



Árd-Chonsalacht na hÉireann
 Consulate General of Ireland



CONSULATE GENERAL OF IRELAND

1 East Wacker Drive, # 1820
 Chicago, IL 60601

Nearest 'L' Station: State & Lake (Brown Line), Lake (Red Line)

Telephone: +1 312 337 2700 (Mon – Fri 10:00 – 13:00hrs)

Public Office Hours Monday-Friday 10:00 – 12:00hrs

Out-of-hours emergency contact number: + 1-312-330-7823

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CHICAGO

1. Soldier Field – stadium information

Soldier field, home to the Chicago Bears, is located near the Chicago downtown area at 1410 S. Museum Campus Drive, Chicago, IL 60605.

The best way of accessing the stadium on match day is by public transport, with the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) 'L' train particularly convenient. Soldier Field is a few blocks east of the "Roosevelt" stops on the CTA Red, Orange and Green Lines (about a 15 minute walk or a short bus ride).

You can also use CTA bus #130 Museum Campus, which serves Union Station and the Ogilvie Transportation Center (the intercity Metra train). From downtown, you can use the #130 or the #146 Inner Drive/Michigan Express, all of which connect with Red, Orange and Green Lines on Roosevelt. All of these bus routes stop in front of the stadium.

Parking facilities are also available at the stadium – see <http://www.soldierfield.net/directions-transportation> for more information.

Be aware that stadium grounds will be open from 11.00. In the American Football tradition, a number of 'tailgate' parties will be held around the area. The organisers have informed us that access to the stadium will be refused to any person obviously under the influence of alcohol, drugs or any other substance modifying their behaviour or to any person adopting or clearly displaying signs of violent or harmful behaviour or behaviour that is contrary to public order. Alcoholic beverages may not be brought into the stadium and you should note that the authorities impose a strict bag policy, details of which can be found at <http://www.soldierfield.net/facility-guide>

The game on 3 November is scheduled to begin at 15.00hrs local time. Access to the stadium opens at 11.00hrs. While doors remain open throughout the match fans are encouraged to arrive at least 30 minutes before kick-off.

2. Consular assistance in Chicago

The Consulate of Ireland, Chicago is located in the Kemper Building, 1 East Wacker Drive, on the corner of East Wacker Drive and State Street. The closest train stop is State & Lake (Red, Brown, Purple, Green, Pink, Orange lines).

The Consulate is typically open to the public between 10.00hrs and 12.00hrs Monday to Friday and closed at weekends. However, consular assistance is provided to Irish fans attending the match by contacting the Duty Officer.

Our public telephone number during these hours is +1 312 337 2700. If you are in need of emergency assistance outside of these hours, you can contact an emergency duty officer at + 1-312-330-7823.

3. Public transport in Chicago

The Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) operates the second largest public transportation system in the United States. Public transport within the city limits is by bus and rail (the 'L') generally efficient.

The 'L' system – short for elevated rail - has eight rapid transit routes, covering 145 stations across the metropolitan area. The service is frequent across all major lines and two routes—the Red and Blue Lines—operate 24 hours a day.

Single tickets cost \$2.50 for the L and \$2.75 for the bus. A day-pass costs \$10.00, including the cost of purchasing a new Ventra Card (\$5), which can be used for subsequent day purchases. Tickets and cards may be purchased from the machines at each L station. More information at <https://www.transitchicago.com/fares/>

Chicago's rail service is linked to both its major airports, O'Hare and Midway. The CTA's Blue Line 'L' can take customers to O'Hare International Airport, while Orange Line trains travel to Midway Airport.

4. General information about Chicago

Chicago has an excellent official website www.choosechicago.com providing information for tourists visiting the city. You can download a practical guide from the website which contains maps, tourist information and details of all cultural and sporting events in the city. Further information on the services provided by the city is available at www.cityofchicago.org.

The weather in Chicago in the autumn or 'fall' months is unpredictable and can change rapidly at short notice, with storms not uncommon. As such, depending on the local forecast on matchday, you are strongly recommended to wear layers and carry a waterproof jacket / wind cheater if at all possible. An official local forecast can be found at <http://www.weather.gov/lot/>.

HOW THE CONSULATE CAN ASSIST YOU

5. If your passport is lost or stolen while in the United States

- ✓ Any loss or theft must be reported to the police and the Consulate General at the earliest opportunity. Ask the Police for a written statement that you have reported the loss. The police are obliged to give you this statement; if there is any problem with this, ask them to contact the Consulate directly. You will require the statement in order to obtain a temporary travel document from the Consulate.
- ✓ The Consulate will make every effort to issue the relevant replacement travel document for your journey within the shortest period of time. To assist the Consulate in this regard please contact us immediately if you discover that your passport has been lost or stolen.
- ✓ Airlines vary in the travel documents they require, so citizens should check with their chosen airline/transport before travelling.

