Avoiding Trouble with International Travel

Handout
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The Department of State is updating the Worldwide Caution to provide information on the continuing threat of terrorist actions and violence against U.S. citizens and interests throughout the world. Recent terrorist attacks, whether by those affiliated with terrorist entities, copycats, or individual perpetrators, serve as a reminder that U.S. citizens need to maintain a high level of vigilance and take appropriate steps to increase their security awareness. This replaces the Worldwide Caution dated January 9, 2015.

The Department of State remains concerned about the continued threat of terrorist attacks, demonstrations, and other violent actions against U.S. citizens and interests overseas. In August 2014, the United States and regional partners commenced military action against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), a designated terrorist organization in Syria and Iraq. In response to the airstrikes, ISIL called on supporters to attack foreigners wherever they are. Authorities believe there is an increased likelihood of reprisal attacks against U.S., Western and coalition partner interests throughout the world, especially in the Middle East, North Africa, Europe, and Asia.

Kidnappings and hostage events involving U.S. citizens have become increasingly prevalent as ISIL, al-Qa’ida and its affiliates have increased attempts to finance their operations through kidnapping for ransom operations. U.S. citizens have been kidnapped and murdered by members of terrorist and violent extremist groups. ISIL, al-Qa’ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and al-Qa’ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) are particularly effective with kidnapping for ransom and are using ransom money to fund the range of their activities.

Extremists may elect to use conventional or non-conventional weapons, and target both official and private interests. Examples of such targets include high-profile sporting events, residential areas, business offices, hotels, clubs, restaurants, places of worship, schools, public areas, shopping malls, and other tourist destinations both in the United States and abroad where U.S. citizens gather in large numbers, including during holidays.

U.S. citizens are reminded of the potential for terrorists to attack public transportation systems and other tourist infrastructure. Extremists have targeted and attempted attacks on subway and rail systems, aviation, and maritime services. In the past, these types of attacks have occurred in cities such as Moscow, London, Madrid, Glasgow, and New York City.

EUROPE: Current information suggests that ISIL, al-Qa’ida, its affiliated organizations, and other terrorist groups continue to plan terrorist attacks against U.S. and Western interests in Europe. On January 7, 2015, two armed gunmen entered the Paris offices of a satirical news magazine and killed 12 people, including two police officers. Al-Qa’aida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) took credit for the attack. On January 9, a man attacked a kosher market in Paris.
immediately killing four people. Also in January, Belgian counter-terrorist units foiled what was described as an imminent terror attack, when they killed two gunmen and wounded another in a shootout in the town of Verviers, near the German border. On February 14, at an event in Copenhagen, Denmark called Art, blasphemy and the freedom of expression, a gunman opened fire killing one person and wounding three police officers. On June 26, terrorists attacked a U.S.-owned factory near Lyon, France, killing one and injuring others. Authorities believe the likelihood of terror attacks in Europe will continue as European members of ISIL return from Syria and Iraq. Additionally, there is a continuing threat in Europe from unaffiliated persons planning attacks inspired by major terrorist organizations but conducted on an individual basis. European governments have taken action to guard against terrorist attacks, and some have made official declarations regarding heightened threat conditions.

**MIDDLE EAST and NORTH AFRICA:** Credible information indicates terrorist groups also seek to continue attacks against U.S. interests in the Middle East and North Africa. The U.S. government remains highly concerned about possible attacks against U.S. citizens, facilities, businesses, and perceived U.S. and Western interests. Private U.S. citizens are strongly discouraged from traveling to Iraq, Syria, or any other country to join in armed conflict. No part of Syria should be considered immune from violence. The security situation remains dangerous and unpredictable as a civil war between government and armed anti-government groups continues throughout the country. There is an increased threat of terrorism from groups such as ISIL, al-Nusra, as well as other extremists whose tactics include use of suicide bombers, kidnappings, use of small and heavy arms, and improvised explosive devices (IEDs). In the last several years, the United States has received reports of numerous foreigners kidnapped in Syria, some of whom have been killed while others remain in captivity. The majority of the victims are journalists and aid workers. U.S. citizens and other Westerners have been murdered by ISIL in Syria. Violent extremists from various countries operate in Syria and may be planning attacks against the United States and other Western targets.

A number of extremist groups also operate in Lebanon and the potential for death or injury in Lebanon exists because of periodic terrorist bombing attacks throughout the country. As a result of spillover violence from the Syria crisis, Sunni groups are active and Hizballah, a group designated by the U.S. government as a terrorist organization, has been present and active for many years.

U.S. citizens in Iraq remain at high risk for kidnapping and terrorist violence. Numerous insurgent groups, including ISIL, remain active and terrorist activity and violence persists in many areas of the country. ISIL controls Mosul, Iraq’s second largest city, as well as significant territory in northern, western, and central Iraq, particularly along the Tigris and Euphrates valleys, and the group continues to attack Iraqi security forces and civilians in those areas. U.S. government facilities and western interests remain possible targets, as evidenced by the April 17 bombing in the public area outside U.S. Consulate General Erbil where one U.S. citizen was injured. In addition, several anti-U.S. militia groups fighting ISIL, such as Kataib Hezbollah (KH)
and Asaib Ahl al-Haq (AAH) are operating throughout Iraq and may present a threat to U.S. citizens.

In Libya, Tunisia, and Algeria, groups affiliated with ISIL, Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), and other terrorist groups have conducted attacks against both foreign and local targets. In Libya, various groups have called for attacks against U.S. citizens and U.S. interests. On January 28, 2015 in Tripoli, Libya, a car bomb was detonated outside the Corinthia Hotel. Three militants rushed inside the hotel and opened fire before blowing themselves up. Five foreigners were among those killed. On March 18, several gunmen attacked the Bardo Museum in the center of Tunis, Tunisia, killing 21 people including 18 foreign tourists. On June 26, a terrorist killed 38, mostly western tourists, on a beach in Sousse, Tunisia. In Algeria’s Kabylie region, an ISIS-affiliated group kidnapped and killed a Westerner in September 2014, and, in south-western Algeria, terrorists killed 39 workers, including westerners, and held hundreds hostage at a gas processing facility in January 2013.

In Yemen, the security situation has greatly deteriorated, necessitating the suspension of operations of the U.S. Embassy. Al-Qa’ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) remains a potent force there.

AFRICA: Al-Qa’ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and al-Murabitun remain active in northern Mali and Niger. Terrorist groups have stepped up their rhetoric calling for additional attacks or kidnapping attempts on westerners and others, particularly those linked to support for international military intervention. The terrorist group AQIM has declared its intention to attack Western targets throughout the Sahel (an area that stretches across the African continent between the Atlantic Ocean and the Red Sea to include Senegal, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Chad, Sudan, and Eritrea). It has claimed responsibility for kidnappings, attempted kidnappings, and the murder of several Westerners throughout the region.

Al-Shabaab assassinations, suicide bombings, hostage taking, and indiscriminate attacks in civilian-populated areas are frequent in Somalia. Terrorist operatives and armed groups in Somalia have demonstrated their intent to attack Somali authorities, the African Union Mission in Somalia, and non-military targets such as international donor offices and humanitarian assistance providers. Al-Shabaab retains its demonstrated capability to carry out attacks in government-controlled territory in Somalia and in neighboring countries such as Kenya and Djibouti.

In fact, al-Qa’ida and its affiliate, al-Shabaab, have attacked targets in Kenya for years. Since late 2013, there have been numerous attacks killing hundreds and causing injury to hundreds more within the Nairobi area, along the coast, and in the northeastern region of the country. Most of these attacks occurred in northeastern Kenya, mainly in Wajir, Garissa, and Mandera counties. The most deadly of these took place on April 2 at the Garissa University College,
where al-Shabaab terrorists killed 148 people, primarily students, and wounded many others. Grenade and improvised explosive device attacks have occurred in Nairobi, including the January 2014 attack at a restaurant in the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport. In 2014 and 2015, the Mombasa area had at least eight such attacks.

Boko Haram, an extremist group based in northeast Nigeria, has claimed responsibility for many attacks, mainly in northern Nigeria. Thus far, 2015 has seen a continued increase in Boko Haram attacks and clashes with Nigerian government security forces in northern Nigeria. Boko Haram has also targeted women and children for kidnapping, reportedly kidnapping women in northern states for marriage as “slave brides.” Boko Haram is known to descend on whole towns, robbing banks and businesses, attacking police and military installations, and setting fire to private homes. U.S. citizen missionaries in northern Nigeria have received specific written threats to their safety and well-being, although none have yet been harmed. Boko Haram has carried out attacks in Cameroon’s Far North Region, and has targeted foreign expatriates, tourists, and government leaders in this region. In Chad, the entire Lake Chad region – not only Chad’s border with Nigeria – is vulnerable because of rising activities by Boko Haram.

U.S. citizens considering travel by sea near the Horn of Africa, the Gulf of Guinea, or in the southern Red Sea should exercise extreme caution, as there have been armed attacks, robberies, and kidnappings for ransom by pirates. The threat of hijacking to merchant vessels continues to exist in Somali territorial waters and as far as 1,000 nautical miles off the coast of Somalia, Yemen, and Kenya in international waters. There has also been a recent rise in piracy and armed robbery in the Gulf of Guinea, including hijackings.

U.S. government maritime authorities advise mariners to avoid the port of Mogadishu and to remain at least 200 nautical miles off the coast of Somalia. In addition, when transiting around the Horn of Africa, the Gulf of Guinea, or in the Red Sea, it is strongly recommended that vessels travel in convoys and maintain good communications at all times. U.S. citizens traveling on commercial passenger vessels should consult with the shipping or cruise ship company regarding precautions that will be taken to avoid hijacking incidents. Commercial vessels should review the Department of Transportation Maritime Administration's Horn of Africa Piracy page for information on maritime advisories, self-protection measures, and naval forces in the region.

