

Sierra Leone

Medical Summary

The health risk information presented here is summarized from Shoreland Travax[®], a decision-support tool used by health care providers to perform a detailed health risk analysis based on specific locations, individual travel styles, and traveler risk behaviors. Travax provides practitioners current, independently researched malaria risk and prevention recommendations in a map-based format that goes beyond the annual WHO and CDC statements included here. Not included here are current reports from Travax of disease outbreaks or environmental events that may pose elevated risks to travelers' health and safety. The Providers section of this site offers a directory of health care providers who utilize Shoreland Travax for travel health counseling. Learn more about the detailed reports and maps available from these practitioners (includes links to samples).

General Information

Sierra Leone is a developing nation in the lowest 25% of the world's economies. Located in western Africa along the Atlantic Ocean (south of Guinea and north of Liberia), the climate is classified as humid equatorial (short dry season) in the west and humid equatorial (long dry season) in the east.

Immunizations

Yellow Fever

- | *Requirement:* A vaccination certificate is required for all travelers.
- | *Official Status:* listed by WHO as a country where YF transmission risk is present.

Other Vaccines

Depending on your itinerary, your personal risk factors, and the length of your visit, your health care provider may offer you vaccination against hepatitis A, hepatitis B, influenza, measles, mumps, rubella, rabies, or typhoid fever. Routine immunizations, such as those that prevent tetanus/diphtheria or "childhood" diseases, should be reviewed and updated as needed.

Malaria

The following is current information as reported by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC):

WHO—*International Travel and Health* (current online update, Country List)

(2018) Malaria risk due predominantly to *P. falciparum* exists throughout the year in the entire country.

- | Recommended prevention: **C** – Risk of *P. falciparum* malaria, in combination with reported chloroquine and sulfadoxine–pyrimethamine resistance. Mosquito bite prevention plus atovaquone–proguanil or doxycycline or mefloquine chemoprophylaxis (select according to reported side effects and contraindications) ^a
- ^aAlternatively, for travel to rural areas with low risk of malaria infection, mosquito bite prevention can be combined with stand-by emergency treatment (SBET).

WHO Country List footnote: When available, the date of the most recent update or confirmation is indicated in parentheses in the country list. If no date is indicated, the most recent update or confirmation was provided before 2013.

CDC—*Health Information for International Travel* (current online edition)

Areas with malaria: All.

- | Estimated relative risk of malaria for US travelers: High.
- | Drug resistance⁴: Chloroquine.
- | Malaria species: *P. falciparum* > 85%, *P. ovale* 5%-10%, *P. malariae* and *P. vivax* rare.
- | Recommended chemoprophylaxis: Atovaquone-proguanil, doxycycline, or mefloquine.

⁴ Refers to *P. falciparum* malaria unless otherwise noted.

Other Concerns

Travelers' Diarrhea

High risk exists throughout the country, including in deluxe accommodations. Food and beverage precautions may reduce the likelihood of illness.

Travelers should carry loperamide for self-treatment of diarrhea and, if risk is moderate to high, an antibiotic to add if diarrhea is severe. Consult a knowledgeable health care provider regarding which antibiotic is appropriate for you and most effective for your destination.

Other Food-Borne Illnesses

Precautions to prevent seafood poisoning may be needed.

Insect- and Arthropod-Borne Diseases

African trypanosomiasis, chikungunya, dengue, onchocerciasis, West Nile virus, Zika may pose a risk. Personal protective measures are important.

Other Disease and Health Risks

Additional concerns include Ebola virus disease, helminths, lassa fever, marine hazards, monkeypox, schistosomiasis, sexually transmitted infections, snakebites, tuberculosis.

Consular Advice

The material below includes information from the U.S. Department of State (DOS), U.K. Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO), Global Affairs Canada (GAC), and Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), as well as from additional open-source material. Standard safety precautions that apply to all international travel can be found in the Library article Safety and Security.

Terrorism Risk

No intrinsic risk of attack by terrorist groups exists, but unforeseen attacks are possible.

Crime

High risk of violent crime (armed robbery and home invasion) and high risk of petty crime exist throughout the country, especially in Freetown (particularly on Lumley Beach; in Congo Cross, Wilkinson Road, and Aberdeen areas; on the ferry to and from Lungi International Airport; in bars, restaurants, and nightclubs), and other cities.

Civil Unrest

Protests and demonstrations may infrequently occur and have the potential to turn violent without warning.

Water Safety

Hazardous water conditions (including currents, tides, and undertows) may occur. Heed posted warnings and avoid beaches that are not patrolled. Do not swim alone or after dark, and do not walk on any beach after dark.

Transportation Safety

Significant risk of traffic-related injury or death exists. The road-traffic death rate is greater than 24 per 100,000 population, the highest risk category. Carefully assess the safety of transportation options before any road travel. Speed laws are poorly enforced. Driving at night is not advised. Seek local advice before traveling on roads outside urban areas after dark.

Traffic flows on the right-hand side of the road. Travelers (including drivers and pedestrians) accustomed to traffic moving on the opposite side should be vigilant when navigating traffic.

Public buses, taxis, and mototaxis do not meet international safety standards (due to unsafe vehicles and poor maintenance). Avoid road travel outside Western Area Province after dark.

Taxis are unsafe. Use a privately hired driver.

Natural Disasters

The rainy season is from May through November. Floods, mudslides, and landslides may occur.

Sandstorms and dust storms occur.

Consular Information

Selected Embassies or Consulates in Sierra Leone

- | United States: [+232] 99-1055-00; sl.usembassy.gov
- | Canada: Canada does not have an embassy or consulate in Sierra Leone.
- | United Kingdom: [+232] 0-76541386; www.gov.uk/world/organisations/british-high-commission-freetown
- | Australia: Australia does not have an Embassy or Consulate in Sierra Leone.

Sierra Leone's Embassies or Consulates in Selected Countries

- | In the U.S.: embassyofsierraleone.net
- | In the U.K.: [+44] 020-7404-0140
- | In Canada: [+1] 613-791-7148
- | In Australia: sierraleonecgtc.org.au

Visa/HIV Testing

HIV testing is not required to obtain a tourist, work, or residence visa.

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