



Safety in Paris





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CONTACT INFORMATION

MICEFA
 Centre Saint-Jacques
 26 rue du Faubourg Saint-Jacques
 75014 Paris
 France

Metro: (line 6) Saint Jacques
 RER: (B) Port Royal

Office Hours:

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday: 9:30am - 12:30pm; 1:30pm - 5:30pm
 Wednesday: 9:30am - 12:30pm

NB: Please note that office hours may change each semester, please check our website for updates.

Office Phone: +33 (0)1 40 51 76 96
Office Fax: +33 (0)1 44 07 18 10
Emergency Cell: +33 (0)6 70 50 87 05/ +33 (0)6 31 26 71 79
E-mail: info@micefa.org
Website: www.micefa.org

MICEFA Team:

Ms. Heather Mortimer-Charoy	Program Coordinator	hmortimer@micefa.org
Prof. Katia Nossenko-Hercberg	Language Coordinator	knossenko@micefa.org
	Academic Director	academicdirector@micefa.org
Ms. Melissa Weaver	Director of Student Affairs	mweaver@micefa.org
Ms. Audrey Casabielhe	Administrative Assistant	adminassistant@micefa.org
Ms. Marcelina Tobar	Activities intern	stagiaire.micefa@gmail.com
Ms. Samantha Csenge	Intern	stagiaire.micefa@gmail.com
Ms. Julia Gotlibowski	Intern	stagiaire.micefa@gmail.com
General Inquiries	MICEFA	info@micefa.org

*In case of an emergency **during office hours**, please call the MICEFA office. **Outside office hours**, please call the emergency cell numbers and leave a message on the voicemail if nobody answered, we will call you back. (Remember – this number is to be used for emergencies ONLY : i.e. severe injuries, illness or serious emotional disturbance, so use your good judgment and common sense before calling). Keep the MICEFA phone numbers on you at all times (better yet, program them into your cell phone as soon as possible), just in case! Also students who have Resident Directors for their time abroad in France, please contact them first, this applies to Rutgers, UCONN, CUNY and CSU-IP students only.

CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

Signs of Culture Shock: If you don't experience some degree of "culture shock" during your first weeks in France, you're either not getting out enough or you're just not paying attention! Under what may at first appear to be a recognizable social structure lie enormous differences in personal and social rules of behavior, family structure, student/ teacher relationships, norms of friendship, political attitudes, sexual relations, approaches to cleanliness, time, space, diet, health, moral codes, many of which you will notice immediately and be able to adapt to fairly easily. Two books that we recommend are *Au Contraire: Figuring Out the French* by Gilles Asselin and Ruth Mastron and *Cultural Misunderstandings: the French-American Experience* by Raymonde Carroll. They should really help you in understanding this phenomenon.

At a less conscious level, you may come to feel threatened, frustrated, angry and destabilized by subtle conflicts that occur, especially since you may be unable to express yourself fully or be fully understood by people you need to deal with. In the first few weeks especially, the combination of culture shock and the readjustment of your body clock to changing so many time zones may lead you to feel that coming to France was a big mistake. Don't believe what your emotions and body rhythms are telling you, but don't ignore them either. Unless you are willing to recognize the source of your feelings, you will not be able to put them into perspective and you risk developing, over time, a sense of inadequacy and even depression. You must be on the alert for signs of these classic reactions, because they are serious matters and can even be health and life threatening.

Coping Strategies: Observe cultural differences, but do not judge them. Remember, none of what is going on around you is directed towards you personally, even the cultural stereotypes which many of the French apply to Americans or others have nothing to do with who you are.

Keep an open mind and a sense of humor. Since you're going to laugh about most of these confrontations one day, why not start out by refusing to take them seriously now. You might want to record your experiences in a diary; it will help you get a grip on them, learn from them, and will be a wonderful reminder – years from now – of your stay in France!

Get out and meet people by doing things you like to do or have always wanted to do, but couldn't. Look for ways to pursue your interests, hobbies, or favorite sports. Go to public places, cafés, clubs, concerts, etc.

