

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- ❑ Driving is on the right. Many vehicles are right-hand drive, a contributing factor in numerous road crashes.
- ❑ Travel beyond the capital city after dark is not considered safe.
- ❑ Motorcycle taxis are frequently involved in serious or fatal crashes.
- ❑ Drivers must carry an International Driving Permit (IDP), good for one month. After one month, a Sierra Leone license is required.
- ❑ Vehicle insurance is compulsory.
- ❑ Seat belt use is mandatory for driver and passengers; child and infant restraints are not required and may not be available. For safety, bring your own child restraint with you.
- ❑ Blood alcohol limit is below 0.08%.
- ❑ There are 27.3 road deaths per 100,000 people in Sierra Leone, compared to 2.8 in Sweden and 2.9 in the UK.

DRIVING CULTURE

- **Driving standards** are poor.
- **Speeding** is common, especially in Freetown where roads are paved.
- **Basic road** rules are frequently ignored. Many drivers are unaware of traffic laws and regulations.
- **Drivers** may behave unpredictably.
- **Many vehicles** are unsafe. Drivers may operate vehicles that are in poor condition without basic safety features including adequate brakes, windshield wipers, horns, turn signals or brake lights.
- **Drink driving** increases during holidays.

ROAD CONDITIONS

- **Sierra Leone** has a public road network of 11,700 km (7,270 miles); approximately 936 km (582 miles) are paved.
- **8,700 km** (5,405 miles) are classified as part of the National Road System; the remaining 3,000 km (1,864 miles) consist of local roads and unclassified roads and tracks.
- **Roads** are designated as primary, secondary, feeder or urban roads:
 - » **Primary roads** connect the capital of Freeport with three provincial capitals, to District Centres and to international routes.
 - » **Secondary roads** connect District Centres and provide connections between primary and other minor roads.
- **The majority** of roads are generally in poor condition.
- **Main roads** between Freetown and Kenema and Makeni, as well as the peninsula highway from Waterloo to Tokeh, are paved and in fair condition.
- **Many roads** are narrow and have large potholes or other surface damage.
- **Roads** are unlit or inadequately lit.
- **Roadways** are typically shared by motorized vehicles, hand-pushcarts, bicycles and large numbers of pedestrians.
- **Beyond Freetown**, there are few road services.
- **Petrol stations** are scarce. For long journeys, bring adequate fuel and spare supplies including tires, water and tools.
- **There is** no national road safety strategy or policy to promote walking or cycling.
- **There are** no regular inspections of existing road infrastructure or formal audits for new road construction.
- **The following roads** may present particular challenges to motorists:
 - » **The Kono Highway** in the eastern region is regarded as one of the country's most dangerous roads. The road is in poor condition with broken surfaces and potholes.



Source: CIA Factbook



- » The **road to Kabala** has a tar surface with many deep potholes.
- » The road leading to the border of **Guinea at Pamelap** is currently under construction; repairs are ongoing.
- **On unpaved** roads throughout the country, a four-wheel drive vehicle is necessary, particularly during the rainy season.

REGIONAL AND SEASONAL CONDITIONS

- **Road crashes** increase during the holiday season from late December through New Year’s; chaotic traffic results from large numbers of people returning home from outside Sierra Leone.
- **During** the holiday season, street traders set up booths on roadways, leading to dangerous conditions for pedestrians and drivers.
- **The annual** rainy season is from May to September.
- **Sierra Leone** is subject to flooding. During heavy rains, road surfaces may wash out and become impassable. Deep potholes and other road hazards may become obscured by standing water.
- **Be familiar** with emergency procedures. The Red Cross provides a website and free, downloadable emergency app: <http://www.redcross.org/get-help/prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies>

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

- **Public transportation** is poorly developed. Options include poda-poda minibuses, shared taxis, moto-taxis (motorbikes) and boats.
- **All forms** of public transportation in Sierra Leone are regarded as unsafe.
- **Poda-podas**, shared taxis and moto-taxis are generally older equipment without basic safety features.
- **Poda-podas** and shared taxis are typically overcrowded.
- **Moto-taxis** rarely supply helmets for passengers.
- **Limited private** bus services are available linking major towns. The Sierra Leone government operates bus service through the Road Transportation Corporation.
- **Walking is** a common means of transportation in both urban and rural areas; pedestrian infrastructure remains undeveloped.
- **No major** car rental agencies operate in Sierra Leone.
- **Local car** rental agencies can be found at larger hotels and in Freetown city center.
- **Water taxis** and ferries offer routes in many areas, including from Lungi International Airport to Freetown.
- **Water taxis** and ferries may lack safety features and be overcrowded. Life jackets may not be available; if traveling by boat or water taxi, bring your own life preserver or life jacket.

Maximum Speed Limits

Type of road	Maximum speed
Urban areas	40 kph (25 mph)

Always adjust speed according to signage, hazards and weather conditions.

Signs are generally pictorial and may not follow European Union conventions.

Loose road surface	Compulsory pedestrian footpath	End of all prohibitions	No entry	Overtaking commercial vehicles prohibited	Stop for children crossing	Junction with trunk road	Compulsory path for cyclists	Road closed

TRAFFIC REGULATIONS

- **There are** few road signs or traffic lights.
- **Road signs** and traffic rules are generally ignored.
- **Enforcement** of speed limits and traffic rules is low.
- **Car and truck** lights must be switched on from 7 pm daily, or during rain and fog conditions.
- **Drivers must** be a minimum of 18 years of age. Motorcycle drivers must be at least 16 years old.
- **Motorcycle lights** must be switched on at all times vehicle is in use.
- **Helmet use** is required for motorcycle drivers and passengers.
- **Parking** on shoulders and verges is prohibited.

Freetown (Capital)

- » Many road surfaces contain deep potholes. Main roads in city center are in fair condition.
- » Side roads are composed of a dirt-gravel mix subject to washing out during rainy weather.
- » A four-wheel drive vehicle may be required to negotiate city roads and side streets.
- » Pedestrians should exercise extreme caution as city sidewalks have missing sections that can lead to falls. Many pedestrians walk in roadways to avoid unsafe sidewalks.
- » Poda-poda minibuses and moto-taxis comprise the main public transportation network.
- » Public transportation is regarded as unsafe.
- » Taxis run fixed routes.
- » Taxis are unmetered.
- » Private rides may be requested from taxi drivers for an additional fee.
- » Private car hire may be arranged through some larger hotels.
- » Road blocks outside of the city are common; drivers may be expected to pay bribes to proceed.
- » Lungi International Airport is located 27.9 km (17.33 miles) from Freetown.
- » Transportation options to Freetown from the airport include ferry and water taxi.
- » Ferries and water taxis may be overcrowded, unsafe and lack adequate life saving equipment.
- » Car rentals are generally not available at the airport; arrange car service prior to travel.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

- **There are no** emergency service numbers in Sierra Leone.
- **Police** may be contacted at: (232) (76) 771 721; Pre-program police number into your phone before departure.
- **Responses** to emergency situations may be slow or nonexistent.
- **In rural** areas, English may not be spoken.
- **Emergency medicine** training is not required of nurses; health services and emergency services are rudimentary.
- **Roadside** assistance is limited.
- **If involved in a crash:**
 - » Comply with all instructions given by police.
 - » Large mobs may form at the scene of crashes, including small crashes without injuries or damage.
 - » Drivers may be in danger from mob responses. Go immediately to the nearest police station for personal safety.

ASIRT is a non-profit humanitarian organization established in memory of Aron Sobel, age 25, who was killed along with 22 other passengers in a Pamukkale Bus Company crash on the roads of Turkey.

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