

# Road Safety Review: Uzbekistan

## KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- ❑ Driving is on the right.
- ❑ Drivers are required to carry a current national license, International Driving Permit (IDP), vehicle documents and proof of insurance valid within Uzbekistan. Drivers are advised to also carry a certified copy of their driver's license translated into Uzbek or Russian to make interactions with authorities at checkpoints easier.
- ❑ Visitors must carry an original or certified copy of passport, visa and visa registration documents at all times. Police conduct frequent document inspections.
- ❑ If staying for more than three days, register with the office of Visa and Registration. Some hotels may offer this service at check-in.
- ❑ Local currency is the Uzbek Som (UZS).
- ❑ Driving at night is dangerous. Most roads are unlit or inadequately lit.
- ❑ Visitors should consider hiring a professional driver and car through a reputable hotel or travel agency.
- ❑ Pedestrians account for approximately 28% of traffic deaths.
- ❑ Travel by bus may require following routes that transit through bordering countries where conflict is ongoing. Visas may be required for each country.
- ❑ Legal blood alcohol limit is zero. Despite legal limits, alcohol is a factor in an estimated 36% of road crashes.



Source: CIA Factbook

## ROAD CULTURE

- **Driving** standards are poor. Erratic and unpredictable road behaviors are common.
- **Drivers** are generally unfamiliar with traffic laws.
- **Speeding** is widespread; many drivers overtake under dangerous conditions.
- **Motorists** often fail to signal for turns.
- **Drivers** frequently ignore lane demarcations.
- **Many drivers** fail to stop at traffic signals or stop signs.
- **Poor driving** practices include a disregard for bicyclists and persons on foot.
- **Pedestrians often** step unexpectedly into streets to cross without first checking for traffic.
- **Motorists** and pedestrians who witness a crash are generally quick to offer assistance and contact emergency help.
- **Drivers** regularly ignore safety procedures in Samarkand where a tram line requires passengers to board and disembark into traffic on a busy main road.

## ROAD CONDITIONS

- **There are** 86,496 km (53,746 miles) of roads; 75,511 km (46,920 miles) are paved and 10,985 km (6,825 miles) are unpaved.
- **Road conditions** vary widely throughout the country.
- **Many** roads have potholes. Maintenance is inconsistent.
- **Only** major cities have streetlights. Highways are unlit.
- **There are** currently no toll roads.
- **Bring** an up-to-date paper map if driving. Satellite systems are unreliable.
- **Pedestrian infrastructure** is underdeveloped. Drivers may not respect existing crossings.
- **Demonstrations** occur and can disrupt road travel and public transport. Past demonstrations have turned violent and resulted in serious injuries and deaths. Avoid all public gatherings.
- **Violent protests** take place more frequently in Andijan and the eastern region of the Fergana Valley.
- **Fuel supplies** are inconsistent. Beyond Tashkent, drivers may have difficulty acquiring petrol.
- **There are** many mountainous areas. These roads are in poor condition, particularly those in the Tian Shan and Fan mountain ranges.
- **Loose** livestock presents a danger in rural areas.
- **Animal-drawn** carts and slow-moving farm equipment are common on all roads, including cities. Carts and farm vehicles may lack lights or reflectors.
- **Traffic checkpoints** are in place at the city limit of Tashkent and other towns.



## Road Conditions, continued

- **Travel to** areas within the Surxondaryo Province requires special permission from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Internal Affairs, or an Uzbek embassy or consulate abroad.
- **Borders** with the Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan are unstable due to ongoing political disputes, which often involve gunfire. Avoid all travel to border areas.
- **Do not travel** to the Fergana Valley and Temez Region; or drive to within 5 km (3.1 miles) of the border with Afghanistan, which is closed until further notice.
- **The boundary** with Kazakhstan is closed to Uzbek and Kazakh nationals.
- **Border areas** between the country and Tajikistan, the Kyrgyz Republic and Afghanistan may have active land mines.
- **Main roads** in Tashkent are better maintained than city streets or secondary and rural roads.
- **The following roads** may present particular challenges to motorists:
  - » **Shota Rustaveli** street is a main route through the city of Tashkent, and serves as a primary corridor for public transportation. There are many intersections and access points to public gardens and monuments. Motorized traffic is dense, and there is heavy foot traffic. Drivers, including taxi and bus drivers, speed and ignore traffic rules. Many people fail to cross at pedestrian walks, and may step into traffic. Serious and fatal crashes are common; many involve pedestrians.
  - » **Kamchik Pass/Tashkent-Osh A373** (also spelled Kamchiq or Qamchiq) is an international paved highway. The route travels through the Fergana Valley between the Tashkent and Namangan regions. Ice may be present on road surfaces year-round. The road is heavily traveled, but should be avoided during severe weather conditions. Heavy snow, avalanches, landslide and mudslides regularly occur.
  - » **Pereval Sasivordovon/R-124** is a high mountain pass located in the Namangan Region in eastern Uzbekistan. The surface is rough gravel, and requires a four-wheel drive vehicle. Weather conditions make the road impassable for much of the year. The road is extremely steep, with many hairpin turns. Guardrails are lacking. This road should be avoided, especially by drivers prone to vertigo.

