

Emergency Action/ Response Plan for Students traveling outside the United States

Before you leave:

Travel Information

The most convenient source of information about travel and consular services is the Consular Affairs home page. The web site address is <http://travel.state.gov>

Passport

A passport is an internationally recognized travel document that verifies the identity and nationality of the bearer. **A valid U.S. Passport is required to enter and leave most foreign countries.** To obtain a passport for the first time, you need to go in person to a passport acceptance facility. You will need two photographs of yourself, proof of U.S. Citizenship, and a valid ID.

If your passport is expired, you may renew by mail if the following are true:

- Your most recent passport is available and not damaged
- If you received a passport within the past 15 years
- You were over the age of 16 when it was issued
- You have the same name or can legally document your name change

A passport application, a list of passport acceptance facilities, and additional information on fees and passport application processing times can be found on the U.S. Department of State web site- http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html

Some countries require passports be valid for a specific time period beyond the period of stay. You can review specific passport requirements for individual countries through the US Department of State web site- http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1765.html

Entry/Exit Requirements (Travel Visa)

A travel visa may be required by the country you will be visiting. Contact the local foreign consular (see the web site below) of the country you plan to visit for the requirements and application process. Most foreign consulates in the US are located in major cities. To determine if a travel visa is needed for the country you will be visiting, see the country specific Entry/Exit Requirements section of the State Department's web site- http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1765.html

Travel Registration

Register with the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate through the State Department's travel registration website
<https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/>

Travel registration is a free service provided by the U.S. Government to U.S. citizens who are traveling to, or living in, a foreign country. Registration allows you to record information about your upcoming trip abroad that the Department of State can use to assist you in case of an emergency. Americans residing abroad can also get routine information from the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.

Local Laws and Customs

While in a foreign country, a U.S. citizen is subject to that country's laws and regulations, which sometimes differ significantly from those in the United States and may not afford the protections available to the individual under U.S. law. You can be arrested overseas for actions that may be either legal or considered minor infractions in the United States. Therefore, before you go, learn as much as you can about the local laws and customs of the places you plan to visit. Good resources are your library, your travel agent, and the embassies, consulates or tourist bureaus of the countries you will visit. In addition, keep track of what is being reported in the media about recent developments in those countries.

Country Specific Information is available for every country of the world. These pages include such information as location of the U.S. embassy or consulate in the subject country, unusual immigration practices, health conditions, minor political disturbances, unusual currency and entry regulations, crime and security information, and drug penalties.
http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1765.html

Travel Advisories

Check out the US State Department's travel advisory web site:
http://travel.state.gov/travel/travel_1744.html

Health Information and Advisories/ Vaccinations

Check the World Health Organization's (WHO) web site for health advisories/ vaccination recommendations for the Country you are traveling to: <http://www.who.int/ith/en/index.html>

You can also find this information on the traveler's health page of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), along with general guidance on health issues such as safe food and water precautions:
<http://www.cdc.gov/travel>

If you are unable to access the internet, Country Specific Information, Travel Warnings and Travel Alerts are available at any U.S. Embassy or Consulate, or you can call the Office of Overseas Citizen Services (24/7) at 202-501-4444.

If your family needs to reach you because of an emergency, they can pass a message to you through the Office **Overseas Citizens Services at 202-647-5225**. This office will contact the embassy or consulate in the country where you are traveling and pass a message from your family to you.



Research the following information before you leave and enter it below and in the "wallet card" at the end of the page. Cut out the wallet card and keep it with you at all times. Keep a copy of your itinerary with you at all times and leave copies with friends and family at home.

****The US Embassy in the country you are visiting is your primary point of contact and assistance during an emergency****

The phone number for the US Embassy in the country you are visiting: _____
(Embassy list can be found here- <http://www.usembassy.gov/>)

The 9-1-1 equivalent, or local law enforcement contact, for the country you are visiting: _____

Hotel Name/ Address/ Phone Number

Also note that the Office of Overseas Citizen Services in the State Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs may be reached for assistance with emergencies (24/7) at 202-501-4444 (if calling from overseas).

When making international calls from countries other than the USA, Canada and the Caribbean the following dialing sequence is normally used. Note that the dialing sequence for making international calls from some countries does not follow this pattern so visit the individual country pages to determine the international dialing instructions for specific countries.

(Dial "011" + Country Code, City Code, and Local Number)
International Dialing Code (from visiting country to United States) _____
Note: Toll-free (800) numbers do not work from outside the United States.

