

# Chapter VII

## Health and Safety

As the title implies, this chapter is divided into two main sections. First, we list the major health care providers and related health services such as ambulance, dental, optical, and pharmacies in the major cities of Cochabamba, La Paz, and Santa Cruz. We then move on to some general observations and suggestions regarding safety issues in Bolivia.

---

### Cochabamba (CBBA)



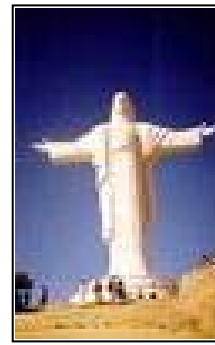
[CBBA Department]



[CBBA Streets]



[Street Signs]



[Cristo]

From a health perspective, CBBA is the borderline between the highland Andes and the lowland tropics. Travelers, who don't venture far from the city, should follow the precautions provided in the LPZ section of this chapter. Those who plan to spend several days or more in the CBBA countryside or venture to even lower altitudes toward the Oriente or Amazon basin need to consider the advice contained in the SCZ section regarding tropical areas.

A unique issue in the rural CBBA region is Chagas Disease. Transmitted by the bite of the Vinchuca bug and carried in the human bloodstream, Chagas is a very serious malady. Those who contract the disease may suffer from impairment of the heart, liver, and even the intestines. Early treatment is possible with a version of chemotherapy. The best prevention is to avoid sleeping in thatched huts or in buildings without closed or screened windows and doors. In the lowlands, mosquito netting over the bed is advised.

## Medical Care – CBBA

Following are several physicians, clinics, and ambulance services. The **Centro Médico Quirúgico Boliviano Belga** is located at Calle Antezana #0455, between Calle Venezuela and Calle Paccieri, Tel. 423-1403, Tel. 422-9207, or Tel. 425-1579. This is the primary clinic in CBBA. Regular hours are 8:00 to 12:00 noon and 15:00 to 19:00 daily. The USA Embassy duty nurse in La Paz can be contacted at Tel. 7722-4861 (Cell) during off hours.

### **Ambulance Service**

MEDICAR Emergency Ambulance Service. Ramón Rivero #942. Tel. 453-3222 and Tel. 453-3181. The Bolivian Roving Patrol in CCBA can be contacted at Tel. 453-3222.

### **Dr. Nancy Otero**

USA Embassy Post Advisor at the Instituto Gastroenterológico Boliviano-Japonés, Tel. 425-6791 or Tel. 425-9198. Dr. Otero can be reached also at EDOCORP in the SERVIMED Building, Calle Baptista #777. Tel. 424-3950.

### **Dr. Juan Carlos Barrenechea**

Centro Médico Quirúgico Boliviano Belga. Calle Antezana #0455. Tel. 411-5944 or Tel. 422-3446.

### **Dr. Alejandro Sauma**

Clínica Médico Quirúgico Boliviano Belga, Calle Antezana #0455, Tel. 423-1403.

### **Dr. James Koller**

Recommended by the Tourist Office. Calle Baptista N #0386, Tel. 422-4191.

### **Centro Médico Quirúgico Boliviano Belga**

Web: [www.cmqbb.com](http://www.cmqbb.com). In a life-threatening situation, you should go directly to the Centro Médico Boliviano Belga and then call a physician. The Centro Belga is recommended by the USA Embassy. Calle Antezana #0455, between Calle Venezuela and Calle Paccieri. Tel. 425-1579 or Tel. 423-1403.

### **Hospital Viedma**

Possible backup clinic in CBBA: Avenida Aniceto Arce E-0257. Tel 422-8106.

## Dental Care – CBBA

The following dentist is recommended by the USA Embassy:

### **Dr. Gerd Simón**

Avenida Santa Cruz, Torres Sofer, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor #201, Esquina Calle Beni, Tel. 429-5858.