## REGIONAL AND SEASONAL CONDITIONS

- **Many locations** are at high altitude. Be alert to symptoms of altitude sickness. Dizziness, lack of coordination, headache, fatigue, shortness of breath and nausea can impair driver judgment and increase road risks.
- **Fasting** during the religious month of Ramadan may result in drivers and pedestrians being dehydrated and less alert.
- **Uzbekistan** is located within an active seismic zone. Tremors are common.
- **There is** a risk of earthquakes, which may be followed by strong aftershocks.
- **Frequent seismic** activity in mountainous areas may result in landslides and blocked roads.
- **During winter**, roads in mountains may not be cleared of snow or ice. Surfaces may be treacherous.
- **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>

Maximum Speed Limits

Type of road	Maximum speed
Urban areas	70 kph (43 mph)
Tashkent, Nukus and regional centers	60 kph (37 mph)
School zones	below 30 kph (18 mph)
Residential areas	below 20 kph (12 mph)
Rural roads	100 kph (62 mph)
Highways	80 to 90 kph (50 to 55 mph)

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

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

Yield to oncoming traffic	Emergency stopping area	Railway crossing blocked	Road has lane for vehicles on fixed routes	Traffic direction and restrictions	Children in area	Direction of lanes	Right turn on red allowed	Pedestrians prohibited

## Road Safety Review: Uzbekistan

### TRANSPORTATION

- **Transportation options** include cars, motorcycles, motorbikes, e-scooters (electric kick-scooters), buses, marshrutka minibuses, one metro system, trams, taxis, rideshares and trains.
- **There are** few motorcycles.
- **Public transportation** is limited, and generally regarded as unsafe.
- **Many buses** and taxis run on Compressed Natural Gas. Safety regulations are regularly ignored. Choose modern vehicles if traveling by bus or taxi.
- **Buses and** minibuses/marshrutkas are often crowded.
- **Schedules**, route information for buses and minibuses, and maps are generally not provided.
- **There is** a metro system in Tashkent.
- **Use only** official taxis with “taxi” signs mounted on roofs. Negotiate fare prior to entering vehicle.
- **New regulations** require taxis to be licensed, painted a uniform color, and have credit card payment options. Despite regulations, many unmarked, unlicensed and unregulated taxis remain in service.
- **Many taxis** do not have seat belts; check availability before agreeing to service. If ordering a taxi by phone, request a vehicle with working seat belts.
- **Do not** enter a taxi occupied by other passengers.
- **Rideshare** systems are operated through local and national companies including Yandex Go and MyTaxi. Services have a dispatch app providing vehicle description, license plate number and driver’s name. Verify all information before entering vehicle.
- **Few people** travel by bicycle. There is little cycling infrastructure.
- **E-scooters and motorbikes** are increasing in popularity in cities. Laws governing their use are being developed.
- **Scooters** capable of speeds over 50 kph (31 mph) are

classified as motorcycles and are subject to the same laws as motorcycles. Drivers must have a valid license.

- **There is** limited rail service. High-speed routes are available to Tashkent, Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva.
- **Night travel** by train is dangerous due to frequent onboard crime. Secure compartment doors from the inside, and do not move through the train unattended.

### TRAFFIC REGULATIONS

- **Drivers must** be at least 18 years of age to drive, and at least 21 years old to rent a vehicle. Individual rental agencies may have other restrictions.
- **Seat belt use** is mandatory for drivers. For safety, all vehicle occupants should wear seat belts.
- **Children are allowed** in front seats provided they are secured in safety restraints appropriate to age and size.
- **Helmet use** is compulsory for motorcycle drivers and passengers. Helmets must be fastened.
- **Children under** the age of 12 are prohibited from being motorcycle passengers. Motorcycle laws are strongly enforced.
- **Vehicles entering** a roundabout have priority over existing traffic.
- **Passing** on curves is prohibited.
- **On multi-lane** roads, trucks may use only the far right lanes.
- **Where** there are no bike paths, cyclists must wear a reflective vest or clothing with reflective elements after dark, or during inclement weather. For safety, cyclists should always wear reflective clothing.
- **Enforcement** of speed limit laws is high.
- **Traffic police** may demand on-the-spot cash payment for arbitrary infractions.
- **Harassment** and extortion by law enforcement individuals, and persons pretending to be police or other authorities, occurs regularly.
- **Police** generally do not speak English.