College of Continuing Education (CCE) contacts:
(Contact **AFTER** contacting the local Embassy or Consulate)
Deborah Hansen (916) 278-4554 Jill Matsueda (916) 278-4930
CCE staff members will notify your designated emergency contact on your behalf.

What to do in an emergency:

If separated from your group, the following will be your meeting locations:

1. Pick up location- if the group is to be picked up at a certain location/ time, go there and wait for your group.
2. Local agreed upon landmark discussed before group separation.
This location is _____
3. Hotel- Be sure to have local currency on hand to pay for transportation costs.
4. US Embassy- Be sure to have your travel card with Embassy contact information

****The Local US Embassy is your primary point of contact and assistance during an emergency****
The phone number for the US Embassy in the country you are visiting: _____

The 9-1-1 equivalent, or local law enforcement contact, for the country you are visiting: _____

Office of Overseas Citizen Services in the State Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs may be reached for assistance with emergencies (24/7) at 202-501-4444 (if calling from overseas).

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International Dialing Code (From visiting country to United States)
(011+Country Code+City Code+Local Number) _____

If separated from your group, the following will be your meeting locations:
1. Pick-up location (if the group is to be picked up at certain location/ time, go there and wait)
2. Local agreed upon landmark discussed before group separation
3. Hotel (be sure to have currency on hand for transportation)
4. US Embassy

At all times keep a mental note of safe havens, such as police stations, hotels, and hospitals.

The U.S. Embassy is your point of contact for assistance in many different situations. During a natural disaster, political upheaval, or other emergency, consular officers assist American citizens with transportation, evacuation, and in keeping them safe. The following are some other services offered:

- **Replace a stolen passport**
- **Contact family, friends, or employers**
- **Obtain appropriate medical care**

If you are ill or injured, contact the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate for a list of local physicians and medical facilities. If you request, consular officers will help you contact family or friends. If necessary, a consul can assist in the transfer of funds from family or friends in the United States. Payment of hospital and other medical expenses is your responsibility and there are health insurance policies designed specifically to cover travel. Many travel agents and private companies offer insurance plans that will cover health care expenses incurred overseas including emergency services such as medical evacuations.

- **Address emergency needs that arise as a result of a crime**
- **Obtain general information about the local criminal justice process and information about your case**
- **Obtain a list of local attorneys who speak English**

Should you find yourself in legal difficulty, contact a consular officer immediately. Consular officers *cannot* serve as attorneys, give legal advice, or get you out of jail. If you are arrested, consular officials will visit you, advise you of your rights under local laws, provide a list of local attorneys who speak English and who may have had experience in representing U.S. citizens, and ensure that you are held under humane conditions and are treated fairly under local law. A consular officer will contact your family or friends if you desire. When necessary, consuls can transfer money from home for you and will try to get relief for you, including food and clothing in countries where this is a problem.

If you are detained, remember that under international treaties and customary international law, you have the right to talk to the U.S. Consulate. If you are denied this right, be politely persistent.

- **Obtain information about local resources to assist victims, including foreign crime victim compensation programs**

If you become the victim of a crime overseas, contact the nearest U.S. embassy, consulate, or consular agency for assistance. Also contact local police to report the incident and obtain immediate help with safety concerns. While consular officials cannot investigate a crime, provide legal advice, represent you in court, serve as official interpreters or translators, or pay legal, medical, or other fees for U.S. citizens, they can assist crime victims in many other ways. Consular personnel overseas are familiar with local government agencies and resources in the countries in which they are located, and they can help you.

Since there's such a large number of travelers and a limited number of consular officers, they do not provide tourist or commercial services.

BEFORE YOU GO

What to Take

Safety begins when you pack. To help avoid becoming a target, do not dress so as to mark yourself as an affluent tourist. Expensive-looking jewelry, for instance, can draw the wrong attention.

Always try to travel light. You can move more quickly and will be more likely to have a free hand. You will also be less tired and less likely to set your luggage down, leaving it unattended.

Carry the minimum number of valuables, and plan places to conceal them. Your passport, cash and credit cards are most secure when locked in a hotel safe. When you have to carry them on your person, you may wish to put them in various places rather than all in one wallet or pouch. Avoid handbags, fanny packs and outside pockets that are easy targets for thieves. Inside pockets and a sturdy shoulder bag with the strap worn across your chest are somewhat safer. One of the safest places to carry valuables is in a pouch or money belt worn under your clothing.

If you wear glasses, pack an extra pair. Bring them and any medicines you need in your carry-on luggage.

