

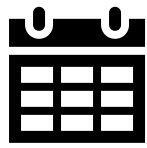


# INTERNATIONAL GRC ATTENDEE

## RETAIL AND SERVICES

---

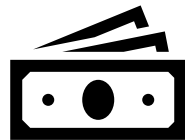
You can shop for clothing, food, and other items or find an open restaurant very late in the evening, and in some cases, 24 hours per day. Business hours for banks and government agencies such as the post office are more limited—typically between 9:00 am and 5:00 pm—though some may have extended hours. GRC events are held in isolated locations, so plan to shop before you arrive, or after your conference concludes.



## CALENDAR DATES

---

Calendar dates are expressed in the month-day-year order in the U.S. For instance, the 3rd of May, 2018, would be listed as 5-3-2018 rather than 3-5-2018.



## CURRENCY

---

Foreign currency exchange bureaus are rare in the U.S.

ATMs (Automated Teller Machines) are widely located on almost every block in the U.S. and are available at or near all GRC meeting locations and at airports. Expect to be charged a small transaction fee (between \$2 to \$5 USD) if you are withdrawing money at an ATM owned by a bank other than your own. We highly recommend completing your ATM transactions at the airport before traveling to the conference site.

Most businesses in the U.S. accept payment in the form of travelers' checks, and checks can also be exchanged for cash at a bank. Travelers are advised to have the checks issued in U.S. dollars because foreign-currency checks are difficult to exchange. Remember – photo identification, such as your passport, is required to use a travelers' check. If you plan to exchange travelers' checks, please do so before traveling to the conference site.



## DRINKING LAWS

---

The legal age for buying and consuming alcoholic beverages in the U.S. is 21; proof of age (a government-issued photo ID card, such as your passport) is required when you purchase alcohol at stores or restaurants.

## ELECTRICITY

---

The U.S. uses 110–120 volts AC (60 cycles), compared with 220–240 volts AC (50 cycles) used in most countries in Europe, Australia, and New Zealand. If your small electrical appliances use 220–240 volts, you will need a 110-volt transformer and a plug adapter with two flat parallel pins to operate them in the U.S. Converters are difficult to find in the U.S., so bring one with you if you anticipate that you will need one.

## EMBASSIES AND CONSULATES

---

International visitors can obtain telephone numbers for their embassies and consulates by calling “Information” in Washington, D.C., at +1-202-555-1212.



## EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE

---

(Medical, Fire, and Police)

Dial 911 in case of emergency! If you become ill during your visit please alert a member of the GRC staff. If there is a medical emergency, dial 911 from any phone.

## LEGAL AID

---

If you are stopped by police for a minor infraction of the law, such as a traffic violation, never attempt to pay the fine directly to a police officer. All fines must be paid to the clerk of the court. If you are accused of a more serious offense, it is wise not to speak or act before consulting a lawyer. Call your embassy or consulate immediately for assistance.

**ADDITIONAL DETAILS ARE AVAILABLE AT [WWW.GRC.ORG](http://WWW.GRC.ORG)**



# INTERNATIONAL GRC ATTENDEE

## SMOKING



In the U.S., smoking laws vary by city. In many locations smoking is prohibited in indoor public places including restaurants and their attached bars, theaters, educational facilities, auditoriums, and public transportation. If you smoke, please ensure that you are in an area where it is permissible to do so. Tobacco products may not be sold to anyone less than 18 years of age. Some GRC sites prohibit smoking entirely. If you have any concerns, please contact GRC in advance.

## TAXES

In the U.S., there is not a VAT (value-added tax) or other indirect tax assessed on most things at a national level. Every state, city, and county has the right to levy its own tax on purchases. Hotels add additional taxes as do some restaurants. Unlike the VAT in many countries, sales taxes are not included in the sticker prices; they are added on to your bill at the checkout counter.

## TELEPHONE CALLS



Costs, especially for long-distance service and operator-assisted calls, can vary widely. Generally, hotel surcharges on all calls are extremely high. It is more cost-effective for visitors to use a public pay telephone or a prepaid telephone card. Many convenience stores and newsstands sell prepaid calling cards. Local calls made from public pay phones in most places cost \$0.50. Pay phones do not accept pennies, and few take anything larger than a quarter (\$0.25). To place an international call, dial 011 and then the country code, city/area code, and phone number. If you need assistance, press "0" to speak with an operator. If you are attending a conference at a hotel site, a phone will be available in your guest room. If you are attending a conference at a school or college site, please inquire in advance about access to a telephone. You will need to purchase a special data plan in advance in order to use your cell phone in the U.S. Please contact your plan carrier. Note that some GRC locations are isolated and cell reception can be very poor. All sites have access to Wi-Fi so you may be able to contact your friends and family using online communication methods.

## SAFETY

Please take the precautions you would take traveling to any large city. Avoid deserted areas such as dark streets or empty city parks at night. Avoid carrying valuables with you on the street, and keep expensive cameras or electronic equipment in your bag or covered when not in use. If you are concerned about the safety of your valuables while at the site, please speak with the GRC Site Manager. GRC cannot guarantee protection of your personal property, but will make every effort to help you secure your items.

## TIPPING

Outside of the GRC meeting, it is customary to tip bartenders, waiters, and cab drivers between 15% and 20%. When paying a restaurant bill, make sure the tip has not already been included (it will appear as a "Service Charge" on the receipt). Tips are not expected in facilities affiliated with your GRC meeting. If you are taking the GRC Bus, a tip for the driver (\$1-2 per piece of luggage) is greatly appreciated.

## TIME ZONES



The continental U.S. has four time zones: Eastern, Central, Mountain, and Pacific.

## U.S. VISA QUESTIONS

Many visitors to the U.S. require a visa to enter the country, unless they are coming from a country that participates in the Visa Waiver Program and possess a Machine-Ready Passport (MRP). If you require a visa to enter the U.S., please check with your local U.S. Embassy or Consulate to obtain the necessary documentation as soon as possible. For additional information on visa requirements, please visit the U.S. State Department website. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security requires travelers from Visa Waiver Program (VWP) countries to apply for travel authorization at least 72 hours prior to departure through its Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA). Additional information and online application can be found on the Department of Homeland Security's ESTA website. If you have additional questions regarding the visa application process, visit the U.S. Department of State website.

**ADDITIONAL DETAILS ARE AVAILABLE AT [WWW.GRC.ORG](http://WWW.GRC.ORG)**