## Optical Care – CBBA

### **CEMY Centro Especialidades Médicas Oftamológicas York**

- Optica Rochester: Avenida San Martín #S-0222, Casi Calle Bolivar. Tel. 425-4705
- Optica York: Avenida San Martín #S-292, Esquina Sucre. Tel. 450-1799
- Optica CEMY: Avenida San Martín #S-274, Casi Esquina Sucre. Tel. 450-5222.

**Centro Optico**

Avenida San Martín #N0369. Tel. 422-9897.

**Optica Buena Vista**

Optical services and supplies. Avenida Heroínas E-#0487 – Esquina San Martín, Tel. 450-2222, Web: [www.lentes.com.bo](http://www.lentes.com.bo).

**Optica San Martín**

Avenida San Martín #N-0119. Tel. 422-3036.

**Pharmacies – CBBA**

If you have an urgent need for medications during the late evening hours or on a Sunday or holiday, ask a hotel clerk or taxi driver to identify a "*farmacia de turno*", one that is scheduled to be open 24 hours. These pharmacies are also listed in the daily newspaper.

**Farmacias Unidas**

Large pharmacy cooperative in CBBA.

- Farmacia Andalucía, Quillacollo. Tel. 426-0067
- Farmacia Auroro, Avenida San Martín #1349, Between Tara and Pulcayo. Tel. 422-9303.
- Farmacia Ayacucho, Avenida Ayacucho #1648. Tel. 422-4630
- Farmacia Colón. Venezuela #0398 - Esquina Lanza. Tel. 422-3418
- Farmacia Cosmos, Plaza 14 de Septiembre #248, Acera Oeste, Tel. 425-7366
- Farmacia Fátima. Calle aniceto Padilla #133, Tel. 424-2586
- Farmacia Elim. Avenida Maximiliano Kolver, Km. 4, Sacaba. Tel. 427-4707.
- Farmacia Hispana, Estaban Are – Esquina Ladislao Cabrera. Tel. 422-4125.

**FarmaCorp**

Several locations in CBBA. Delivery service is available at Tel. 452-4244.

- Open until midnight. Calle San Martín near Calle Sucre. Tel. 450-4635.
- Open 24 hrs. Avenida Ballivián #719. Tel. 452-4244.
- Open until midnight. Avenida America – Esquina Calle Pando. Tel. 440-0120.

**Farmahorro**

Avenida Heroínas – Esquina Tumusla, Tel. 422-9456.

**Red Bolivia**

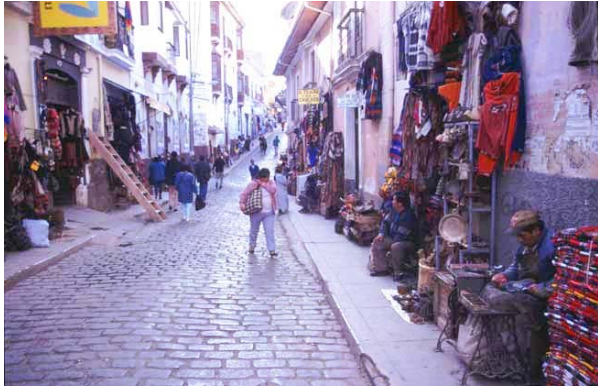
Avenida San Martín near Ladislao Cabrera. Tel. 450-9524.

**San Lucas**

Avenida Pasteur near Avenida Aniceto Arce. Tel. 425-5391.

---

## La Paz (LPZ)



[Artesanías District – La Paz]



[Coroico, Provincia Nor Yungas, La Paz]

### Medical Care – LPZ

If you experience a serious or life-threatening accident or medical condition, go directly to the **Clínica del Sur**. This clinic has an emergency room that is staffed on a 24-hour basis. Avenida Hernando Siles #3539 - Esquina Calle 7 in Obrajes. Tel. 278-4001, Tel. 278-4750, or Tel. 278-2922.

Once you arrive at the clinic, you may need to call one of the physicians recommended by the USA Embassy. If your condition is such that a specialist is needed, one of these doctors should be able to provide you with a referral.