To avoid problems when passing through customs, keep medicines in their original, labeled containers. Bring copies of your prescriptions and the generic names for the drugs. If a medication is unusual or contains narcotics, carry a letter from your doctor attesting to your need to take the drug. If you have any doubt about the legality of carrying a certain drug into a country, consult the embassy or consulate of that country before you travel.

Bring travelers checks and one or two major credit cards instead of cash.

Pack an extra set of passport photos along with a photocopy of your passport's information page to make replacement of your passport easier in the event it is lost or stolen.

Put your name, address and telephone numbers inside and outside of each piece of luggage. Use covered luggage tags to avoid casual observation of your identity or nationality. If possible, lock your luggage.

Consider getting a telephone calling card. It is a convenient way of keeping in touch. If you have one, verify that you can use it from your overseas location(s). Access numbers to U.S. operators are published in many international newspapers. Find out your access number before you go.

What to Leave Behind

Don't bring anything you would hate to lose. Leave at home:

- valuable or expensive-looking jewelry
- irreplaceable family objects
- all unnecessary credit cards
- your Social Security card, library card, and similar items you may routinely carry in your wallet.

Leave a copy of your itinerary with family or friends at home in case they need to contact you in an emergency.

Make two photocopies of your passport identification page, airline tickets, driver's license and the credit cards that you plan to bring with you. Leave one photocopy of this data with family or friends at home; pack the other in a place separate from where you carry the originals.

Leave a copy of the serial numbers of your travelers' checks with a friend or relative at home. Carry your copy with you in a separate place and, as you cash the checks, cross them off the list.

THINGS TO ARRANGE BEFORE YOU GO

Your Itinerary

As much as possible, plan to stay in larger hotels that have more elaborate security. Safety experts recommend booking a room from the second to seventh floors above ground level – high enough to deter easy entry from outside, but low enough for fire equipment to reach.

When there is a choice of airport or airline, ask your travel agent about comparative safety records.

Legal Documents

Have your affairs in order at home. If you leave a current will, insurance documents, and power of attorney with your family or a friend, you can feel secure about traveling and will be prepared for any emergency that may arise while you are away. If you have minor children, consider making guardianship arrangements for them.

Credit

Make a note of the credit limit on each credit card that you bring, and avoid charging over that limit while traveling. Americans have been arrested for innocently exceeding their credit limit. To reduce the occurrence of card cancellation, contact each individual card company and inform them of your overseas travel plans. . Ask your credit card company how to report the loss of your card from abroad. 1-800 numbers do not work from abroad, but your company should have a number that you can call while you are overseas.

PRECAUTIONS TO TAKE WHILE TRAVELING

Safety on the Street

Use the same common sense traveling overseas that you would at home. Be especially cautious in (or avoid) areas where you may be more easily victimized. These include crowded subways, train stations, elevators, tourist sites, market places, festivals and crime-ridden neighborhoods.

Don't use short cuts, narrow alleys or poorly lit streets.

Try not to travel alone at night.

Avoid public demonstrations and other civil disturbances.

Keep a low profile and avoid loud conversations or arguments.

Do not discuss travel plans or other personal matters with strangers.

Avoid scam artists by being wary of strangers who approach you and offer to be your guide or sell you something at bargain prices.

Beware of pickpockets. They often have an accomplice who will:

- jostle you,
- ask you for directions or the time,
- point to something spilled on your clothing,
- or distract you by creating a disturbance.

Beware of groups of vagrant children who create a distraction while picking your pocket.

Wear the shoulder strap of your bag across your chest and walk with the bag away from the curb to avoid drive-by purse-snatchers.

Try to seem purposeful when you move about. Even if you are lost, act as if you know where you are going. Try to ask for directions only from individuals in authority.

Know how to use a pay telephone and have the proper change or token on hand.

Learn a few phrases in the local language or have them handy in written form so that you can signal your need for police or medical help.

Make a note of emergency telephone numbers you may need: police, fire, your hotel, and the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.

If you are confronted, don't fight back -- give up your valuables.

Safety in Your Hotel

Keep your hotel door locked at all times. Meet visitors in the lobby.

Do not leave money and other valuables in your hotel room while you are out. Use the hotel safe.

If you are out late at night, let someone know when you expect to return.

If you are alone, do not get on an elevator if there is a suspicious-looking person inside.

Read the fire safety instructions in your hotel room. Know how to report a fire, and be sure you know where the nearest fire exits and alternate exits are located. (Count the doors between your room and the nearest exit; this could be a lifesaver if you have to crawl through a smoke-filled corridor.)