6. If you require urgent medical treatment

Please ensure that you arrange travel insurance before you leave Ireland.

The Consulate can:

- ✓ Offer general advice on the local medical services
- ✓ Assist in liaising with doctors or hospitals
- ✓ Advise relatives or friends about accidents or illnesses
- ✓ Liaise with the Irish and US authorities to facilitate repatriation to Ireland where such a move is deemed medically advisable

However, the Consulate will not:

- X Pay medical or hospital bills – for this reason you are strongly advised to take out travel insurance.
- X Provide medical advice
- X Pursue insurance companies about payment or refund of the cost of medical treatment
- X Pursue claims for compensation relating to negligence, injury or any other matter
- X Pay for visits by relatives

7. If you have been the victim of a crime

Please contact the ***police immediately if you have been the victim of a crime.***

The Consulate can:

- ✓ Inform family or friends of your situation
- ✓ Help you to transfer funds from home if this is necessary
- ✓ Assist in liaising with the local police
- ✓ Assist in arranging repatriation to Ireland

However, the Consulate will not:

- X Give legal advice or act as your lawyer
- X Intervene in court proceedings
- X Investigate a crime
- X Pay legal costs

8. If you are arrested or imprisoned

If you are arrested, you may ask the US authorities to inform the Consulate of your arrest.

The Consulate can:

- ✓ Visit you or arrange for you to be visited by a Consulate official
- ✓ Advise you about the prison system and about your entitlement to visits, mail and other facilities
- ✓ Bring details of any medical condition you may have to the attention of prison officials
- ✓ Pursue with the prison authorities on your behalf any complaints about ill-treatment or discrimination
- ✓ Pass messages to and from your family

However, the Consulate will not:

- X Secure better treatment for Irish citizens than local or other nationals receive
- X Give or pay for legal advice
- X Interfere with or influence the proper operation and application of the local judicial system
- X Provide any financial assistance while you are in prison
- X Pay bail bonds or fines.

9. If you need help accessing funds

Irish citizens travelling abroad sometimes experience financial difficulties, due to unforeseen circumstances. Money can be transferred easily and quickly from Ireland by using one of the well-known commercial agencies (the best known being Western Union) who have numerous outlets in the US, including across Chicago.

To arrange a transfer of funds using Western Union you take the following steps:

- Contact a relative/friend at home in Ireland.
- Give your relative/friend the contact details for Western Union in Ireland (1800 395 395 or www.moneytransfer.ie).
- Your relative/friend will need to contact Western Union and arrange to transfer money to you. Western Union charges a fee for this service. The money transfer is instant and you will be able to collect the money within a few minutes of receiving confirmation from your relative/friend.
- In order to collect the money, you will need to have ID. *If you do not have your passport or any other form of ID, Western Union has confirmed that you can collect the money by showing the "statement of loss" form issued by the police. In this case, you should ask your friend/relative in Ireland to mention this at the time of transfer an additional security question will be required.*
- Make sure that your relative/friend gives you the Money Transfer Control Number (MTCN), which is necessary to collect your money, as well as the answer to the additional security question, if relevant.

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE UNITED STATES

10. **While in the United States**

When you're in the US, all federal, state and local laws apply to you. Laws vary from state to state but when you're physically present in a state, even temporarily, you're subject to that state's laws, and, in many cases, to the jurisdiction of its courts. If you get into any difficulties with US Authorities, you should explain to them that you are an Irish national and ask to speak to an Irish consular officer. We will do what we can to help you but we cannot get you out of trouble or out of jail.

US Federal Law requires all foreign nationals carry immigration documentation (such as your passport showing that you have permission to enter or remain) at all times while in the USA. It is important that you have your documents available for scrutiny if you're asked by law enforcement officials to present them wherever you are in the United States. Before travelling to the United States, the Consulate recommends that you take photos of your passport and other relevant IDs and email them to yourself.

11. **General Safety and Security**

Violent crime, including gun crime, rarely involves tourists, but you should take care when travelling in unfamiliar areas. You should take sensible precautions to protect yourself and your property against petty crime, including:

- Don't carry your credit card, travel tickets and money together - leave spare cash and valuables in a safe place
- Limit the amount of cash you carry by using travellers' cheques or international credit cards
- Leave a copy of your passport (and travel and insurance documents) with family or friends at home or, alternatively, take photos of your documents and email them to yourself
- Avoid showing large sums of money in public and don't use ATMs after dark, especially if you are alone. Check no one has followed you after conducting your business
- Keep a close eye on your personal belongings and hold on to them in public places such as cafes, bars train and bus stations
- Avoid dark and unlit streets and stairways, arrange to be picked up or dropped off as close to your hotel or apartment entrance as possible
- Keep a lookout for people acting suspiciously or unattended packages in public places

Since the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001, the US government has issued a number of warnings of potential further terrorist attacks in the country. The US domestic threat level stands at 'elevated' (yellow) and the government is maintaining heightened security, especially at airports. You should expect stringent security checks at airports, transport stations and other public buildings.