#### **Ambulance Transport**

Most often, the quickest way to the clinic is via taxi or private car. If injuries require transport via an ambulance, call one of the following:

- Radio Patrulla, a Bolivian mobile police/medical unit at Tel. 243-3145.
- Ambulancia SAMI, Tel. 7061-6567 or Tel. 279-9911.
- AMID, Tel. 222-1949 or Tel. 222-6767.

#### **Dra. María De Los Angeles Terán**

Hours 10:00 to 12:30 and 15:00 to 17:30 daily. Avenida 6 de Agosto #2809, Edificio Mercurio, first floor, Sopocachi, Tel. 243-3432, Tel. 243-1133, or Cell 7729-8094.

#### **Dr. Eduardo Montero**

Hours: 16:00 to 19:00. Edificio CEMDI, Avenida 6 de Agosto #2530, Sopocachi, Tel. 243-2373 or Cell 7153-8197.

#### **Dr. Ramiro De La Rocha**

Hours: 10:00 to 12:30 and 15:00 to 17:30. Edificio Mercurio, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor, San Jorge. Tel. 243-3432 or Cell 7729-8094.

#### **Dr. Manuel Pantoja Ludueña**

Calle 15, Torre Ketal, First floor, Calacoto, Zona Sur. Tel. 279-0080.

**Dr. Juan Enrique Wantig**

Pediatrician. Avenida Montenegro #E2, San Miguel, Zona Sur. Tel. 279-6802 (office) or Tel. 272-1206 (home), and Cell 7729-6550.

**Clinica Cemes**

For minor emergencies, you might want to consider the more convenient Clínica Cemes located on Avenida 6 de Agosto #2881, just a few blocks from the USA Embassy in the Sopocachi-San Jorge district, Tel. 243-0350 or Tel. 243-0360. The clinic is small but more than adequate for less complicated treatments.

**Trauma Klinik**

A backup possibility is the Trauma Klinik, Calle Claudio Aliaga #12, Unit F, in San Miguel, Zona Sur, Tel. 277-1819 or Tel. 277-1904.

**Hospital Metodista**

Avenida 14 de Septiembre #5809 – Esquina Calle 12, Obrajes, Zona Sur. Tel. 278-3509 or Tel. 278-3372.

**Dental Care – LPZ**

In case of a dental urgency, consider one of the following dental service providers who are recommended by the USA Embassy.

**Dr. Jorge Aguirre**

Edificio Illimani, Avenida Arce #2677, Esquina Campos, Sopocachi, Tel. 243-0496 or Cell 706-15678.

**Dra. Celina Cuellar**

Hours of attention from 8:00 to 12:00 noon and 15:00 to 19:00. Edificio Aranjuez, Calle Julio Patiño #1044, Calacoto, Zona Sur, Tel. 279-8518.

**Dr. Elmer Mollinedo**

Clínica Odontológica, Open from 9:00 to 16:00 on Monday, Wednesday and Friday and from 9:00 to 12:00 noon and 15:00 to 19:00 on Thursday and Friday. Edificio Calacoto, Calle 21 #8215, in front of the Ketal Supermarket. Zona Sur, Tel. 279-2512 or Cell 7152-0160.

If you need the services of a specialist, one of the dentists listed in this section can provide you with a referral.

**Optical Care – LPZ**

If you have an optical urgency you can contact an ophthalmologist. For less serious matters, there are shops that specialize in optical supplies of all types.

**Dr. R. Fernando H. Murillo**

Edificio Rhesus, Calle Rene Moreno #1367 – Esquina Calle Claudio Aliaga, San Miguel, Zona Sur, Tel. 279-4272 or Cell 7724-2769. Dr. Murillo has a second office at Edificio San Pablo, Avenida 16 de Julio #905 on the Prado, Centro.

**Dra. Vánia Garcia**

Edificio CEMESUR, Calle 21 – Esquina Avenida Ballivián, Calacoto, Zona Sur, Tel. 279-2357 or Cell 7156-3873.