Safety on Public Transportation

If a country has a pattern of tourists being targeted by criminals on public transport, that information is mentioned in the Country Specific Information in the section about crime.

Taxis. Only take taxis clearly identified with official markings. Beware of unmarked cabs.

Trains. Well-organized, systematic robbery of passengers on trains along popular tourists routes is a problem. It is more common at night and especially on overnight trains.

If you see your way being blocked by a stranger and another person is very close to you from behind, move away. This can happen in the corridor of the train or on the platform or station.

Do not accept food or drink from strangers. Criminals have been known to drug food or drink offered to passengers. Criminals may also spray sleeping gas in train compartments. Where possible, lock your compartment. If it cannot be locked securely, take turns sleeping in shifts with your traveling companions. If that is not possible, stay awake. If you must sleep unprotected, tie down your luggage and secure your valuables to the extent possible.

Do not be afraid to alert authorities if you feel threatened in any way. Extra police are often assigned to ride trains on routes where crime is a serious problem.

Buses. The same type of criminal activity found on trains can be found on public buses on popular tourist routes. For example, tourists have been drugged and robbed while sleeping on buses or in bus stations. In some countries, whole busloads of passengers have been held up and robbed by gangs of bandits.

Safety When You Drive

When you rent a car, choose a type that is commonly available locally. Where possible, ask that markings that identify it as a rental car be removed. Make certain it is in good repair. If available, choose a car with universal door locks and power windows, features that give the driver better control of access. An air conditioner, when available, is also a safety feature, allowing you to drive with windows closed. Thieves can and do snatch purses through open windows of moving cars.

Keep car doors locked at all times. Wear seat belts.

As much as possible, avoid driving at night.

Don't leave valuables in the car. If you must carry things with you, keep them out of sight locked in the trunk, and then take them with you when you leave the car.

Don't park your car on the street overnight. If the hotel or municipality does not have a parking garage or other secure area, select a well-lit area.

Never pick up hitchhikers.

Don't get out of the car if there are suspicious looking individuals nearby. Drive away.

Patterns of Crime Against Motorists

In many places frequented by tourists, including areas of southern Europe, victimization of motorists has been refined to an art. Where it is a problem, U.S. embassies are aware of it and consular officers try to work with local authorities to warn the public about the dangers. In some locations, these efforts at public awareness have paid off, reducing the frequency of incidents. You may also wish to ask your rental car agency for advice on avoiding robbery while visiting tourist destinations

Carjackers and thieves operate at gas stations, parking lots, in city traffic and along the highway. Be suspicious of anyone who hails you or tries to get your attention when you are in or near your car.

Criminals use ingenious ploys. They may pose as good Samaritans, offering help for tires that they claim are flat or that they have made flat. Or they may flag down a motorist, ask for assistance, and then steal the rescuer's luggage or car. Usually they work in groups, one person carrying on the pretense while the others rob you.

Other criminals get your attention with abuse, either trying to drive you off the road, or causing an "accident" by rear-ending you.

In some urban areas, thieves don't waste time on ploys, they simply smash car windows at traffic lights, grab your valuables or your car and get away. In cities around the world, "defensive driving" has come to mean more than avoiding auto accidents; it means keeping an eye out for potentially criminal pedestrians, cyclists and scooter riders.

How to Handle Money Safely

To avoid carrying large amounts of cash, change your travelers checks only as you need currency. Countersign travelers checks only in front of the person who will cash them.

Do not flash large amounts of money when paying a bill. Make sure your credit card is returned to you after each transaction.

Deal only with authorized agents when you exchange money, buy airline tickets or purchase souvenirs. Do not change money on the black market.

If your possessions are lost or stolen, report the loss immediately to the local police. Keep a copy of the police report for insurance claims and as an explanation of your plight.

After reporting missing items to the police, report the loss or theft of:

- travelers' checks to the nearest agent of the issuing company
- credit cards to the issuing company
- airline tickets to the airline or travel agent
- passport to the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate

Terrorism

Terrorist acts occur unpredictably, making it impossible to protect yourself absolutely. The first and best protection is to avoid travel to areas where there has been a persistent record of terrorist attacks or kidnappings.

Most terrorist attacks are the result of careful planning. Just as a car thief will first be attracted to an unlocked car with the key in the ignition, terrorists are looking for the most accessible targets. The chances that a tourist, traveling with an unpublished program or itinerary, would be the victim of terrorism are slight. In addition, many terrorist groups, seeking publicity for political causes within their own country or region, may not be looking for American targets. Nevertheless, the following pointers may help you avoid becoming a target of opportunity. They should be considered as adjuncts to the tips listed in the previous sections on how to protect yourself against the far greater likelihood of being a victim of crime. These precautions may provide some degree of protection, and can serve as practical and psychological deterrents to would-be terrorists.