#### Tashkent (Capital)

- » Transportation options include cars, buses, marshrutka minibuses, one metro system, taxis, rideshares, motorcycles, e-scooters (electric kick-scooters) and trains.
- » Driving is not recommended. Traffic is chaotic and drivers are aggressive.
- » There are few street signs. Navigating city roads can be challenging.
- » Surfaces of main roads are generally in fair condition. Streets and secondary roads often have deep potholes and broken pavement.
- » Tashkent is connected to Samarkand via the M34, but requires traveling along a brief section in Kazakhstan.
- » There is a ring road around the city.
- » E-scooters are becoming popular (see “Traffic Regulations”). Pedestrians should be alert to e-scooter drivers who are not familiar with traffic safety rules.



## Tashkent, continued

- » Tashkent Avtovokzal public bus station is on Prospekt Bunyodkor across from Sobir Rahimov metro station.
- » Private buses, marshrutkas and shared taxis to Samarkand, Bukhara and Urgench leave from Sobir Rahimov private bus station on Prospekt Bunyodkor, about 7 km (4.3 miles) southwest of Navoi Park; and from a private “bus yard” behind the Ippodrom Bazaar, 3 km (1.8 miles) past Sobir Rahimov metro station.
- » Buses include modern city buses and marshrutka minibuses.
- » City buses are green and run on set schedules; times may not be adhered to.
- » Buses require tokens, which can be purchased at bus stations.
- » Use only regulated, licensed taxis ordered through a reputable hotel. The taxi fleet includes regular cars and shared taxis (these may be vans or minibuses).
- » Avoid independent taxi services offered by residents with private vehicles.
- » Dispatchers for phone taxis and rideshares generally speak only Uzbek or Russian.
- » Taxi drivers often do not know street names, and navigate by proximity to known public buildings such as large hotels or hospitals. Carry a copy of destination written in Uzbek or Russian that includes nearby landmarks or public buildings for reference.
- » Many newer taxis are metered. Driver may not activate meter, or claim that it is broken. Negotiate fares in advance of travel.
- » Shared taxis and marshrutkas follow fixed routes. Passengers may request a stop anywhere along route.
- » The underground metro system has three lines: Chilonzor (Red Line) from Janubly to Turkistan; Uzbekistan (Blue Line) from Berunly to Chkalov; and Yunus-Obod (Green Line) from Sabir Rakhimov to Buyuk Ipak Yuli.
- » Metro trains run from about 5 am to midnight. Frequency of service increases during daily peak commuter hours.
- » Metros require a token to access the station. Tokens are sold at ticket offices (“KASSA”) at station entrances. Some international credit cards are accepted for token purchases.
- » Metro stations are monitored by police. Passenger bags and identification documents are examined upon entry.
- » A new tram system is planned; dates for construction are being determined. Construction is anticipated to significantly disrupt road and pedestrian transportation throughout the city.
- » Tashkent Railway Station (Toshkent Vokzal) is the main station, and is located south of city center at the end of Shevchenko Street.
- » Rail services include high-speed Afrosiyob trains to Samarkand, and the Sharq Train to Bukhara.
- » Night trains are available to Khiva and Termez.
- » International routes to neighboring countries may be affected by political unrest.
- » South Station (Janubly Vokzal/Yuzhnyy), south of the city on Nasir Street, is currently closed.
- » Rideshare systems are operated through local and national companies including Yandex Go and MyTaxi. Services have a dispatch app providing vehicle description, license plate number and driver’s name. Verify all information before entering vehicle.
- » Pedestrians are generally ignored by drivers, even at crossings.
- » Tashkent International Airport is approximately 4 km (2.5 miles) from city center. There are two terminals, separated by an airfield. A taxi is necessary to travel between terminals.
- » Transport to the city is by car, marshrutka or taxi.
- » Avoid drivers of unregistered taxis soliciting for passengers in the arrivals area. Drivers may be aggressive.
- » Official taxi stands are located outside of the exit door. Vehicles have “taxi” signs mounted on car roofs. Negotiate fare prior to entering vehicle.
- » Bus stops are located outside of the arrivals area past the parking lot, just before the main road.
- » Most buses run from 6 am to midnight. There are direct routes to the city, central square, Oybek metro station and the main train station.
- » Car rental agencies are locally based. Rental vehicles may be in poor repair and lack standard safety features including seat belts.