**Optica Iris**

Plaza del Obelisco. Edificio Club de La Paz. Centro. Tel. 231-2389.

**Optica Master**

Open 8:30 to 21:00 weekdays. Calle Potosí #1260, Centro. Tel. 220-4227.

**Optica Moderna Rex**

Calle Jenaro Sanjinés #533. Centro. Tel. 240-6595.

**Optica Nuevo Horizonte**

Calle Ingavi #1000 – Esquina Yanacocha. Centro. Tel. 240-8521.

**Optica Santa Lucia**

Open from 9:30 to 20:30. Calle Potosí #1148. Centro. Tel. 240-6013.

**Optica Visión**

- Avenida Mariscal Santa Cruz, Edificio Litoral, main floor, Centro. Tel. 236-0554.
- Edificio Torre Ketal, main floor, Calacoto, Zona Sur. Tel. 279-7423.

**Optic Prism**

Two locations in La Paz:

- Calle 21 #8461, Local 1, Calacoto, Zona Sur. Tel. 279-3456
- Avenida Illimani #1990. Miraflores. Tel. 224-5929.

## Pharmacies – LPZ

If you have a late night need for medications and encounter difficulty in locating a pharmacy, ask the hotel desk to advise you of a 24-hour pharmacy, one that is scheduled on be open that evening (*de turno*). Alternatively, someone who speaks Spanish can call the emergency telephone for the Radio Patrulla (Tel. 110) to obtain this information.

**FarmaCorps**

Outlets in the Centro and Zona Sur. Delivery available by calling Tel. 231-1311 or Tel. 279-5252.

- Avenida 16 de Julio, El Prado, Hotel Copacabana Bldg. Centro. Tel. 231-1311.
- Calle 21 #1488 – Esquina Calle Patiño, Calacoto, Zona Sur. Tel. 279-5252

**Superdrugs**

This drug store/pharmacy chain is open 8:00 to 24:00 daily and provides delivery.

- Avenida Villazon in front of the University, Tel. 214-1900.
- Calle 18 – Esquina Avenida Montenegro, Calacoto, Zona Sur.

**Farmacia Carlos V**

Edificio Mercurio, Avenida 6 de Agosto – Esquina Calle Cordero, Sopocachi, Dra. Luz Clavijo de Salamanca is the supervising pharmacist. Tel. 243-0490.

## Farmacia Gloria

Delivery service available. Several locations in La Paz.

- Calle 16, Calacoto, Zona Sur. Dra. Gloria Helguero is the lead pharmacist, Tel. 277-0770.
  - Avenida Sánchez #6975, between Calle 2 y Calle 3, Irpavi, Zona Sur.
  - Avenida Ballivián, #941, HiperMaxi, Zona Sur. Tel. 277-0784
  - Avenida Arce #2670, Edificio Apolo. Sopocachi. Tel. 243-4344.
- 

## Santa Cruz (SCZ)



If you plan to venture to the countryside or stay in SCZ for more than just two or three days, you should follow all of the health recommendations contained in the Preparation Chapter, especially if venturing into rural areas. Malaria prophylactics are recommended. SCZ city is in a tropical zone and the farther east and north you go, the Amazon basin becomes warmer and more humid. Be prepared and remain vigilante of health issues.

1. Make sure that all recommended vaccinations are current.
2. Protect yourself from mosquitoes and other pests by using repellent, staying in hotels with window screens or closed windows (air conditioned) rooms. Use a mosquito net whenever possible but especially in the rural areas. Wear long sleeved shirts and long pants when outdoors, especially when hiking in the countryside.
3. Be especially careful with water and food. Use only bottled water for drinking and brushing teeth. Eat only clean and well-cooked foods.
4. Wash your hands with soap as frequently as feasibly possible.