SOUTH ASIA: The U.S. government continues to receive information that terrorist groups in South Asia may also be planning attacks in the region, possibly against U.S. government facilities, U.S. citizens, or U.S. interests. The presence of al-Qa’ida, Taliban elements, Lashkar-e-Tayyiba, indigenous sectarian groups, and other terror organizations, many of which are on the U.S. government's list of designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations, poses a potential danger to U.S. citizens in the region. Terrorists and their sympathizers have demonstrated their willingness and ability to attack locations where U.S. citizens or Westerners are known to congregate or visit.
The presence of several foreign and indigenous terrorist groups poses a danger to U.S. citizens throughout Pakistan. Across the country, terrorist attacks frequently occur against civilian, government, and foreign targets. Attacks have included armed assaults on heavily guarded sites, including Pakistani military installations and airports. The Government of Pakistan maintains heightened security measures, particularly in the major cities. Terrorists and criminal groups regularly resort to kidnapping for ransom.

No province in Afghanistan should be considered immune from violence and crime, and the strong possibility exists throughout the country for hostile acts, either targeted or random, against U.S. and other foreign nationals at any time. Elements of the former Taliban regime and members of other terrorist organizations hostile to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and foreign nationals remain active in every province of the country. Furthermore, travel to all areas of Afghanistan remains unsafe due to ongoing military combat operations, landmines, banditry, armed rivalry between political and tribal groups, and the possibility of insurgent attacks, including attacks using vehicle-borne or other improvised explosive devices. U.S. citizens are increasingly targeted for kidnapping. The threat situation in Afghanistan is still considered critical and is expected to remain so through the current political and military transition.

India continues to experience terrorist and insurgent activities which may affect U.S. citizens directly or indirectly. Anti-Western terrorist groups active in India include Islamist extremist groups such as Harkat-ul-Jihad-i-Islami, Harakat ul-Mujahidin, Indian Mujahideen, Jaish-e-Mohammed, and Lashkar-e Tayyiba. Past attacks have targeted public places, including some frequented by Westerners, such as luxury and other hotels, trains, train stations, markets, cinemas, mosques, and restaurants in large urban areas. Attacks have taken place during the busy evening hours in markets and other crowded places, but could occur at any time.

CENTRAL ASIA: Supporters of terrorist groups such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, al-Qa’ida, the Islamic Jihad Union, and the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement remain active in Central Asia. These groups have expressed anti-U.S. sentiments and may attempt to target U.S. government interests.

EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC: Information from credible sources suggests that there is a continued risk of armed terrorist and criminal groups operating and planning attacks against foreigners, including U.S. citizens, in the East Asian and Pacific region. Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) and the Abu Sayyaf Group, have cells operating throughout Southeast Asia and JI is linked to al-Qa’ida and other regional terrorist groups. There is a risk of travel to the southern Philippines, specifically related to kidnapping threats in the Sulu Archipelago and the ongoing threat of violence on the island of Mindanao, particularly in Central Mindanao.

Over the past year there have been several kidnappings-for-ransom targeting foreigners in the Eastern Sabah province of Malaysia and in the southern Sulu Sea area by terrorist or insurgent
groups based in the Sulu Archipelago of the Philippines. In addition to incursions on the coastal and island resorts themselves, criminal or terrorist bands may attempt to intercept boats ferrying tourists in the area.

Indonesian security forces have disrupted a number of terrorist cells, including JI, a terrorist organization that carried out several significant bombings in Jakarta and Bali over the past decade. Although Indonesian counterterrorism efforts have been successful in preventing terrorists from conducting large-scale attacks in recent years, extremists in Indonesia may demonstrate a willingness and ability to carry out small-scale violent attacks with little or no warning.

**Before You Go**

U.S. government facilities worldwide remain at a heightened state of alert. These facilities may temporarily close or periodically suspend public services to assess their security posture. In those instances, U.S. embassies and consulates will make every effort to provide emergency services to U.S. citizens. U.S. citizens abroad are urged to monitor the local news and maintain contact with the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.
Safe Travel Tips

1. Do your homework!
   - Visit the websites, [http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/alertswarnings.html](http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/alertswarnings.html) for the latest travel warnings and advisories from the U.S. Department of State; [http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country.html](http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country.html) to learn about the country you will be visiting and [http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list/](http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list/) for the latest travel and health warnings on the sites you intend to visit.
   - See Tab A – *All that You Should Leave Behind*

2. Register your travel with DOS/STEP.
   - STEP = Smart Traveler Enrollment Program, website [https://step.state.gov/step/](https://step.state.gov/step/)
   - See Tab B – *DOS Step Info & Importance of Being Prepared*

3. Leave your itinerary and contact information with someone either at home or at your respective office.

4. Copies of important items you are taking with you.
   - Make copies of your passport, credit cards, etc. in case they are stolen or lost. The copies make it easier to obtain replacements and notify companies. Take the copies with you and store them in a separate place.
   - See Tab C – *The Most Important Travel Document*

5. Do not take anything that you cannot afford to lose.
   - Sanitize your wallet and all electronic devices of credit card and bank account numbers, contact lists, PII, etc. If you are traveling for MSU clean Laptops are available through the ORED/ORS Laptop Loan program.
   - Consideration should be given to obtaining a “clean” telephone for overseas travel use as well either by local rental or at the airport.
   - See Tab D – *NDSU Cyber Tips & Your Cell Phone Aboard*

6. Be aware of your surroundings and people around you when you are out traveling, walking, in airports, everywhere.

7. Vary your routes and times, do not be predictable and set patterns.

8. Familiarize yourself with the culture, laws and security concerns of the place(s) you intend to visit.
• What is legal here in the U.S.A., may not be legal where you are visiting. Be careful with any photography, accepting of gifts/presents, Wifi and cell phone use as nothing can be considered secure. Ask your host or even the hotel staff about specific areas that should be avoided.
• See Tab E – *Picture This – The Dos and Don’ts of Photography, The Don’ts of Alcohol, Travel in High Altitude & Nurse in Macedonia*

9. Listen to your instincts and use common sense.

• If a situation arises that makes you feel uneasy, chances are it’s probably time to extricate yourself from it. Get yourself to a police station or other place that has heavy traffic and lights.
• Avoid public and political demonstrations.
• See Tab F – *Surviving a Protest*

10. Be aware of heavily tourisy sites, not everyone flocking to the tourist meccas is there for a vacation.

• See Tab G - *Scams*

11. Dress comfortably and in a style appropriate for the country being visited.

• Leave the designer goods at home, wearing clothes at the height of fashion tells people you’re foreign, well off and make you a potential target.
• Don’t advertise your nationality. Wearing a “hip” T-shirt or other article of clothing that announces your nationality often attracts the wrong kind of attention.
• Try to fit in!

12. Request a hotel room on a lower floor, floors 3 to 6 if possible.

• Ground floors are less secure.
• Floors above six are too high for conventional fire equipment to reach.
• See Tab H – *Hotels - The Ins and Outs*

13. Be careful when traveling with prescription medications.

• See Tab I - *Traveling with Medications*


• Someone being too inquisitive about you, your work, family, or purpose of travel.
• Asking if this is your first time here – could be a question used by criminals to mark you.
• Being too helpful then asking for something in return.
The following report is based on open source reporting.

February 20, 2014

Introduction

Seasoned travelers understand that laws in foreign countries can differ vastly from those in the United States, so they are usually prepared for an international trip. But some rules can catch even the savviest of globe trotters off guard, and a crash course can come as early as the security line. Something travelers may not think twice about carrying in the United States can raise a red flag in the destination country, resulting in a fine or even incarceration. Understanding as much as you can about local restrictions before you set out is, therefore, vital for any traveler.

That Can Stay Here

What foreigners can and cannot bring into a particular country is not always clear. Laws on the books can be ignored or arbitrarily applied. They can also change frequently and not be communicated (or even updated in the legal code). Spur-of-the-moment “rules” can also be concocted depending on who is working the customs line or, more legitimately, what is happening in-country. While this can be extremely frustrating, there are a number of import restrictions that are almost universal. For example, prescription drugs without the original doctor’s prescription likely will not be permitted anywhere you go. Plant life – including fruit baskets and gift items – and live animals are not usually welcome; neither are guns or narcotics.

But even these known restrictions are nuanced. For example, in Japan, restrictions are not just limited to prescriptions. Vicks inhalers, Actifed, and Sudafed, due to the pseudoephedrine each contains, are all forbidden. Many over-the-counter medicines are also barred from entry in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and while narcotics are almost universally illegal, some countries deal with violators more severely. For example, 30 grams of cocaine will earn the carrier a death sentence in Singapore. Spent bullet shells can also put you on the wrong side of the law in places like the UAE, as can body armor, hand cuffs, or other pieces of security equipment. In Vietnam, military uniforms should be left at home; any literature, music, or paraphernalia that glorifies fascism, the Nazi past, or the Third Reich should skip the trip to Germany.

Religious Customs

In countries where a particular religion plays a strong role in the government or society, importation of a different religion’s materials can face thorough scrutiny, if not outright prohibition. For example, Bibles face restrictions in places like the Maldives, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Afghanistan. In Saudi Arabia, Christmas decorations can also be confiscated and the owner subject to fines and penalties. Images of Buddha are very sensitive in Thailand, where Buddhism plays a central role in society.

Restrictions on religious material are also commonplace in countries where religion is expressly left out of government. Such items are forbidden in places like Burma, and those entering China could encounter challenges as well. In both classifications of countries, however, pornography and other material deemed indecent -- subjective decrees open to wide interpretation -- are also usually forbidden. Vietnamese authorities have been known to seize various personal effects, to include documents, compact discs, literature, and personal letters they deem to be pornographic or political in nature, or intended for political or religious proselytizing. Finally, alcohol too can carry very strict rules, if it is legal at all.
**Electronic Devices Welcome, Sort of**

Bringing electronic devices on your travels is complicated, and satellite phones provide a great example as to why. In some countries, such as India and China, rules for importing satellite phones can be confusing and sometimes arbitrary. In other countries, particularly in the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa, authorities reserve the right to inspect, question, and possibly harass if you carry one, regardless of codified law. In Russia, the importation and use of Global Positioning Systems (GPS) and other radio electronic devices are sometimes subject to special rules and regulations.