12. **Entry requirements (Visa / Passport)**

The **Electronic System for Travel Authorization** (ESTA) is an electronic registration system requiring travellers who are part of the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) to register in advance of travelling to the US. You should register through the Department of Homeland Security website, where you will have to pay a fee (currently \$14). Registration can be done by third parties on your behalf, such as travel agencies, and multiple applications can be completed and paid for in one transaction.

You can submit an ESTA application at any time prior to travel – the Department of Homeland Security recommends that it be submitted at least 72 hours in advance of travel. Once approved, it will be valid for multiple entries into the US and generally for up to two years or until your passport expires, whichever comes first.

If you don't get authorisation to travel you'll need to go to your nearest US Diplomatic or Consular Mission and apply for a visa. An ESTA approval does not determine admissibility into the US. The final decision for entry to the US rests with immigration authorities at the port of entry. Please note also that the ESTA programme does not apply if you have a visa for the US and that children, including infants, who are endorsed on a parent's passport must have an individual machine-readable passport or else obtain a visa in the parent's passport.

You must have an **individual machine-readable passport** to avail of the US Visa Waiver Programme. Otherwise you will have to get a visa, in advance, from your nearest US Diplomatic or Consular Mission. A machine-readable passport is a passport in which your details have been printed on the data page which also contains your photograph. A passport where your details have been handwritten is not a machine-readable passport.

In most cases, to enter the US, you must have a passport that is valid for at least six months after the date you enter. However, Ireland has an agreement with the US that allows you to enter on a current passport up to the actual date of expiration – so your Irish passport needs to be valid only for the duration of your stay in the US.

However, if you're travelling visa-free on the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) and your passport is valid for less than 90 days, you will be admitted only until the date on which the passport expires. If the passport is not valid for the duration of your stay, you must apply for a new passport from your nearest Irish Embassy or Consulate while in the US.

13. Driving

If you're planning to drive in the US, be aware that cars drive on the right side of the road but otherwise road safety conditions are fairly similar to Ireland. If you want to drive:

- Bring your full Irish driving licence and make sure you have adequate and appropriate insurance
- Be aware that, as in Ireland, driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs is strictly against the law in the US and that you risk being detained, fined or banned from driving if caught
- Keep your vehicle doors locked and your bags kept out of sight to prevent opportunistic bag-snatching if you're stopped at traffic lights

If you're hiring a vehicle, we advise you not to hand over your passport as a form of security. If you're allowing your passport to be photocopied, keep it in your sight at all times. Check that you have adequate insurance and read the small print of the vehicle hire contract (particularly any waiver that will come into effect if the vehicle is damaged).

14. Communications

The international code for dialling the United States is +1. To call Ireland from the US use the prefix +353.

15. Money

ATMs are plentiful and Irish cards are accepted in most US ATMs, albeit that service charges are applied in most cases. Credit cards are in common use but on occasion Irish cards may not be accepted. In addition to your PIN code, you may also be asked to present photo identification when paying by credit card.

If your credit card has been lost or stolen, you should cancel the relevant card(s) immediately, to prevent illegal use:

For lost/stolen AIB Credit Cards call:	+353 1 668 5500
For lost/stolen Bank of Ireland Credit Cards call:	+353 56 775 7007
For lost/stolen Permanent TSB Credit Cards call:	+353 1 215 7333
For lost/stolen MBNA Credit Cards call:	+353 71 965 6262
For lost/stolen National Irish Bank Credit Cards call:	+353 1 484 3701/2/3
For lost/stolen Ulster Bank Credit Cards call:	+353 1 702 5108

16. Health Insurance

Medical treatment is expensive and there are no special arrangements for Irish citizens. The Consulate strongly recommends that before travelling to the United States you purchase comprehensive travel insurance which covers all your intended activities here.

Be aware that some hospitals may ask non-US residents to pay a deposit or 'good faith' payment on admittance. You should direct any requests for funds to your travel insurance provider in the first instance; only pay the hospital if you're advised to do so by your travel insurance company. Your level of medical care won't be affected while your claim is being processed.

GENERAL EMERGENCIES	
<u>Emergency Numbers in Chicago</u>	<u>Consular Assistance</u>
Emergency Number: 911	Consulate General: + 1 312 337 2700
Chicago Police Dept: + 1 312 744-4000	Emergency line (out of office hours): + 1-312-330-7823
Chicago Fire Dept: +1 312 744-2961	Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade: +353 1 478 0822

Stay Safe and Enjoy the Rugby Weekender!