## Medical Care – SCZ

In an emergency, you can obtain advice from the Health Unit of the USA Embassy/Consulate in SCZ at Calle Guemes #6 Este during weekdays. The duty nurse in SCZ can be reached at Tel. 7736-1289 (Cell) and the duty nurse in La Paz during evenings and on weekends Tel. 7222-4861 (Cell). In case of an emergency, transport the patient as quickly as possible by taxi to the **Clínica Angel Foianini** at Avenida Irala #468, near Calle Chuquisaca, Tel. 336-2211, Tel. 422-9407, or Tel. 423-1403. Once at the clinic ask for assistance in obtaining the services of a doctor or contact one of the physicians recommended by the USA Embassy.

### **Ambulance Service**

Generally, the fastest way to the clinic is via taxi; however, if the patient requires ambulance transport, it can be provided by the Clínica Foianini. Tel. 336-2211 or Cell 7162-7647.

### **Dr. Esteban Foianini**

Clínica Foianini, Avenida Irala #468. Tel. 336-2211 or Tel. 336-2211.

### **Dr Marcelo Arano and Dr. Gonzalo Avilés**

Respectively a cardiologist and a surgeon who are associates at the Clínica Foianini, Avenida Irala #488, Tel. 336-2211.

### **Dr. Marco Garafulic**

Surgeon. Tel. 342-2626

### **Dr. Gonzalo Ostria**

Surgeon located at Calle Ingavi – Esquina Independencia. Tel. 332-9578.

### **Dra. Ruth Turner de Oropeza**

Calle Pari #90. Tel. 332-8809.

### **Hospital Japones**

A possible backup to Clínica Foianina, Located on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Anillo near Calle Ballivián, Tel. 333-2516 or Tel. 346-2031.

## Dental Care – SCZ

In case of a dental urgency in SCZ, the following two dentists are recommended:

### **Dr. Hernán Velarde**

Recommended by USA Embassy. Avenida Monseñor Costa #265, Tel. 354-4040.

### **Dra. Carolina Ibañez de Hanley**

Bilingual dentist, recommended by British travel guides. Avenida Ibérica, Barrio Las Palmas, Tel. 353-0700, E-mail: [carolina@cotas.com.bo](mailto:carolina@cotas.com.bo).



## Optical Care – SCZ

*Opticas* in Bolivia carry eyeglasses, contact lenses, medications, and supplies related to eye care.

### **Optica Multivis**

Calle 21 de Mayo #121, Tel. 334-8489.

### **Opticas Pauker**

A chain of optical stores with locations throughout the city:

- Calle 24 de Septiembre – Esquina Calle Florida.
- Avenida René Moreno #130.
- Calle 21 de Mayo #9.
- Bolívar Shopping, Local 12.
- Avenida Arenales – Esquina Calle Barrón.

### **Optica Precisión**

Calle 21 de Mayo, between Calle Ayacucho and Calle Junín. Tel. 337-0220.

### **Optica Santa Cruz**

Calle Ayacucho #218, Tel. 332-3482.

### **Optica Viscarra**

Four locations in SCZ:

- Calle 23 de Mayo 75, Tel. 332-7166
- Calle Ayacucho #188, Tel. 332-2664
- Calle Bolívar, Shopping Bolívar #6
- Avenida Irala #347, Tel. 332-2664

## Pharmacies – SCZ

Check the daily newspaper to determine which pharmacies are *de turno*, scheduled to be open on a 24-hour basis on a specific date. Some pharmacies are open 24/7 on a permanent basis.

### **Farmacia América**

Calle Libertad #345, Tel. 337-1094.

### **Farmacia Gutiérrez**

Open 24 hrs. Avenida 21 de Mayo #76, just off the Plaza 24 de Septiembre, Tel. 332-6666.

Other locations include:

- Avenida Argomoza – Esquina Charcas, Tel. 332-7100.
- Avenida Cañoto – Esquina Landívar, Tel. 336-1777.
- Avenida Irala #564, Tel. 337-2777.
- Avenida Cristóbal Mendoza #628. Tel. 337-8797.