## Samarkand

- » Transportation options include cars, buses, marshrutka minibuses, a tram, taxis, rideshares, motorcycles, e-scooters (electric kick-scooters) and trains.
- » Driving should be avoided. Drivers generally disregard traffic laws and are often aggressive and confrontational.
- » Street signs are lacking. Many roads have broken, uneven surfaces. Potholes are common.
- » E-scooters are becoming popular (see “Traffic Regulations”). Pedestrians should be alert to e-scooter drivers who are not familiar with rules.
- » City buses/marshrutkas are older white minibuses. Many are in poor condition.
- » The main bus station is near the airport.
- » Bus schedules are not observed. Bus stops are often unmarked.
- » Bus drivers may not make stops at some locations if traffic is heavy.
- » Taxis include yellow licensed taxis with “taxi” signs on roofs, and shared taxis.
- » Most drivers do not speak English. Carry a copy of destination written in Uzbek or Russian, and include landmarks near your destination. Street signs are lacking, and drivers are often unfamiliar with the city.
- » Shared taxis to Tashkent, Bukhara and Navoi depart from a stand located east of the Ulugh Beg Observatory; some may be found in front of the observatory.
- » Panjakent Street bus station is the main station.
- » There is one tram line connecting the train station and Siyab Bazaar.
- » Most of the city’s tram network no longer functions. Repairs and updates are ongoing. Stops are located in the middle of a busy road, forcing passengers to board and disembark into traffic.
- » Samarkand Railway station is 5 km (3.1 miles) northwest of Navoi Park. Tickets must be purchased in advance at the Uzbekistan Railways ticket office on Amir Temur St.
- » Trains are often crowded. Buy tickets in advance.
- » Rail service includes daily high-speed Afrosiyob trains to and from Tashkent. There are limited international routes to Russia and Kazakhstan. Domestic train service is slow.
- » Pedestrian infrastructure is underdeveloped. Drivers frequently disregard the presence of pedestrians.
- » Samarkand International Airport is 6 km (3.7 miles) from city center. Most service is domestic, with limited international routes to locations in Russia.
- » Airport construction is ongoing.
- » Taxis and a limited selection of rental cars are the only means of transport to the city.
- » Rental cars may be in poor condition.

## ACCOMMODATIONS AND INCLUSIONS FOR MOBILITY CHALLENGED

- **Laws prohibiting** discrimination against persons with physical, sensory or other challenges are enforced.
- **Most buildings**, public transportation, clinics and other public destinations are not adapted for use by persons with physical, sensory or other challenges.

## EMERGENCY INFORMATION

- **Pre-program** emergency numbers into your phone before departure.
- **Responders** to emergency numbers, doctors and hospital staff often do not speak English.
- **Emergency numbers:**
  - » Police: 102 (Tashkent) or 02 (most of Uzbekistan).
  - » Fire: 101 (Tashkent) or 01 (most of Uzbekistan).
  - » General emergency services: 103 (Tashkent) or 03 (most of Uzbekistan).
  - » Ministry of Emergency Situations: 1050 (Tashkent) or 050 (most of Uzbekistan).
- **Medical care** is inadequate; hygiene practices in clinics and hospitals are poor.

## Emergency Information, continued

- **Reliable** medical treatment is generally available only in cities. Overnight hospital care is minimal.
- **Ambulances** are available in most of the country, but are not equipped with state-of-the-art medical equipment, and may not be staffed with trained paramedics or physicians.
- **It may be** faster for injured or ill persons to take a taxi or private vehicle to the nearest major hospital. Private ambulances are available in some main cities.
- **Cash payment** is required for medical treatment, and may be required in advance of care.
- **First responders** may be unable to access remote areas to provide urgent medical treatment.
- **There are** shortages of medical supplies, including disposable needles, anesthetics and antibiotics.
- **Medicines** sold in pharmacies are often counterfeit. Purchase or accept medicines only from medical professionals at reputable hospitals or clinics.
- **Pharmaceutical drugs** prescribed in other countries may be illegal in Uzbekistan. Verify legal status of any medications before entering the country, and carry medicine in original packaging with a written prescription from your physician.
- **If involved in a crash:**
  - » Call police. There may be significant delays before authorities respond.
  - » Do not move vehicle until directed to do so by police.
  - » Submit to mandatory medical and drug exam.
  - » Notify your embassy and car rental agency.
  - » Fill out forms for insurance company.
  - » Collect contact information from other driver(s) and any witnesses if possible.
  - » Take photos of crash scene if it is safe to do so.

**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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Association for Safe International Road Travel, 11769 Gainsborough Road, Potomac, MD 20854 USA,

Phone: 1-240-249-0100; Email: [asirt@asirt.org](mailto:asirt@asirt.org); Website: [www.asirt.org](http://www.asirt.org); Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ASIRT.org/>