long-distance destinations.
- » Most inner-city guaguas are white vans running along designated routes. Many are overcrowded; drivers stop along the route to pick up other passengers.
- » Guaguas marked "expreso" do not stop to pick up additional passengers. Fares are paid in cash; drivers may not make change.
- » Guaguas have a driver and a conductor. Conductors collect fares and call out stops as requested by passengers.
- » Long-distance coach bus companies provide routes between the city and Punta Cana, Puerto Plata and Santiago de los Caballeros.
- » Coach buses are generally modern, air-conditioned vehicles that connect all major regions.
- » Taxis include private cars, shared carrito conchos (generally called "conchos") and motoconcho motorbike taxis.
- » Taxi ranks are located near main bus stations, large hotels and in popular tourist areas.
- » Rates for city taxis are regulated by the local municipality taxi association. Use only regulated taxis with signs on vehicle tops.
- » Do not hail taxis on the street. Ordering a taxi through a reputable hotel is recommended; many unregulated taxis do not have standard safety features including seat belts, turn signals, headlights, taillights, windscreen wipers or good tires.
- » Multiple companies operate taxis. Condition of vehicles varies widely. Verify that there are working seatbelts before agreeing to service.
- » Conchos provide a service similar to inner-city guaguas. Vehicles run along specific routes. Drivers stop to pick up passengers along the way.
- » Carrito conchos taxis may be in poor repair and are often overcrowded.
- » Carros publicos are unregulated taxis. Vehicles may lack safety features.
- » There are many motoconchos. Motoconchos are regarded as unsafe. Drivers often speed and weave through traffic and pedestrians, even on sidewalks.
- » Motoconchos drivers generally wear neon-colored vests. Passenger helmets are usually not provided.
- » The Metro Santo Domingo is a subway system with two lines.
- » Metro train cars are modern.
- » The metro runs from 6 am to 11:30 pm Monday through Friday, and 6 am to 10 pm on weekends and holidays.
- » Reloadable smartcards are used for metro fares.
- » During twice-daily rush hours, metro cars are often overcrowded.
- » The Teleferico is an aerial tramway with four stops. It connects to Metro Line 2 at Eduardo Brito. The tramway serves commuters in outlying neighborhoods.
- » Rideshares are available in major urban centers including Santo Domingo, Santiago and Puerto Plata. Use only services that have a dispatch app providing vehicle description, license plate number and driver's name. Verify



Santo Domingo, continued

- information before entering vehicle. Motoconchos ride-hailing apps are also available; vehicles are not regarded as safe.
- » Pedestrians should exercise caution. Drivers often ignore those on foot, even where there are marked crossings.
- » Many streets and sidewalks are damaged, requiring pedestrians to walk in roadways.
- » Many manholes are missing covers.
- » E-scooters are popular. Drivers frequently disregard traffic rules. E-scooters are banned in some areas.
- » Ferries with car carrying space connect the city to Mayaguez and to San Juan, Puerto Rico. The San Juan route is an overnight journey.
- » There is a major cruise terminal at Sansouci.
- » Water taxis are also available. Safety records of ferry and boat operators varies. Life boats and life-saving equipment may be inadequate. If traveling by boat, bring your own life preserver.
- » Santo Domingo Airport/Las Américas International Airport is approximately 32 km (20 miles) from the city.
- » Transportation between the airport and the city includes taxis, public buses/guaguas, airport shuttles, shared vans/carrito conchos and rental cars.
- » Use only taxis authorized by the airport.
- » Airport guaguas and shared vans/carrito conchos are not advised. Many drivers speed and disregard traffic laws.
- » Private airport shuttles are operated by multiple companies. Book in advance.
- » Some major car rental agencies are represented at the airport. Check vehicle for safety features including seat belts, headlights, taillights, windshield wipers, turn signals and good tires.