### **Farmacia Santa María**

Calle Junín - Esquina Calle 21 de Mayo. Tel. 336-3233. Other locations in SCZ:

- 24 hrs. Avenida Cañoto – Esquina México, Tel. 337-6001.
- 24 hrs. Avenida Cristo Redentor, Hipermaxi Norte, Tel. 342-3454.
- Avenida Santos Dumont, Hipermaxi Sur, Tel. 355-2727.
- 24 hrs. Avenida Irala – Esquina Vallegrande, Tel. 337-2356.
- Avenida 26 de Febrero – Esquina Avenida Piraí, Tel. 355-2647.
- Avenida Uruguay – Esquina Mamoré, Tel. 354-0878.

### **FarmaCorp**

Many locations throughout Santa Cruz. Delivery service is available by calling Tel. 355-5555. Locations with an asterisk (\*) are open 24 hrs.

- Calle Junín – Esquina 21 de Mayo. Tel. 336-3233
- Avenida Irala – Esquina Vallegrande. Tel. 337-2352\*
- HiperMaxi Norte, Avenida Cristo Redentor – Esquina 3<sup>rd</sup> Anillo. Tel. 342-3554\*
- Avenida Cañoto – Esquina México. Tel. 337-6001\*
- Hipermaxi Sur, Avenida Santos Dumont – Esquina 3<sup>rd</sup> Anillo. Tel. 355-2727\*
- Extra-Ketal, Avenida Cristóbal Mendoza #628. Tel. 337-8797.

---

## **Safety Issues in Bolivia**

The overall safety level in Bolivia is comparable to that of developed countries. In some cases, the danger level in Bolivia exceeds that of the United States and Europe but in some other aspects, Bolivia is actually safer. Following is an annotated review of safety conditions in Bolivia.

### **Lack of Standardization**

There is very little standardization in construction in Bolivia. That means that the width of lanes of streets, roads, and highways vary significantly. No two sidewalks, stairs, or doorways adhere to the same measurements. Ditto for plumbing, electrical wiring, and lighting. Rarely are two features identical or even “normal”. For example, hot and cold water taps may be switched or mislabeled. Be alert and take the time to familiarize yourself with your immediate surroundings.

### **Road Hazards**

Travelers have dubbed the road between La Paz and the Yungas as the “most dangerous” road in the world. In fact, this route has now become a favorite attraction for daredevil mountain bikers. Only a fraction of Bolivia’s highway system is paved. Roads tend to be narrow and susceptible to damage from summer rains and winter snows. Signage and proper lighting is almost non-existent.

### **Traffic Problems**

Bolivians tend to be aggressive drivers, similar to those found in some places in Europe. Pedestrians do not necessarily have the right of way. In Bolivia's congested cities, cars rarely stay in their assigned lanes and pedestrians dart out in front of vehicles as they please. The saving grace is that, in the cities, traffic speeds are relatively low, resulting in few serious accidents.

### **Petty Crime**

If you leave any personal articles unattended while on the street, in public locations such as a bus station, at tourist attractions, or in shopping malls, the items will probably go missing. Petty thefts of opportunity are common. There are also reports of pickpockets and purse-snatchers in areas frequented by tourists. Being alert and handle packages and other items you carry around in a guarded manner. This will reduce the possibility of theft.

### **Scams**

Tourists are sometimes the targets of scams. Typically, a government official or pseudo-official will attempt to shakedown a traveler for some bureaucratic transaction or a fabricated violation of some sort. Unless you are certain that the official is acting appropriately, hold your ground. Do not hand over documents and do not pay fines on the street. Ask to see the official's identification. Ask to speak to a supervisor. Solicit the assistance of almost any Spanish-speaker such as hotel clerk, taxi driver, or store employee. In most cases, unsavory characters will back off if they encounter resistance.

