



## **Consular Advice for Irish Citizens travelling to Sochi for the Winter Olympic Games 7 – 23 February 2014, and/ or the Paralympic Winter Games 7 – 16 March 2014**

### **General information**

Official Sochi Olympic Games website: [www.sochi2014.com/en](http://www.sochi2014.com/en)  
Official guide for spectators: [www.sochi2014.com/en/games/spectator](http://www.sochi2014.com/en/games/spectator)  
Olympic Council of Ireland: <http://www.olympics.ie/>  
Register with the Embassy before you travel:  
<http://www.embassyofireland.ru/home/index.aspx?id=86576>

### **Visa Information**

- You will need a valid visa to enter the Russian Federation. A simplified system for issuing visas to those visiting Sochi for the Games was introduced in December 2013. Applicants can go straight to the designated “Olympic Windows” in Russian Consular Offices. Such applications will be expedited to the extent possible. For a complete list of everything you will need to apply for your visa click on the link below, and then click on the “Getting a Russian Visa” section.  
<http://dublin.kdmid.ru/en.aspx>
- You have to apply online via the website of the nearest Russian Embassy. For Dublin you can access the application form, and all of the information you need, on the following link:  
<http://dublin.kdmid.ru/en.aspx>
- You will also be asked to complete a migration card on arrival. One half of the card is retained by the migration officer at the airport and you must present the other half to the airport authorities on your return journey.

### **Identification**

- You must carry your original passport at all times. A copy will not be sufficient. The police conduct ID checks and will want to see original documentation so you should carry your passport to the Games’ venues to gain entry. If you can’t produce your passport when asked, you may be fined. We recommend that you email yourself a photocopy of your passport, Russian visa and migration card in case your passport goes missing. A photocopy of your passport and visa is also beneficial in the event of losing the original – keep these copies somewhere safe.

### **Lost or stolen passports**

- If your passport is lost or stolen, you will have to submit an application for an emergency travel document to the Embassy in Moscow. If you lose your passport, it is essential to secure a “spravka” (police statement) from the nearest police station. This document is required for you to apply for an exit visa, without which you will not be allowed to leave Russia.

## **Money**

- The Russian Rouble is the only legal currency in Russia. Credit cards are not as widely accepted as in Ireland but can be used at most hotels. Roubles can be obtained in Ireland from a Bureau de Change, but the supply is sometimes limited. Many Irish ATM and credit cards can be used to take money from ATM's in Russia – you should first confirm with your bank that your card can be used abroad. Otherwise, you can obtain roubles by exchanging Euros at official currency exchanges in Russia, at the airport or possibly at a local hotel. It is illegal to exchange money in the street.

## **Personal safety**

- Pickpockets may target fans, so you should keep your passport and valuables in a secure location on your person.
- Visitors should only use official taxis, ideally booked through their hotel or at official taxi desks at the airport. Prices should be agreed in advance of getting into a taxi.
- Do not leave drinks unattended as drinks may be spiked.
- Do not get involved with drugs in Russia. Russian legislation regarding the possession and use of drugs is very strict. There is no delineation between “hard” and “soft” drugs. There is no tolerance of drugs including for personal use, with severe penalties and mandatory sentencing in place.
- Security will be tight at the various stadium locations, and inebriated fans will be refused entry.
- There is an ongoing threat from terrorism in Russia, including suicide bombings in public places and attacks in places frequented by expatriates and foreign travellers. Caution and vigilance in public places is advised.

## **General tips**

- The Department of Foreign Affairs strongly recommends that comprehensive travel insurance, including personal medical insurance and evacuation by air ambulance, is obtained before travelling to Russia. Carry the contact number for your travel insurer at all times.
- Travellers should note that the Irish government does not provide funds for emergency medical repatriation or for the repatriation of remains or for expenses incurred by Irish citizens as a result of a personal emergency while travelling.
- Tap water is unsafe to drink in Russia. Caution should be exercised. Bottled mineral water is widely available.
- English is not widely spoken in Russia, but hotel staff as well as some staff at airports will have good English.
- Extreme shortages of hotel rooms are likely during the Olympics. Visitors are urged to book rooms well in advance. Given the increased demand for hotel rooms, prices will be inflated during the Olympic period. Advertised rates for standard rooms are currently as much as €500 per night. Now is the time to think about where you will want to stay.
- Carry a note of the address of your hotel (in both English and Russian) – it can help people give you directions and ensure that taxi drivers know where you want to go.

- Carry the address and telephone number of the Embassy in Moscow so that you can call for help.
- Homosexuality is legal in Russia, but there is still a degree of intolerance among some sections of the population; be careful about public displays of affection. A law banning the promotion of “non-traditional sexual relations” entered into force in June 2013; it is unclear how this law will be applied, but it includes tougher penalties for non-Russians including arrest, fines and deportation.
- Be sure to respect the validity period of your Russian tourist visa.
- Avoid illegal demonstrations and protests.

You can view the full text of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade’s travel advice for Russia on <http://www.dfat.ie> (Travel Advice)

### Emergency Numbers

	From Landline	From Mobile	From MTS mobile
Police	02	112	020
Ambulance	03	112	030
Fire	01	112	010

### Embassy Contacts

- Embassy of Ireland  
Grokholsky Pereulok 5,  
Moscow, 115127.
- Tel: +7 495 937 5911 or +7 985 928 7615 (emergency only)
- Email: [moscowembassy@dfa.ie](mailto:moscowembassy@dfa.ie)