Thumb drives and other mobile devices are not illegal, but in places where political or religious sensitivities exist, expect no privacy. While it is safe to assume that all countries reserve the right to inspect your electronic equipment upon entry, governments in some areas will likely exercise that right more thoroughly. Furthermore, devices can be disassembled during the inspection process, and what condition they return in may be anybody's guess.

**Strange but True**

The above restrictions are by no means exhaustive. Some countries maintain unusually odd bans. For example, non-biodegradable plastic bags are banned in Rwanda. Travelers carrying them upon arrival at Kayibanda International airport may have them confiscated and be forced to pay U.S. $4 for a reusable cloth replacement. Chewing tobacco is illegal in Singapore, as are cigarettes in Bhutan.

**Conclusion**

There are ways to keep yourself protected wherever you are traveling. First, travelers should consult the State Department's [travel page](#) for country-specific information dealing with local laws and customs. Second, if you have assets in-country (expatriates or nationals), ask their advice. They have likely been through the process many times before and can provide useful tips. Finally, if you do not need it, do not bring it. Few things are worth risking fines, deportation, or possibly even a stay in prison.

**For Further Information**

Please direct any questions regarding this report to OSAC's [Cross Regional Analyst](#).
May 26, 2015

Overview

Emergency preparedness has become a critical consideration for U.S. citizens traveling overseas. Development of a safety- and security-minded culture is critical to an organization. Although development of emergency preparedness plans generally falls on senior-level staff, adherence to and compliance with these plans often falls on the layman who may travel to security “hotspots” or be faced with the fallout from a national disaster. To maintain security awareness, employees need to understand that they are also a crucial part of the equation.

By examining three recent crises around the world in which U.S. private-sector organizations found their crisis-management plans put into action, this report looks to encourage OSAC constituents to develop new (or reassess existing) plans by considering lessons learned from those who shared their experiences. It also offers basic advice on training personnel to consider emergency-preparedness as part of their job, even if their position falls outside the realm of organizational security.

Lessons Learned

Nepal Earthquake

On April 25, 2015, a 7.8 magnitude earthquake shook Kathmandu and surrounding areas in Nepal. The earthquake, aftershocks, and subsequent landslides contributed to the deaths of over 8,600 people, with over 21,800 injured, and many unaccounted for. Evacuations were difficult due to constant power outages, widespread road damage, and flight delays and cancellations. Furthermore, the Nepalese government did not have a coordinated evacuation strategy for foreign nationals.

The Nepalese government, OSAC constituents, and independent travelers could have benefited from improved natural-disaster contingency plans. As OSAC constituents – many from U.S. academic institutions – rushed to evacuate their students and personnel, a lack of telecommunications capabilities hindered timely roll-calls and evacuation strategies. In countries prone to natural disasters and where the public infrastructure is underdeveloped, OSAC constituents should consider having satellite phones readily available to travelers in the event that the Internet and telephone lines become inoperable. OSAC constituents may also consider purchasing emergency evacuation insurance to evacuate personnel.

Constituents must also consider the medium- to long-term risks that develop after an initial disaster. With the annual monsoon season looming, organizations still in Nepal are experiencing heightened sanitation concerns because of collapsed infrastructure.

West Africa Ebola Outbreak

The largest outbreak of Ebola virus disease (EVD) ever reported – in number of infections, in geographical scope, and in duration – swept through three countries in West Africa beginning in March 2014, causing over 11,100 deaths and at least 15,800 more infections. This Ebola outbreak, the first in West Africa, began in Guinea’s heavily forested southeast when a child was bitten by an infected bat. It wasn’t until May 9, 2015, more than a year later, that the World Health Organization declared Liberia Ebola-free.
West African governments and OSAC constituents took precautionary measures against Ebola. Many countries closed their land, air, and sea borders with countries that reportedly had citizens infected with Ebola, and many more closed their borders to citizens of affected countries and travelers with recent visits to the region. Airports that received traffic from affected countries increased their medical surveillance of passengers with questionnaires and thermal-imaging cameras. The governments of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone established treatment and isolation centers and increased public awareness campaigns in attempt to stop the spread. Sierra Leone imposed multiple three-day stay-home education campaigns.

OSAC constituents, apart from those involved with medicine and healthcare, were at a very low risk for contracting the disease. U.S. embassies in all three countries remained fully staffed throughout the outbreak, although family members were evacuated. Some constituents withdrew operations, and others prohibited travel to countries impacted by Ebola, based on State Department Travel Warning guidance and often due to logistical and travel impediments.

Terror Attack in Kenya

On September 21, 2013, four attackers armed with guns and grenades stormed the Westgate Shopping Mall in Nairobi, Kenya, indiscriminately attacking shoppers. The al-Shabaab terrorist group claimed responsibility for the attack, claiming retaliation for Kenyan involvement in the Somali conflict. At least 71 people were killed, and more than 175 were injured.

Many OSAC constituents responded to the attack by avoiding all Western establishments such as restaurants, hotels and tourist attractions and prohibiting travel after dark. Some U.S. organizations restricted all travel to Kenya until the situation was resolved.

OSAC constituents utilized various methods -- such as telephone trees, text or SMS messages, emails, or social media -- to account for employees and travelers in Kenya. Constituents used text or SMS messages, robocalls, emails, social media, and other mass communication mediums to distribute information within their organizations as events became known. Several constituents reported problems accounting for personnel – some taking as long as a few days to account for everyone. As a result, many now recommend establishing crisis-management plans include alternate mechanisms for accounting for personnel in the event that landlines and cellular networks are unavailable.

How do OSAC Constituents Manage Emergency Preparedness Programs?

OSAC constituents must identify a realistic, comprehensive approach for how their management and employees would prepare for and respond to crises. While there is no uniform emergency-preparedness strategy that adequately fits the needs of all organizations in all circumstances, security professionals can prepare their support staff and travelers by clearly articulating emergency communication plans and the employee’s role during a crisis. Many companies give travelers a small card with emergency contacts, including corporate crisis management team, travel agents, and medical evacuation providers, to carry in a wallet or bag in case of emergency. It is also beneficial to put strategy into practice through crisis management exercises.

An OSAC constituent in the media and entertainment industry shared details of its disaster preparedness program that included centralizing its emergency-preparedness and -response duties. They have a Crisis Management Team that runs disaster preparedness exercises across the enterprise to engage company leadership. They also have a Community Watch Team that is responsible for messaging all employees on disaster preparedness, among other travel safety and security issues.

A faith-based OSAC constituent provided a step-by-step crisis preparedness guide for trips abroad. Travelers must identify emergency scenarios (like a natural disaster), establish a communication plan with other volunteers, and assemble a 72-hour emergency survival kit. During a disaster, travelers follow their

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communication plan and account for their traveling party. Travelers also plan for alternative communication methods should telecommunications or transportation routes be disrupted. Alternatives could include short-wave radios or personal contact. After a disaster, travelers must report the crisis event to a supervisor. Their crisis plan must also address the implications of a violent intruder or a bombing incident.

U.S. Embassy Tegucigalpa recently ran an emergency-preparedness exercise that taught dependents basic safety and survival skills, including what to put in an emergency-survival kit and how to use a shortwave radio. This exercise taught children how to keep themselves safe in the event that an adult is not present or is incapacitated. A key lesson from the exercise was how to remain calm during a crisis disaster, a challenge that applies not only to children but to adults. Most importantly, the Embassy realized that they were working with people with different abilities and learning styles, so they incorporated a bit of fun into the exercise—the “emergency” was a zombie apocalypse—to achieve buy-in from participants. Organizations may similarly find their adult employees willing to learning emergency-preparedness techniques while they are ostensibly being entertained.

**How to Prepare your Employees: The Basics**

Some basic ways to prepare for an emergency scenario include.

**Register on STEP:**
Registering for the Department of State’s Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) will inform the U.S. Embassy/Consulate of U.S. citizen travel itineraries. STEP enrollees will receive emergency Consular Affairs messages from the nearest U.S. embassy/consulate. In a crisis, U.S. citizens may be called by the office of American Citizens Services (ACS) at the U.S. embassy/consulate to assess their status, location, and needs for assistance. In the event of a crisis, U.S. citizens are advised to contact the nearest ACS; contact information is available online.

**Assemble a “go bag”:**
A disaster supply kit, known as a “go bag,” is necessary when preparing for an emergency. Basic services (gas, electricity, sewage, and potable water) may not be available for prolonged periods. A go bag should contain equipment to sustain outages, and needs to be prepared and readily available. It should contain enough cash, non-perishable food, water, first aid supplies (including prescription medications), sanitation materials (hand sanitizers, bleach, toilet paper, etc), and other supplies and tools to last at least 72 hours. Copies of personal identification documents (driver’s license, passports, visa) are also essential, in the event a traveler is unable to access the originals.

**Analyze Your Surroundings:**
Consider the types of crises your employees could encounter while on travel. For example, a location could be prone to earthquakes or at risk for flooding during hurricane certain season. Terrorist attacks or threats could pose heightened risks for wrong place, wrong time violence. Political instability instigated by mass public demonstrations or a coup d’état could lead to extensive logistical disruptions and hinder employee evacuations.

In general, it is wise to:
- Select lodging that is resilient to weather-related impacts from natural disasters;
- Avoid travel when there are known periods of annual inclement weather or geo-political instability (such as elections); and
- Establish alternative travel routes and an exit strategy should critical transportation infrastructure be obstructed during a crisis.