### **Auto Theft and Vandalism**

If you rent a vehicle, be advised that it is not safe to park your vehicle on the street in major cities for long periods, especially overnight. Autos are frequently vandalized and sometimes, even stolen when parked on the street at night. Find an enclosed lot. The cost will be less than \$2 USD a day. Often your hotel will assist you with parking or even return the vehicle to the rental agency at night. For short-term parking, sometimes it is possible to pay a youngster a couple of *pesos* to watch after your car.

### **Violent Crime**

We wish that we could report that violent crimes against tourists never occur in Bolivia but this would not be accurate. There are situations where tourists have been victimized by thieves who threaten them with guns, knives, or some other weapon. Women traveling alone have been raped. Fortunately, these incidents are quite rare in Bolivia. The rate of murder, rapes, and shootings in Bolivia's major cities is significantly lower than in cities of comparable size in the United States. The rate of crime in the highlands (La Paz and Cochabamba) tends to be significantly lower than that in Santa Cruz. Violent crime in the *campo* (rural areas) is extremely rare.

## Civil Unrest

Americans are probably the most likely group to have exaggerated fears of being victims of some sort of political or social disturbance, especially if the United States is considered to be the perpetrator or even an accomplice in the matter being protested by Bolivians. Americans and other travelers are not likely to be the target of civil unrest. It is true that there are many marches, protests, and even boycotts, strikes, and roadblocks in Bolivia. Yet, to some degree, these are healthy manifestations of a democracy in action.

Very few acts of civil disobedience result in violence. Those that do can usually be avoided. It is best to stay away. If you must observe, do so from the sidelines where you are unlikely to be noticed. Always place yourself in a situation where a quick exit is possible. Don't get cornered in by tear gas, troops of soldiers or police, or the marchers themselves.

The United States Embassy via the Department of State, issues travel advisories when warranted--Ditto for the embassies of Great Britain, Australia, and several other countries. Analyze each advisory. Remember, these warnings are usually based on "worse case" scenarios which are unlikely to materialize. In many instances, the alerts continue in effect long after the crisis has past.

## Terrorism

Bolivia has had periods when *guerillas* or other rebel groups have perpetrated acts against the government. Nothing serious of this nature has occurred since 1982 when the military relinquished rule to civilians. Nevertheless, since Bolivia is a third world country, its security measures lack the intensity and sophistication found in developed countries. Still, most experts agree that Bolivia is not a likely scenario for any major terrorist event.

In the spring of 2006, there was a simultaneous bombing of two backpacker type hostels in La Paz. At least one Bolivian, a hotel employee, was killed and several employees and guests, including a few European travelers, were injured. Interestingly, the bomber ended up being a mentally deranged American from Sacramento, California.

## Natural Disasters

Remarkably, Bolivia's largest cities are rarely scenes of major natural or man-made disasters. La Paz, has suffered some minor flooding and landslides in the rainy season, but this has occurred primarily in the Indian quarters of the city where buildings are not up to code and drainage systems have not be installed. Earthquakes are possible in the Andes but none have struck Bolivia's major cities and towns in modern times. Fires are infrequent since most buildings are constructed of masonry and in the highlands; there is literally a lack of oxygen to stoke major blazes. Bolivia is landlocked and surrounded by the Andes so there is no fear of hurricanes, and as far as we know, there has never been a report of a tornado in all of Bolivia.

In countryside, floods and landslides can be more serious. Villages located on steep slopes or near major rivers have been swept away. Travelers to isolated areas during the rainy season may find that bridges or roads have been washed out, stranding individuals for several days.

## **Medical Evacuation**

In the case of a serious illness or accident, telephone service has expanded to the point that even in the more remote corners of Bolivia, it is possible to summon land or air transportation to evacuate an individual. From La Paz and Santa Cruz, there are several commercial international flights daily to the United States and also flights to other locations where world class emergency medical treatment is available within several hours such as Buenos Aires, Santiago de Chile, Sao Paulo, and Lima. There are a number of private firms that also provide air ambulance services for the most serious cases. Remember however, except of the most complicated procedures, clinics in La Paz, Cochabamba, and Santa Cruz are quite capable of handling almost any medical emergency.

---