Santiago de los Caballeros

- » Second-largest city. Traffic is chaotic.
- » Many roads are poorly lit and maintained. Open manholes are common.
- » Transportation options include cars, taxis, “carrito conchos/shared taxis, carros publicos/shared cars, motoconchos/motorbike taxis, buses, “guaguas” minibuses, long-distance coaches, “conchos” horse-drawn carriages and e-scooters.
- » All public transportation is regarded as generally unsafe.
- » Guaguas minibuses are usually white vans that run along city routes, and connect to Santo Domingo and other long-distance destinations. Vehicles do not display routes; on board conductors call out destinations and stops.
- » Guaguas are often overcrowded. “Expreso” guaguas do not pick up other passengers.
- » Fares are collected by guaguas conductors.
- » Privately-owned long-distance coach buses connect to other cities in all major regions.
- » Taxis are numerous, and include private cars, shared carrito conchos (generally called “conchos”) and motoconcho motorbike taxis.
- » Avoid hailing taxis on the street or hiring from ranks near stations and hotels. Instead, order a taxi through a reputable hotel.
- » Regulated vehicles have “taxi” signs on roofs. Fares are controlled by the local municipality taxi association.
- » Multiple taxi companies operate within the city. Condition of vehicles varies widely. Verify that there are working seatbelts before agreeing to service.
- » There are many unregulated taxis, often referred to as carros publicos or conchos, that run along pre-determined routes. These vehicles frequently lack standard safety features including seat belts, turn signals, headlights, taillights, windscreen wipers or good tires.
- » Motoconchos motorbike taxis are common, and are regarded as dangerous. Drivers often speed and weave through traffic and pedestrians, even on sidewalks.
- » Drivers of motoconchos usually wear neon-colored vests. Most drivers do not provide passenger helmets.



Santiago de los Caballeros, continued

- » Use only services that have a dispatch app providing vehicle description, license plate number and driver's name. Verify information before entering vehicle.
- » The number of e-scooters is increasing. Drivers frequently disregard traffic rules and the presence of pedestrians. E-scooters are banned in some areas.
- » Streets and sidewalks are often in poor repair. Surface conditions may require pedestrians to walk in roadways. Many streets have missing manhole covers.
- » Pedestrians are at risk. Infrastructure is inadequate. Drivers frequently ignore persons on foot, even where there are marked crossings.
- » Cibao International Airport is 19.3 km (12 miles) from city center.
- » Taxi ranks are located outside of the arrivals terminal, and include private and shared vehicles. Use only licensed, regulated taxis and avoid shared cars.
- » Guaguas minibuses have routes between the airport and the city.
- » An airport shuttle bus links the city and airport.
- » Most major car rental agencies are represented at the airport.

ACCOMMODATIONS AND INCLUSIONS FOR MOBILITY CHALLENGED

- **Laws prohibiting** discrimination against persons with physical, sensory or other challenges are not always enforced.
- **Accessible facilities** and access to services is limited in most areas.
- **Santo Domingo** and some large resorts may offer accessible features including ramps and elevators. This type of infrastructure is generally limited or unavailable in most areas of the country.
- **Footpaths** and streets often have uneven, damaged surfaces that may be difficult to navigate.
- **There are no** parking provisions for persons with mobility challenges.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

- **Responders to** emergency numbers, doctors and hospital staffs may not speak English.
- **Pre-program** emergency numbers into your phone before departure.
 - » Police, ambulance and fire: 911
 - » Roadside assistance: +1-829-689-1000
- **Emergency number coverage** is not consistent throughout the country. If unable to get a response from 911, call tourist police at 1-809-200-3500.
- **Responses to** emergency situations may include long delays. Police and security forces are understaffed and inadequately equipped. Emergency services are generally not available near the border with Haiti.
- **Ambulances** and trained emergency staff are unavailable in many parts of the country.
- **Beyond** urban areas, first responders may be unable to reach injured persons or provide life-saving care.
- **Reliable medical care** is generally available only in or near major cities and tourist zones. Private hospitals and clinics offer a higher standard of care than public clinics and medical facilities.
- **Doctors and hospitals** require proof of insurance, or payment in advance of admission or treatment. Persons unable to pay medical bills in full may be prevented from leaving the country.
- **Public clinics** are not equipped with basic medical resources or supplies. Overnight medical care is generally unavailable.
- **Many hotels** and resorts have agreements with specific medical providers, eliminating the choice of emergency medical care.
- **In the event** of a crash, drivers are taken into custody until fault has been determined by a court. Detention may last for extended periods of time. If arrested, request that your national embassy be contacted.



Emergency Information, continued

- **If involved in a crash:**
 - » Call 911. Dispatchers connect callers to the appropriate emergency service.
 - » Notify car rental agency.
 - » Obtain copy of police report for rental agency.
 - » Take photos of scene and collect contact information from other driver(s) and any witnesses.
- **If involved in a crash without injuries** in Santo Domingo or Santiago:
 - » Register the crash at a reporting center such as La Casa del Conductor or El Centro del Automovilista. Centers are staffed with English-speaking agents.
 - » If the crash occurs outside of these cities, it must be reported to the nearest police station.



ABOUT THE ASSOCIATION FOR SAFE INTERNATIONAL ROAD TRAVEL (ASIRT)

ASIRT is a non-profit humanitarian organization established in memory of Aron Sobel, age 25, who was killed along with 22 other passengers in a Pamukkale Bus Company crash on the roads of Turkey.

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