The contents of this (U) presentation in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the United States Department of State, or the United States Government, except as otherwise noted (e.g., travel advisories, public statements). The presentation was compiled from various open sources and (U) embassy reporting. Please note that all OSAC products are for internal U.S. private sector security purposes only. Publishing or otherwise distributing OSAC-derived information in a manner inconsistent with this policy may result in the discontinuation of OSAC support.
Establishing a Communication Plan:

Employees, their families, and colleagues may not be together when disaster strikes. Make sure you have a known, reliable communication plan with redundancies to reestablish contact within the group and with friends/family/work beyond the affected region. Your plan should consist of a safe place to meet, a method to contact each other and communicate externally, and a location for shelter. You should also arrange for a check-in contact outside the region of travel for those who have not yet been able to meet in-country; the external contact can serve as an organizational point of contact not only for those involved in the emergency, but for inevitable calls from headquarters to ensure in-country personnel are accounted for.

Resource Library
OSAC Personal Readiness and Emergency Preparedness Guide
Kathmandu, Nepal Earthquake Preparedness Guide
Logistics Cluster (Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) coordination mechanism)
Humanity Road (Top-rated disaster response nonprofit)
U.S. Department of State STEP

The Smart Traveler Enrollment Program or STEP is a free service of the Bureau of Consular Affairs of the U.S. State Department that allows U.S. citizens and nationals traveling aboard to enroll their trip with the nearest embassy or consulate.

Advantages to enrolling with STEP are:

- Receive important information from the Embassy about safety conditions in your destination country, helping you make informed decisions about your travel plans.
- Help the U.S. Embassy contact you in an emergency, whether natural disaster, civil unrest, or family emergency.
- Help family and friends get in touch with you in an emergency.

STEP website is [https://step.state.gov/step/](https://step.state.gov/step/)
The Most Valuable Travel Document

Product of the Research & Information Support Center (RISC)

The following report is based on open source reporting.

April 9, 2014

Introduction

The disappearance of Malaysian Airlines Flight 370 underscores a security issue that has existed for a very long time: passport fraud. That two Iranian men boarded a plane belonging to a major airline in a modern airport using registered stolen passports begs two questions: 1) how is this done? and 2) why? The passports were reported stolen in Phuket, Thailand, and ended up in the hands of two Iranian men attempting to immigrate illegitimately to Europe. But, many other cases have a more malign intent. INTERPOL Secretary General Ronald K. Noble states that “in every major terrorist attack...you can find fraudulent travel documents tied or linked in some way” and called passport fraud “the biggest threat facing the world.”

Pick Your Poison

To understand how passport fraud works, it is important to understand the different methods of execution. Below are the most common forms of fraud:

- **Doctoring:** This involves changing the information contained inside the actual passport. It is the most easily detectable of the methods, as long as the inspecting authority knows what to look for.
- **Resemblance:** This requires obtaining a legitimate document from someone who has similar physical traits. This is a common fraud practice, and it is not easy to detect since there is nothing fraudulent in the passport.
- **Stolen Blanks:** These are real documents taken from official stock before they have been filled out. Brokers can buy them from corrupt officials or steal them and customize them.
- **Real Passport Issued to a False Identity:** Occasionally, a government agency will issue a genuine passport to someone who provided a false identity. Through different means, criminals have obtained fraudulent documents (birth certificate, social security card, etc.) to support the issuance of a legitimate passport.
- **Counterfeit:** Finally, counterfeit passports are those created from scratch. Most counterfeit passports may be useful for traveling in the developing world, especially at land-border crossings, but would likely not withstand the scrutiny of authorities in the developed world or at most airports. Travelers may find counterfeit passports in market stalls in much of the developing world.

Fraud Around the World

Because of its magnetism for tourists and its relatively lax laws, Thailand is one of the world’s hubs for passport fraud. Each year, Thai authorities struggle to track thousands of lost or stolen passports that often end up on the black market.

However, the problem is not isolated to Thailand. In 2010, police arrested seven people there and three in Spain for their part in an international document fraud ring. The network, which operated out of Thailand for 10 years, would steal passports from tourists (often targeting people in Barcelona and tailored to a requested nationality and age profile (i.e. resemblance fraud)) and send the passports to Thailand, where they would be delivered to terrorist groups such as al-Qa’ida, Lashkar-e-Taiba, and the Tamil Tigers. The fraud ring is also believed to have had links to the 2004 Madrid train bombings that killed 191 people. In

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2005, British citizen and terror suspect Samantha Lewthwaite, also known as the White Widow, purchased a fraudulent South African passport in Durban with the help of corrupt government officials. The intermediary who sold her the passport said he and a partner processed more than 3,000 fraudulent IDs and passports for mostly al-Qa’ida-linked networks, such as al-Shabaab. Other major cases of fraud have been reported in Ghana, Peru, Ireland, and Mexico. In fact, with a high demand and numerous means of production, document fraud is going on all over the world.

Best Practices

A U.S. passport is one of the most valuable identification documents in the world. Every traveler should treat carrying one as such, and there are a number of ways to ensure its security:

- In places like Phuket, tourists may be required to leave their passport as a deposit when renting recreational equipment. When the equipment is returned, crooked business owners can falsely claim that the rented item was damaged. If the traveler refuses to pay the collateral, they may abandon their passport by reporting it as stolen and request a new one from their embassy. Their old passport can then be sold on the black market. If you find yourself in a position where a vendor is demanding your passport, offer another form of collateral. One tourist reported that, after a heated discussion, he was able to leave his driver’s license instead. In fact, Phuket police called meetings with dozens of owners of motorbike rental shops and told them to take copies of passports instead of the originals. If all else fails, you must decide if the experience is worth potentially losing your passport.

- Another way to stay secure is to limit the number of people who handle your passport; the fewer sets of hands on it, the better. If you must surrender your passport (international hotel check-in for example), limit the amount of time it is out of your possession and be cognizant as to what is being done with it.

- When walking on the street, keep a copy of your passport on your person while leaving the actual document in your hotel safe or another secure area. It is more likely that a passport will be lost/stolen on the street than an official would require the actual document (although there are several countries that do require you to keep your actual passport on you at all times; this information can be found on each country’s Country Specific Information sheet.

If you do lose your passport overseas, immediately call 877-487-2778 to report it and please visit the State Department’s travel page for directions on what to do next. Swiftly reporting the passport as lost or stolen will reduce the possibility the passport will be misused to board a plan or to transit an international border.

For Further Information

Please direct any questions regarding this report to OSAC’s Cross Regional Analyst.
The following information is from North Dakota State University.

Cyber Security Tips for Traveling Abroad with Mobile Electronic Devices

**Note**: This web page is intended to outline steps, tips, and guidelines that you can use to protect yourself, your information, and your mobile devices when you travel abroad.

**Introduction**

To maintain contact with work, family, and friends, most persons, when traveling abroad prefer to use a mobile electronic communication device(s). Mobile electronic devices such as laptops, cell phones, and tablets, when taken abroad, may be successfully attacked with malware and automated attack tools. These devices, even when kept current with security software, may not be able to thwart such an attack.

As part of a renowned research university, NDSU's faculty, scholars, and staff often travel abroad for research, collaboration, continued study, or to present at national gatherings. When traveling to certain countries where there is strong scientific competition, the country is not on friendly terms with the United States, there is civil unrest or political discord, or where violence and crime are prevalent, and they may become victims of cyber-attacks, cybercrime, monitoring or surveillance. This is particularly true if the individual is engaged in classified or proprietary research in a STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) program. Institutional leaders who are politically or religiously active, fluent speakers of the language, and individual tourists may also be actively targeted.

**Acknowledgement**

Credit and appreciation given to Joe St. Sauver, Manager for Internet 2 Nationwide Security Programs and the InCommon Certificate program, for allowing the use of large excerpts from his articles “Travel to Destinations other Than China or the Russian Federation,” and Cyber Security and Travel to China or the Russian Federation,” March, 2012.

**Frequently Asked Questions**

*What can happen to my mobile electronic devices when I travel abroad?*
What can I do to protect myself, my electronic devices, and my information when I am traveling abroad?

Are there additional tips and guidelines that I can use when I travel to countries that are less than friendly or there is civil unrest, or where crime and violence are prevalent?

Are there other resources where I can find information on the country(s) that I am planning to travel to?

What can happen to my mobile electronic devices when I travel abroad?

Depending on where you plan to travel to, electronic communication devices, when taken abroad, may be subject to involuntary official governmental review and possible duplication of the hard drive's contents.

NDSU and University System policies require that any hard drive which contains personally identifiable information, financial, proprietary, or intellectual property be encrypted. Use of encryption to protect information may be forbidden in some countries. And, if your encryption product allows you to "hide" information, those "hidden" areas can be detected, and you could be subject to criminal charges by the country's government. Because it is difficulty to monitor encrypted traffic, use of secure ("https") websites and/or use of virtual private networks (VPNs) may be blocked by some countries.

Attempts to circumvent national censorship of certain websites, such as some mainstream western social media sites, is discouraged. If you are found to be using a product to circumvent the blocking of censored websites, you may be warned, have your electronic devices confiscated, or you may become subject to criminal charges.

Personal privacy may not be respected. Even private spaces such as hotel rooms, rental cars, and taxis may be subject to video, audio, or other monitoring. This type of surveillance may be able to track your whereabouts, what you may be doing, what's on your electronic device, and what you may be entering into it. Conversations either in person or on a phone may be monitored. Local colleagues may be required to report any conversations held with foreigners.
What can I do to protect myself, my electronic devices, and my information when I am traveling abroad?

The guidelines and recommendations listed below outline and define steps you can take to protect yourself, your information, and your electronic devices.