Schedule direct flights if possible and avoid stops in high-risk airports or areas.

Be cautious about what you discuss with strangers or what others may overhear.

Try to minimize the time spent in the public area of an airport, which is a less protected area. Move quickly from the check-in counter to the secured areas. Upon arrival, leave the airport as soon as possible.

As much as possible, avoid luggage tags, dress and behavior that may identify you as an American.

Keep an eye out for abandoned packages or briefcases, or other suspicious items. Report them to airport authorities and leave the area promptly.

Avoid obvious terrorist targets such as places where Americans and Westerners are known to congregate.

Travel to High-Risk Areas

If you must travel in an area where there has been a history of terrorist attacks or kidnappings, make it a habit to:

Discuss with your family what they would do in the event of an emergency. Make sure your affairs are in order before leaving home.

As noted earlier, it's a good idea to register your travel with the Department of State. This may be accomplished online at <https://travelregistration.state.gov>. Registration will make it easier to contact you in case of an emergency.

Remember to leave a detailed itinerary and the numbers or copies of your passport or other citizenship documents with a friend or relative in the United States .

Remain friendly but be cautious about discussing personal matters or your itinerary.

Leave no personal or business papers in your hotel room.

Watch for people following you or "loiterers" observing your comings and goings.

Keep a mental note of safe havens, such as police stations, hotels, and hospitals. Formulate a plan of action for what you will do if a bomb explodes or there is gunfire nearby.

Let someone else know what your travel plans are. Keep them informed if you change your plans.

Report any suspicious activity to local police and the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.

Select your own taxicabs at random. Don't take a vehicle that is not clearly identified as a taxi. Compare the face of the driver with the one on his or her posted license.

If possible, travel with others.

Be sure of the identity of visitors before opening the door of your hotel room. Don't meet strangers at your hotel room, or at unknown or remote locations.

Refuse unexpected packages.

Check for loose wires or other suspicious activity around your car.

Be sure your vehicle is in good operating condition.

Drive with car windows closed in crowded streets. Bombs can be thrown through open windows.

If you are ever in a situation where somebody starts shooting, drop to the floor or get down as low as possible. Don't move until you are sure the danger has passed. Do not attempt to help rescuers and do not pick up a weapon. If possible, shield yourself behind a solid object. If you must move, crawl on your stomach.

How to Avoid Legal Difficulties

When you are in a foreign country, you are subject to its laws and are under its jurisdiction. Familiarize yourself with legal expectations in the countries you will visit. Some of the offenses for which U.S. citizens have been arrested abroad are:

Drug Violations

More than 1/3 of U.S. citizens incarcerated abroad are held on drug charges. Some countries do not distinguish between possession and trafficking, and many have mandatory sentences - even for possession of a small amount of marijuana or cocaine. A number of Americans have been arrested for possessing prescription drugs, particularly tranquilizers and amphetamines, that they purchased legally elsewhere. Other U.S. citizens have been arrested for purchasing prescription drugs abroad in quantities that local authorities suspected were for commercial use. If in doubt about foreign drug laws, ask local authorities or the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.

Possession of Firearms

Places where U.S. citizens most often experience difficulties for illegal possession of firearms are nearby - Mexico, Canada and the Caribbean. Sentences for possession of firearms in Mexico can be up to 30 years. In general, firearms, even those legally registered in the U.S., cannot be brought into a country unless a permit is obtained in advance from the embassy or a consulate of that country and the firearm is registered with foreign authorities on arrival. (Note: There are also strict rules about bringing firearms or ammunition into the U.S; check with U.S. Customs at http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/vacation/kbyg/prohibited_restricted.xml before your trip.

Photography

In many countries you can be detained for photographing security-related institutions, such things as police and military installations, government buildings, border areas and transportation facilities. If you are in doubt, ask permission before taking photographs.

Purchasing Antiques

Americans have been arrested for purchasing souvenirs that were, or looked like, antiques and which local customs authorities believed were national treasures. This is especially true in Turkey, Egypt and Mexico. Familiarize yourself with any local regulations of antiques. In countries with strict control of antiques, document your purchases as reproductions if that is the case, or if they are authentic, secure the necessary export permit (often from the national museum). It is a good idea to inquire about exporting these items before you purchase them.