Get plenty of rest and try to avoid excessive alcohol consumption. Especially in the first few weeks, over-tiredness, with or without the dehydrating effects of alcohol, can compromise your normally resistant immune system and mimic the symptoms of depression.

***Above all, DO NOT REMAIN ISOLATED: TALK to people in the group,
or to others at MICEFA.***

SAFETY IN PARIS

Public Transportation:

- Only purchase tickets from a ticket office or automatic ticket machine and never from someone on the street as they will charge you more or even sell you an invalid ticket.
- Do not travel on the Night Bus (*Le Noctilien*) alone.
- Be aware of your surroundings and keep your bags closed. Don't leave items in your pockets.
- If you are wearing a backpack, pull it to the front of you when using transportation.
- Never take a taxi that does not have an official sign or meter.
- Don't respond to any solicitation in the metro or on the street.

In the Street:

- Be careful when crossing the road. Be careful, even when you have the green light or are standing on the curb.
- Avoid walking alone late at night in deserted or poorly lit streets. Women are advised to walk in groups at night.
- Do not handle money in public and carry a minimum amount of cash.
- DO NOT carry your passport with you but keep a photocopy in your wallet. Make sure you give MICEFA a copy of your passport at the beginning of the semester, too.

Pick pocketing and How to avoid it:

Tourist attractions are a major target for pick pocketing and scams so be aware at all times!

- Do not keep items in your back pockets.
- Do not lend your mobile phone to a stranger.
- Do not leave your personal items unattended in public places such as changing rooms, café, restaurant, etc.
- Do not leave your bag at your feet, hanging off the back of your chair or on the seat next to you at a café or restaurant and do not leave your wallet or phone on the table.

Protests:

- Do not get involved in political protests or demonstrations. They could lead to violence and you could become injured or arrested, in which case your visa may be revoked.

Going Out:

- Extreme alcohol consumption or any addictive behavior can lead to an encounter with the police and the revocation of your visa. Please consume in moderation.
- Do not take part in any illegal activities. This includes drinking in public, which is banned in most parts of Paris and everywhere after 4pm.

In Case of Theft or Assault:

- Do not try to fight off a mugger because this may lead to a more serious attack.
- Go to the nearest police station or use the police emergency number located at the end of the page.

Your ID documents:

- Remember to scan and save all of your important ID documents. This includes your birth certificate, your passport, your credit cards, etc.
- You should also have a copy of your passport with you at all times. NEVER have your actual passport on you. Keep it in a safe place instead.

Handling Money:

- Do not keep a large amount of cash on you or in your room.
- In case your bankcard has been stolen, call your bank as soon as possible to report it. You should also let the police know.

At the Police Station:

- Each arrondissement has a police station. They are called *Commissariat de Police*. Below is the address for the one near the MICEFA office.
 - 114-116 Avenue de Maine Paris 75014
 - metro Gaîté
- You must ask for a *Récépissé de Déclaration de Perte ou Vol* if you have lost personal possessions or personal possessions have been stolen from you.
- If you would like to go look for the object(s) yourself, you should go to *Le Service des Objets Trouvés*, the Paris office of Lost and Found, located in the 15th arrondissement.
 - 36 rue des Morillons Paris, France 75015

Emergency Numbers:

- Ambulance service (SAMU) : 15
- Police : 17
- Firemen (*pompiers*) : 18
- SOS Médecins : 01 47 07 77 77
- Urgences Médicales de Paris : 01 48 28 40 04
- SOS Help (depression, suicide) : 01 47 23 80 80
- Credit card lost or stolen : 08 36 69 08 80

Useful Vocabulary:

- *Récépissé de Déclaration de Perte ou Vol*- Receipt for declaration of loss or theft; this is given to you by the police at any police station
- *Le Service des Objets Trouvés*- Lost and Found
- *Commissariat de Police*- police station
- *Le Noctilien*- a bus that runs even after the métro has closed
- *Carte de credit*- credit card
- *Code secrete*- PIN code
- *Porte feuille*- wallet

- *Carte d'identité*- personal identification card
- *Sac à main*- purse
- *Voler*- to steal