- If possible, do not take your work or personal devices with you. Use a temporary device, such as an inexpensive laptop and/or a prepaid "throw away" cell phone purchased specifically for travel.
- If you must take your electronic device(s) with you, only include information that you will need for your travel.
- Be sure that any device with an operating system and software is fully patched and up-to-date with all institutional recommended security software.
- When not in use, turn off the device(s). Do allow them to be in "sleep" or "hibernation" mode when they are not in active use.
- Be sure to password or passcode protect the device. Do not use the same passwords/passcodes that you use on your work and personal devices. The password/passcode should be long and complex.
- Minimize the data contained on the device. This is particularly true of logins and passwords, credit card information, your social security number, passport number, etc.
- Assume that anything you do on the device, particularly over the Internet, will be intercepted. In some cases, encrypted data may be decrypted.
- Never use shared computers in cyber cafes, public areas, hotel business centers, or devices belonging to other travelers, colleagues, or friends.
- Keep the device(s) with you at all times during your travel. Do not assume they will be safe in your hotel room or in a hotel safe.
- Upon returning from your travels, immediately discontinue use of the device(s). The hard drive of the devices should be reformatted, and the operating system and other related software reinstalled, or the device properly disposed of.
- Change any and all passwords you may have used abroad.

Are there additional tips and guidelines that I can use when I travel to countries that are less than friendly or there is civil unrest, or where crime and violence are prevalent?

Before you travel:
- Tape over any integrated laptop cameras, or disable them.
- Physically disconnect any integrated laptop microphones
- Install a privacy screen on your laptop to discourage "shoulder surfing."
- Disable all file sharing.
- Disable all unnecessary network protocols (e.g., WiFi, Bluetooth, infrared, etc.)
- Backup any data you may have stored on the device.
- Leave unneeded car keys, house keys, smart cards, credit cards, swipe cards, or fobs you would use to access your work place, or other areas, and any other access control devices you may have at home.
• Clean out your purse or wallet of any financial information such as bank account numbers, logins and passwords, any RFID cards (including U.S. Government Nexus "trusted traveler" cards) should be carried inside an RF-shielded cover.
• If you need to send and receive email while traveling, create a temporary "throw away" account on Microsoft Outlook or a similar service before you travel.

Additional smart tips for traveling abroad in less than friendly countries:
• Do not send any sensitive messages via email.
• Limit or avoid making or receiving voice calls, using voice mail, instant messaging, text messaging, or sending and/or receiving faxes.
Your Cell Phone Abroad: Stay on Budget, Stay Secure

By Vincent I. Polley

Vincent I. Polley (vpolley@knowconnect.com) is president of KnowConnect PLLC, providing consulting services on information policy, security, and knowledge management processes. He is Chair of the ABA Standing Committee on Continuing Legal Education.

For a busy lawyer, traveling abroad is entirely different than making a business trip to San Francisco. We rely on connectivity without a second thought within the United States. But traveling internationally—even to Canada—requires advance planning if we hope to maintain that seamless contact.

The good news: You can stay in touch securely and (increasingly) inexpensively with your current phone in most countries. But beware. If you don’t do a little planning before you leave, you may come home to a huge bill from your carrier, even if you’re just going to Canada.

This article is designed for lawyers who make a few trips a year and want to keep things as straightforward as possible, using their same phone number and their familiar phone (with all its apps and data intact). There are more intricate and cheaper approaches that we won’t explore, such as jailbreaking your phone, using a prepaid SIM card, or buying a burner phone overseas and forwarding your U.S. calls to that new number. If you’re interested in these approaches, you can find plenty of information on the web.

If you’re like me, keeping things simple is worth the moderate cost. Much of what follows is derived from my planning and experiences during several recent trips to Europe and Asia with my iPhone.

Connectivity

Staying in touch with clients and family is entirely achievable nearly anywhere in the world. In fact, your regular phone may work outside the U.S. with no advance planning at all (especially if you have an AT&T smartphone, which can connect to most of the world’s GSM telephony networks). But without advance planning, the costs can be shocking—$6-per-minute telephone calls and $15-per-megabyte data charges. For most smartphone users, this could amount to several thousand dollars. So plan ahead; call your carrier before you leave to let them know you’ll be abroad and to learn what special services you might need. Another reason to call ahead: Older Verizon phones using the CDMA telephony protocol were unable to operate in most non-U.S. countries, so you will need to make sure that your phone can work overseas.

For a recent Asia trip, I purchased three separate AT&T services:

- World Traveler for calling ($6 per month, which reduces phone rates about 30 percent, but they’ll still be at least $1 per minute);
- Global Messaging for texting ($30 per month for 200 text messages); and
Global Data for **Internet** ($120 per month for 800 megabytes).

These carrier services enable you to use your phone for data (at nearly reasonable rates) when you’re not near a WiFi hotspot and to make and receive important phone calls.

Immediately upon return to the United States, I called AT&T again to cancel these services; for some of them the per-month charges are pro-rated, so my total cost was only about $90. (Costs are dropping—in the past year AT&T has halved the price for double the data allowance; expect this trend to continue.)

Make sure that you speak to an international representative when you arrange your additional services and also when you cancel them. If you cancel too soon and all overseas charges haven’t been posted to your account, they will be charged at higher rates. In general, AT&T’s International service team will give you good advice, but only you can determine how much data and messaging capacity you need.

Even with the reduced-rate AT&T World Traveler service, basic voice calls cost $2 per minute in Hong Kong, whether you are making or receiving the call. Most country charges are more than $1 per minute. And most plans charge you for a minute even if you are on the call for only seconds.

To save money, use your phone for calling as little as possible while out and about. Be aware that you will be charged even if you don’t answer the phone for all the time a caller spends leaving a message. And most phones do not allow you to use data services if the phone is off or in “airplane mode,” so you risk receiving a telephone call if your phone is turned on.

To reduce telephone charges, here are some tips:

1. Change your voicemail message before you leave the United States, telling people that you won’t (or will rarely) be checking your voicemail—ask them to e-mail you instead.
2. Make sure that your e-mail auto-responder states that you won’t (or will rarely) have ready access to your phone but that you will be responding to e-mail.
3. Turn your phone off (or go to airplane mode) when you go to bed. Not only will it keep you from being awakened in the middle of the night, it will prevent you from being charged for incoming calls.
4. Ask your hotel to make local calls for you to make reservations or order a taxi. Most do not charge for this service, and even if they do, it will be far less than your mobile carrier in most cases.
5. Check out visual voicemail services that allow you to receive your voicemail messages as e-mails. This may save you money as well.

On the other hand, when in an office or hotel where WiFi is available, you can use your phone to place calls using the Skype app or the Google Voice app (Facebook may be about to introduce a similar service). To use these services, you need to open an account online before you leave the United States and download and install the app onto your phone. These services permit you to make calls from your smartphone, laptop, or tablet. With a little extra work, you can configure your Google Voice and Skype accounts to process incoming calls, too, but this requires creating a new phone number and making sure clients/family know to use it. I don’t
bother. Instead, when outside the United States, I set my e-mail auto-responder to tell people that it’s easier for me to phone them, and I ask that they send me an e-mail or text message if they would like to talk. When this doesn’t work and I receive an incoming call on my phone, I ask if I can return the call as soon as I can find a WiFi connection.

Security

Your smartphone contains your address book, calendar, e-mail, Internet surfing history (with many of your login credentials and passwords), and hordes of other confidential information—some of which is client information.

Make sure you back up your address book, calendar, and other essential but not confidential information (such as your passport number) onto a thumb drive that you keep in a separate place from your phone and computer. If you lose your phone, this tiny detail could save your trip. I also use this extra drive to copy photos that I’ve taken on my trip, for the same reason.

Phone Security. You should protect your smartphone as you do your laptop. Security issues are more pronounced overseas for at least two reasons:

• First, many countries are actively engaged in state-sponsored cyber-espionage, targeting U.S. business travelers and lawyers. China is one of these countries, but even “friendly” governments have their darker sides (e.g., France; there are also reports that Israel examines some laptops upon entry into the country). Some U.S. government officials must follow security protocols that forbid them to take their regular phone/laptop into China. Instead, these travelers are issued disposable computers and phones that they’ll only use in China and will wipe completely on leaving the country. Needless to say, these disposable devices don’t carry any confidential information.

• Second, citizens returning to the United States have very limited privacy rights while crossing the border; U.S. Customs and Border Protection can seize and search cellphones and laptops of returning travelers. Although I’m unaware of any instances in which a returning lawyer has claimed attorney-client privilege as a shield against such investigations, it seems the smarter course to take precautions against a U.S. Customs search, just as you would against a Chinese cyber-intrusion. (For more, see “The Danger of U.S. Customs Searches for Returning Lawyers.”)

Depending on the consequences of a security breach, you may decide not to carry any important information when you travel outside the United States. For most of us, this isn’t practical—our laptops and smartphones are filled with confidential information and with the details that enable daily operations: address books, calendars, notes, and the like.

If you’re going to take all this with you, take a few steps to protect it.

• On your laptop, use whole-disk encryption to secure the entire contents of your laptop, and use a strong password (try the first letter from each of the words in your favorite Supreme Court quotation).

• On your smartphone, use a passcode lock and enable the feature that automatically erases all the data if someone else tries to guess your passcode and gets it wrong ten times. (Note: if you use a four-digit passcode, make sure that two of those digits are the same—e.g., 2342. Counterintuitively, this is more secure than using a code with no repeating digits;
guessing the right four-digit code where there are three fingerprint smudges has 36 possibilities, but where there are four smudges there are only 24 possibilities.) Better yet, use a complex password that consists only of numbers—as long as you choose a string of at least five digits, the thief’s ability to crack your password drops by at least an order of magnitude and is essentially zero if you use a nine-digit string.

Locking and encryption are necessary but not sufficient. There are special-purpose security tools that can get past whole-disk encryption and locked smartphones if the devices are only in “sleep” or hibernation mode. Your protection and security are greatly enhanced if you shut your laptop and phone completely off when crossing a border or leaving the device in your hotel room.

**WiFi security.** One last security suggestion: Be careful when using public WiFi services, even in the United States. The information you send or receive while using public facilities can easily be intercepted by even teenaged snoops. Be particularly wary of using login information (username and password) to connect with any Internet service—your Gmail account, your bank account, or your firm’s server. It’s one thing if a snoop is reading your e-mail traffic; it’s something else altogether if they’ve recorded your bank login details. For this reason, I *never* log in to any Internet-based service while using public WiFi—except when I’ve activated a VPN (Virtual Private Network) service to encrypt the exchange of login credentials. Good, free, U.S.-based VPN services include Hotspot Shield (hotspotshield.com) and Cloak (getcloak.com; I use Cloak because I can use it on my laptop, iPad, and iPhone).

Note: When using a VPN service provider such as these, you’re substituting your trust in them for your lack of trust in a public WiFi network; it’s possible that the VPN provider is spying on you. If your firm has its own VPN service, use that instead.

**Maps: Online and Off**

Using your phone for maps and navigation can consume a huge amount of data—easily 10 megabytes during a 20-mile journey. But I like to know where I’m going in a foreign country, so I purchase the expensive AT&T data plan. There are some apps that use stored maps (together with GPS and/or WiFi) and require less data download. Be sure to read the app reviews and look at the maps before leaving. Some rely on public/crowd-sourced information that may not be accurate or helpful. I discovered that one off-line map I purchased for Asia had no English!

**Housekeeping**

Finally, there are the usual things to do whenever you go on a trip and change time zones:

- adjust your clocks,
- change the time zone on your laptop,
- set your e-mail auto-responder, and
- change your voicemail message.

There are also a few additional items that can help minimize communications costs while overseas:
1. To help reduce data usage (and increase battery life), set your phone to check for new e-mail less frequently.
2. Turn off the “push notifications” settings on Facebook, Twitter, and any other apps that regularly push data to your phone. Use your laptop or WiFi to access these services instead.
3. Disable all those “location services” that you don’t need (you will need to use Apple Maps or Google Maps, so you cannot turn off all location services).
4. Finally, to keep track of how much data you’ve used, reset your usage tracker to zero just as you leave the country (on the iPhone, look under Settings>General>Usage>Cellular Usage).

Bon voyage!
March 19, 2015

Summary

Just about everyone has a camera at his or her immediate disposal through a smartphone. It is not uncommon to want to immortalize certain individuals, experiences, sites, or scenery, especially when traveling abroad. However, individuals to be photographed might have religious or animist/indigenous beliefs that photographs steal the soul (particularly of children) or disrespect the spiritual world; gender roles may make photography difficult, precluding women from being photographed; and security apparatus (police and military) generally do not want to be photographed. Some people simply want to be paid for being photographed. However, foreign laws and customs governing what is permissible to photograph can vary vastly from U.S. norms.

Dos & Don'ts for Photography Abroad

Behavior that might be deemed inappropriate includes: lewd or lascivious acts, kissing, drinking alcohol, and immodest skin exposure. Edifices that might be deemed sensitive might include: government buildings, voting centers and processes, embassies, military facilities and vehicles (including airplanes), religious structures, and palaces. Scenery might include: war zones, sacred grounds, archeological sites, and tribal artifacts.

The use of the “selfie stick,” a telescoping rod to take photographs of oneself from approximately one meter’s distance, is banned in many locations, to include museums and art galleries, particularly in Europe.

Villagers in rural areas are sometimes suspicious of strangers, especially if they are not prone to seeing many people from outside their own community or country. There have been several incidents of violence in rural areas of Kenya, for instance, against Kenyan and foreign adults suspected of stealing children. Be aware that close contact with children, including taking their pictures or giving them gifts, can be viewed with deep alarm in some cultures, and may provoke panic and/or violence.

In some cases, anti-photography laws exist but are generally not pursued. For example, photographing the Eiffel Tower in Paris at night is technically a copyright infringement and, thus, illegal. Or, in Romania and Bulgaria, public buildings can be photographed, but those images cannot be sold. Further, in March 2014, Hungary made taking a photograph of people illegal unless everyone included has given permission; however, vagaries in the civil code leave room for interpretation.

Case Studies in 2014 and 2015

In mid-March 2015, OSAC staff members visited Turkmenistan and were told not to photograph government buildings, which are rarely clearly identified as such but are numerous in Ashgabat. After photographing carcasses in a meat market, they were approached and told not to do so again. The staff members left the stall but were overtly surveilled and followed by two men for some time.

Also in mid-March, Thailand made posting specific ‘selfies’ online, a trend common with female tourists, illegal under the Computer Crime Act, punishable by five years of jail time and a 100,000 baht (U.S.$3,035) fine.
In early March, two U.S. citizens carved their names into Rome’s Coliseum walls and then photographed themselves and their act of vandalism. The two were arrested for aggravated damage and may face fines and jail time. The Coliseum has signage in English and Italian that defacing the structure is prohibited.

In early February 2015, U.S. sisters were arrested and deported from Cambodia for taking inappropriate photographs of themselves in the Preah Khan Angkor temple, a World Heritage site. They were charged with "indecent trafficking of pornography and exposing sexual organs." The sisters were sentenced to a six-month suspended prison term, fined the equivalent of U.S.$315, and banned from the country for four years.

In October 2014, a U.S. citizen was arrested in the United Arab Emirates and charged with taking pictures of a restricted area. He was held in the al-Wathba prison, charged, fined the equivalent of U.S.$135, and released after 29 days incarceration. The U.S. citizen was to speak at a conference and then travel on to Malaysia. However, as in many cases, the detention was allegedly not communicated to the Embassy or to his contacts, and only after the U.S. citizen did not appear in Malaysia days later did his friends become concerned and begin searching for him.

Impact to Private Sector

Depending on what country is involved, visitors who violate local law or custom can be detained for lengthy periods, charged stiff fines, and/or be declared persona non grata. Not knowing local laws and customs is not excusable in the eyes of the court or police. Further, photographic documentation of illegal activities can be used in most judicial trials, as was the case when a fish poacher photographed himself with an illegal weapon in Wales, U.K. Prisons overseas are not kept to U.S. standards, and prolonged detainment under such conditions may lead to biological and psychological maladies. Further, should a detained individual be representing a corporate entity, an arrest could cause unwanted business tensions. The notoriety that would likely come, at least online if not in mainstream media, may be damaging personally, making future academic or professional pursuits challenging. For example, in March 2014, four U.S. citizens were arrested for 'streaking' at Machu Picchu in Peru, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. They were photographed by other tourists, and these and other 'streaking' photographs and videos have circulated online. Peruvian Ministry of Culture authorities are increasing surveillance measures, requiring guides and specific routes, and cracking down on a behavior that tarnishes the ancient citadel.

Guidance

In tourist destinations, including museums or galleries, and near diplomatic buildings signs will often be posted if photography is not allowed. These signs generally have a traditional camera, or increasingly an image of a cell phone, with a red circle and single diagonal line (see right image). However, in other cases, there is no signage or it is unclear. A similar sign may restrict flash photography (see left image) or videography. When traveling overseas, it is always a good idea to ask an individual directly if he or she is agreeable to being photographed or to ask the authorities if photography is permitted in the area. Perusing OSAC Crime and Safety Reports is a best practice, as they often include information on photography.

For Further Information

For additional information on global diseases and pandemic outbreaks, please contact OSAC’s Health and Disease Analyst. For country-specific concerns, please contact the appropriate regional analyst.

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May 5, 2015

Summary

As of May 5, experts in Nigeria have settled on alcohol poisoning as the cause of 23 reported deaths and 10 additional patients undergoing treatment in Ondo state since April 15. Victims, mostly male teenagers, reported neurologic side effects, including: headache, weight loss, dizziness/fainting, and blurry vision/blindness. Death occurred within 24 hours of symptoms when left untreated. After a hemorrhagic fever, like Ebola, was ruled out, authorities feared the alcohol had been contaminated with a pesticide used in crop management. A health ministry spokesman lent credibility to alcohol tainted with methanol, which is toxic and frequently used to make other chemicals. In the meantime, on April 27, the local Irele government in Ondo state banned the production and consumption of local gin, called ogogoro, as a link is feared.

The deadly situation in Nigeria underscores the need for awareness that consuming alcohol abroad comes with various risks that are not necessarily prevalent in the U.S.

Don't for Alcohol

Don't Drink Homemade or Counterfeit Booze

Across the world, people brew their own alcohol to varying levels of toxicity. In 2014, some 24 people died and dozens more were sickened in Kenya after drinking “kathuvuria,” a bootleg alcohol. Some 31 people died and 160 were hospitalized in Uttar Pradesh, India, after consuming homemade brew tainted likely with methyl alcohol. Bootlegged booze is common in India where vendors cannot afford to buy a liquor license and may add chemicals or methyl alcohol (methanol) to make a cheaper alcohol, and police often solicit bribes to ignore complaints or violations. Local residents burned down the vendor’s stall in reprisal. According to open source reports, “In 2011 almost 170 died in West Bengal, 107 died in Gujarat in July 2009 and 30 died in September 2009 in Uttar Pradesh” due to alcohol poisoning alone.

Counterfeit alcohol, which is sold at a considerably lower cost than legitimate brand name beverages, is equally dangerous since it, like bootlegged booze, is unregulated and may be watered down with toxic items like fuel, chemicals, and antifreeze. In April, four people in Semarang, Indonesia, died from drinking fake imported Red Label and Black Label brands. Similarly, in April 2012, several dozen people in the Czech Republic and Poland died after drinking poisonous counterfeit spirits. In Mozambique, in January 2015, some 72 people died when a homebrewed traditional beer, called Pombe, served at a child’s funeral was maliciously contaminated, allegedly with crocodile bile. A toxicology analysis was being conducted, as experts are unsure if the bile is toxic or if the Pombe was contaminated with another agent, such as pesticides.

Don't Overdo It

Wine, beer, and liquor may have a higher alcohol content than is customary in the U.S. This could lead to overconfidence in judging the number and volume of drinks.

Excessive alcohol consumption can lead to accidental falls or leave a person more susceptible to criminal advances. In early April, an American college student was found dead under a bridge in Rome's
Trastevere district after a night of ‘pub crawling.’ The circumstances of his death remain under investigation.

Americans, especially college students studying in Europe, notoriously over-imbibe at the Munich, Germany, Oktoberfest annual celebrations. Similarly, European and some African football (soccer) matches are customary locales for excessive alcohol consumption and often sites for violence and hooliganism. American students are similarly notorious for their excesses during Spring Break jaunts in Mexico and the Caribbean. Throughout Latin America, it is not uncommon for police to solicit bribes from drunk and/or underage students to avoid getting arrested.

**Don’t Compete with Locals and their Brew**

Cultural gastronomic traditions may involve multiple shots of high percent alcohol that a local may have become accustomed to, but a visitor may not. Hungarians have palinka shots, a digestiv fruit brandy that is 86 percent alcohol. Even Australian PM Tony Abbott was celebrated “skolling” (chugging) a schooner (2/3 of a pint) of beer before flipping the empty glass on top of his head at a pub. Finally, in South Korea, it is customary for business partners to drink various types of alcohol in multiple venues at least monthly (often Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays) as a way to get to know the true personalities in a tradition known as hoesik. In these, and other, drinking customs, expatriates may want to keep pace with their hosts, who have likely practiced their national traditions for years. This level of inebriation can lead to cultural misunderstandings, ruined business relations or, worse, an increase in exposure to criminality.

**Don’t Fall for the Friendly Stranger Trick**

In many cases around the world, travelers (often, but not exclusively, men) succumb to an alcohol-related scam in which a friendly stranger, who is in cahoots with the bar staff, asks the victim to buy rounds of drinks. By the end of the session, the bar tab is excessive, and the victim is physically prevented, and sometimes assaulted, from leaving until the bill, typically in the hundreds of U.S. dollars, is settled. These cases are particularly prevalent in Eastern and Central Europe and often involve elements of organized crime.

**Don’t Let your Drink out of your Sight**

Just as the previous scam, around the world, drinks/food can be spiked with a knock-out agent, often called a date rape drug, like scopolamine. The date rape drug is commonly used to assist in sexual assaults. It works fast and causes you to become weak and confused. The most popular date rape drugs are Rohypnol (roofies), gamma hydroxybutyric acid – GHB (liquid ecstasy), and ketamine (special K). All of these chemicals can come in a pill, powder, or liquid form. In December 2014, a South African man and Somali woman were arrested in Johannesburg with 12,600 Roofie pills concealed in a truck. Similarly, in July and August 2014, five employees of a U.S. firm were victimized by drink spiking in a St. Petersburg, Russia, clubs and were subsequently robbed.

**Don’t EVER Drink and Drive**

In most countries, citizens and police have little to no tolerance for drunk drivers, and the consequences for being found drinking and driving are quite severe in most cases. For example, if caught drunk driving in China, the penalty is life in prison if you hurt someone, and in most European countries the punishment usually consists of a steep fine and possible jail time. It is worth knowing what the legal blood alcohol level (BAC) is, and the estimated number of drinks allowed, before you get behind the wheel.

**Countries of Note**

Alcohol is strictly prohibited in most Muslim-majority countries and in some parts of India. U.S. citizens have been detained for possessing alcohol in their luggage upon arrival in some Muslim countries.
For example, Indonesia, in mid-April, passed a ban on small retailers, including minimarts, convenience store, and small shops (it does not impact hotels, supermarkets, or food outlets), from selling “Class A” liquor (less than five percent alcohol), which includes beer and pre-mixed drinks throughout the nation, except on Bali or Lombok, where street vendors can still sell beer at the beaches. Two Islamic political parties called for a full ban on drinks with more than one percent alcohol nationwide — and those found guilty would face up to two years in prison and harsh fines -- in what is widely seen as pandering to conservative voters. Experts fear that even this ban will drive people to bootleg distributors and unregulated brews and will adversely impact tourism. However, as it stands, the current government does not support a complete booze ban, and the conservative bill is unlikely to pass Parliament.

Drinking in Oman will continue to be confusing, as the Shura Council passed an alcohol ban in December but continue to debate it, as a ban would adversely impact their burgeoning international tourism market.

In much of the Middle East, alcohol is banned, and for those places where it is legal, it is only for men. Not so in Jordan, where even single women can drink openly in bars and nightclubs.

Impact to Private Sector

Overindulging alcohol can lead to blackouts, injury, assault, abuse, reckless behavior, impaired judgment and decision-making, long-term health consequences, and death. Medical care may not be up to Western standards, increasing the risk should medical attention be required. Cultural, linguistic, and ethno-national nuances may be heightened with increased alcohol consumption.

Most countries do not have a legal drinking age, although frequently one must be 18 to purchase liquor, and it is not uncommon for young adults to have beer or wine with a meal. Based on a small sampling of U.S. college students, those already over 21 actually consumed alcohol more frequently but in less volume. Conversely, students under 21 took advantage of the novelty of unfettered access to alcohol. In some places, booze is actually cheaper than water; in others, it is prohibitively expensive due to import taxes or transit costs. And, increasingly a service size is standard while the alcohol is priced based on the percentage of alcohol. All of this may promote a culture, particularly for younger U.S. citizens, of over-indulging.

Guidance

It is important to research the customs, traditions, and laws of your destination prior to travel. Consume alcohol in moderation. Purchase liquor from legitimate sources, and inspect packaging for irregularities, broken seals, or errors on the labels. Experience local customs, traditions, and gastronomy, but stay within your faculties. Employ the ‘buddy system’ when possible to ensure safe return to your residence. Further, review OSAC Crime and Safety Reports for specific destinations, as they may highlight destination-specific alcohol-related guidance. Peruse the Consular Affairs brochure “Alcohol and Drugs Overseas,” which is tailored to the study abroad demographic but is applicable to most travelers.

If traveling overseas for an academic program, refer to the school’s guidance and policies on alcohol consumption. Some universities may offer pre-planning alcohol-use questionnaires to help identify possible risks and triggers for excessive use, and many require signing an alcohol/drug policy. Many academic institutions have resources for awareness training and student safety that apply to both the domestic and international domain, as is the case with this fee-based Alcohol Awareness for Study Abroad Guide and Video.

Some destinations issue Security Messages in anticipation of an influx of U.S. students for particular events or periods, such as U.S. Embassy Nassau, which released a message regarding safety in the Bahamas for Spring Break. Consular Affairs has a dedicated Spring Break website.

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For Further Information

For additional information on public health concerns and pandemic outbreaks, please contact OSAC’s Health and Disease Analyst. For country-specific concerns, please contact the appropriate regional analyst.
The following is based on open-source reporting.

Summary

In mid-July, an experienced American mountaineer, athlete, and physician, Andy Zimet, was found dead alone on Lenin Peak (23,406 feet above sea level) in the Pamir Mountains of Kyrgyzstan. With no discernable trauma or evidence of foul play, authorities believe he died of altitude sickness.

“High altitude” generally describes locations 8,000 feet above sea level and higher; however, altitude sickness can impact anyone traveling from one altitude to a notably higher one. Awareness is necessary because at this elevation oxygen levels are lower and can cause difficulties for travelers. As you increase in altitude, there is less oxygen and water in the air. Many higher-altitude tourist destinations, particularly those for trekking and adventure sports, are remote and may lack access to medical care.

What is Altitude Sickness?

According to the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), altitude sickness (also called Acute Mountain Sickness or AMS) is often compared to an alcohol hangover with accompanying headache, tiredness, lack of appetite, nausea, and vomiting. Usually, symptoms tend to appear 2-3 days after arrival at high altitude destinations. Mild cases can often be treated with over-the-counter painkillers or anti-inflammatories. However, severe, albeit rare, reactions include the swelling of the brain (high-altitude cerebral edema) and lungs (high-altitude pulmonary edema), for which a person should descend to a lower altitude immediately. Descent is the primary treatment for most altitude sickness.

Where is it?

Although travel to destinations above 8,000 feet (approx. 2,400 meters) above sea level generally triggers concern about altitude sickness, symptoms can manifest in travelers going from any elevation to a relatively higher one, particularly if travel occurs quickly. Some airports with steep ascent requirements include: Gustaf III Airport (SBH) on St. Bart's; Courchevel Airport (CVF), Courchevel, France; Tenzing-Hillary Airport (LUA), Lukla, Nepal; and Baghdad International Airport (BGW) in Iraq. Further, in the one-hour flight from Jorge Chavez International Airport (LIM), Lima, Peru, to Alejandro Velasco Astete International Airport (CUZ) in Cusco, Peru, passengers ascend 11,000 feet.

Altitudes can be found and compared here. Some of the major cities (i.e. more than 250,000 occupants) in high altitude locations include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Elevation (ft)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>El Alto, Bolivia</td>
<td>13,615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juliaca, Peru</td>
<td>12,549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oruro, Bolivia</td>
<td>12,159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lhasa, China</td>
<td>12,002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Paz, Bolivia</td>
<td>11,942</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cusco, Peru</td>
<td>11,151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huancayo, Peru</td>
<td>10,013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quito, Ecuador</td>
<td>9,350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golmud, China</td>
<td>9,216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sucre, Bolivia</td>
<td>9,153</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Impact to Private Sector Operations

Altitude sickness can impact travelers of any type (business, tourism, education, volunteer, etc), although staff of aviation industries and mountain adventurers and their support staff are generally in more high elevation environments. Whatever the reason for being in a high-altitude destination, consider allowing for a day or two for travelers to acclimate, especially before any strenuous activities. Consuming 2-3 liters of water per day will help the body adjust to higher elevations. Descent options should be planned for in case someone suffers more severe symptoms and needs to relocate to a lower elevation. All travelers should be advised of symptoms, as someone suffering from them may not recognize altitude sickness themselves or may dismiss their own symptoms.

Understand symptoms associated with altitude sickness

Consider allowing a day or two to acclimate

Drink 2-3 liters of water per day

Have a plan for relocation in case it becomes necessary

Ascend gradually

Be prepared with altitude sickness medication

Avoid excessive tobacco, caffeine, salt, & alcohol

At altitudes higher than 8,000 ft, limit ascent to 1,000 ft/day

Guidance

The CDC offers guidance for traveling in high-altitude locations. The easiest way to avoid altitude sickness is to ascend, by foot, car, or aviation, gradually and be prepared with altitude-sickness medication, especially if a gradual ascent is not possible. Prescription medications may be recommended for rapid travel (e.g. via helicopter), especially to very high altitudes. However, anyone suffering the effects of altitude sickness should not continue the ascent until he/she has acclimated; should symptoms worsen, descend immediately. American Family Physician also recommends that after reaching 8,000 feet, travelers do not ascend more than 1,000 feet per day thereafter. Further, people with pre-existing or acute medical conditions, including heart or lung disease, diabetes, and pregnancy, should consult a physician before traveling to high-altitude destinations. Mayo Clinic also advises a consultation with a medical provider for anyone suffering from sinus infections, bronchitis, sleep disorders, and musculoskeletal conditions. Mayo advises travelers to stay hydrated and to avoid excessive tobacco, caffeine, salt, and alcohol.

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Some natural supplements may help alleviate symptoms in some travelers; however, in some cases, these are controlled substances in the U.S. (as well as in other countries) and are not regulated. Consumption of these supplements is generally not advised; travelers who use them do so at their own risk.

For Further Information

For additional information on occupational health, please contact OSAC’s Health and Disease Analyst. For information on the geopolitical security climate in impacted regions, please contact OSAC’s Research & Analysis Unit.
An Alabama nurse who was on a humanitarian mission in Macedonia is now awaiting a judge's ruling after she was arrested and tried for allegedly stealing rare coins.

Candi Dunlap, of Meridian, Ala., was arrested on Sept. 28 at Macedonia's airport after the coins were found in her carry-on luggage, the Clarion Ledger reported.

The judge had been expected to rule Friday but delayed her decision until next Wednesday.

Others on the mission trip with Dunlap insisted she was given the coins as a thank you from a Macedonian and that she had no idea they were not to be taken from the country.

U.S. lawmakers representing Meridian have been hopeful she will be released.

"I am hopeful that there will be a resolution to this soon that will allow Candi to return home," Rep. Gregg Harper said Thursday. "We know that this has been an extreme hardship on Candi and her family."

In Washington, the State Department said U.S. Embassy officials in Macedonia have been visiting with Dunlap regularly to ensure she is well treated.
The following report is based on open source reporting.

August 7, 2014

Introduction

Travelers are regularly cautioned about protest activity when visiting a foreign country. The U.S. Department of State, for example, consistently encourages citizens to “avoid all demonstrations, since even peaceful gatherings can quickly turn violent” – a phrase common to many Consular messages. However, a deeper understanding of what motivates protest activity, and who or what the intended targets are, can be useful tools for educating travelers.

The Nature of a Protest

According to a 2013 report by Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, a German non-profit organization that promotes democracy and political education, the global number of protests has increased every year from 2006 (59) through the first half of 2013 (112). [Note: these were protests covered in online news media. The countries analyzed represent 92 percent of the world’s population]

While protests take place throughout the world, where they occur is not always a good indicator of how they will proceed. A country with a peaceful tradition of rallying can experience violence, while another with a more acrimonious style can experience no incidents at all. For example, in Cambodia, generally known for a peaceful tradition, demonstrators and police have recently come to blows over anti-government sentiment as well as a demand for a higher minimum wage among garment workers. In South Africa, known as the “protest capital of the world” and where violence is not a rarity, most demonstrations end peacefully and without incident.

Demonstrations can also take place in countries not known for having any protest tradition at all, such as in Iran during the 2009 Green Movement, or in Egypt, Syria, Tunisia, and Libya during the 2011 Arab Spring uprisings.

By their nature, protests also attract attention. They can be exciting events, and for a foreigner, provide an up-close look at a country’s political landscape. But the advice to avoid them is not dispensed arbitrarily. An overzealous demonstrator can incite a crowd; individuals with ulterior motives can infiltrate an otherwise peaceful rally; a heavy-handed police response can provoke an aggressive reaction from gatherers. When this happens, onlookers can pay the price. This past May, a bystander was killed by a stray bullet during an anti-government protest in Istanbul, Turkey. Authorities in southern China acknowledged that police “may have accidentally injured…bystanders” during an April protest against a chemical plant in Guangdong province. During Egyptian riots in June 2013, an American college student was stabbed to death as he took photographs of the unfolding violence. What starts as simple curiosity can easily turn into a fight to stay out of harm’s way.

Protests by Region – 2006-2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High-income (Region)</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America/Caribbean</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Asia/Pacific</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East/North Africa</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Europe/Central Asia</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Asia</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>World Total</td>
<td>843</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data provided by Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung

* As of July 2013

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Indicators Can Help

There are indicators, however, that can be helpful to any traveler when assessing the probability for protests, and how they will play out. Anti-government protests, for instance, may not be as likely to target foreigners as they would police officers or nearby property (although the death of the American student referenced above shows this is not always true). Destroying property can be a way of not only displaying intense dissatisfaction with conditions in the country, but also attempting to undermine the government. This was the case in Thailand in 2010, when anti-government protesters targeted not only government buildings, but also commercial facilities. The same was true for 2010 anti-government/austerity protests in Greece. In both cases, foreigners were not directly targeted, and in Thailand, they were actually greeted warmly if they happened to pass by the event.

A protest against another country, on the other hand, might not result in widespread violence, but particular people and properties could be vulnerable. This past May, anti-Chinese protests in Vietnam targeted what were perceived to be Chinese-affiliated companies and factories following a maritime dispute between the two countries. In July, anti-Israeli protests in Germany and France led to the attack of synagogues and Jewish businesses in those countries.

There are also a number of issues that seem to bring protesters to the street regardless of location. For example, citizens accustomed to government subsidies (fuel, transportation, etc.) can quickly mobilize if their entitlements are threatened in any way; violent clashes in the streets of Jakarta in 2013 following a reduction of fuel subsidies are a prime example. The suspicion of electoral fraud is another key catalyst, as was evident during protests in Russia following disputed 2011 legislative elections. Another major indicator pertains to infringements--real or perceived--on basic democratic rights. Residents of Hong Kong, for example, regularly take to the streets to demand greater democratic freedom.

The Likeliest Scenario

More than likely, the biggest impact to travelers during a demonstration will be transportation difficulties, including blocked roads, crowded public transportation, and congested traffic. A lot of protests advertise in advance where and when they will take place, which makes a traveler’s job of planning to get around them easier. Even for the ones that do not, it should become pretty clear what area(s) to avoid as numbers amass. Social media can be a great tool for collecting information; organizers and participants are likely to tweet about the event or post pictures to Facebook, Instagram, or a popular local social network (such as VKontakte in Russia). During past protests, OSAC constituents have allowed employees to work remotely or even take the day off when demonstration activity encroaches on work sites or precludes safe commuting. Over periods of sustained protest activity, employers have deferred travel, and in some cases, removed personnel from the city or country entirely. Each organization is responsible for its own plan, but understanding the fundamentals is a good start to making one.

Additional Information

For recent OSAC analysis on other regional protests, please see the below reports:

Middle East Conflict Fuels Europe Protests
Haiti Opposition Protests
Northern Ireland Orangemen Parade Volatility
Royal Thai Army Invokes Martial Law
May Day

For Further Information

Please direct any questions regarding this report to OSAC’s Cross Regional Analyst.
Scams

1. Drink up!
This is one of the oldest scams in Europe, and is particularly popular in places such as Budapest, Hungary. It involves local women or “helpful” taxi drivers luring unsuspecting (usually male) tourists to a particular establishment. The women are usually overly friendly and order a LOT of drinks. When the bill comes it’s exorbitant, the women refuse to pay and the staff and bouncers insist the male tourist coughs up the cash.
DFAT advises travellers to check prices before ordering in Hungary: “Certain bars, clubs and restaurants (mainly in the business district of central Pest) charge exorbitant prices. Disputes about overcharging have been known to lead to violence. Security guards may compel you to pay. Be wary of seemingly helpful taxi drivers, who may receive commissions for taking tourists to such establishments, and of other unsolicited invitations to socialize.”

2. Faking it in the city of romance
Unlicensed taxis are a big problem in various locations around the world, and Paris is definitely one of them. Just two weeks ago, a tourist was caught in a terrifying fake taxi ordeal in Paris. The 29-year-old ended up being caught up in a high-speed police chase, and she was forced to pay the $600 bill before being dumped by the side of the road.
Another common taxi scam sees drivers pretend they are lost and take tourists further than they want to go in order to jack up the price. It’s important to always get in a licensed cab and ask to use the meter.

3. Hot dog bother
At locations around the world — commonly airports — scammers eat hot dogs and “accidentally” squirt mustard on nearby travellers — or alternatively they’ll drop bird poo on them. While they clumsily “help” clean up the mess, valuables are stolen. So make sure to place your bags between your legs and pay attention.

4. Hotel hassles
It’s a red flag if hotel staff say they are having trouble with your card details, but tell you to go to your room and they’ll call if there are any issues. Later you may receive a call asking you to repeat the card details, and somehow a large (and unexpected) sum of money will be transferred out of your account.
Make sure you always go to the front desk for transactions as you can’t be sure who is pretending to be on the end of the phone.

5. Express kidnapping scams
Express kidnappings occur when tourists are abducted for short periods by criminals who hope to receive a pay-off from the victim’s family, business or ATM cards. DFAT warns tourists to be on alert in South American countries such as Brazil, Colombia and Bolivia, with the situation often turning violent or even deadly. However, there are also an increasing number of fake abductions, called “virtual kidnapping”. Perpetrators will wait for their victim to be in an uncontactable area (such as a place without phone coverage) and will contact their family, saying their loved one has been kidnapped and demand a ransom.

6. Gold ring scam
Some say if you haven’t had this scam tried on you, you haven’t really been to Paris. Typically a scammer will approach a tourist with a gold ring (or other valuable-looking object) and ask if it’s theirs. When the unsuspecting tourists picks it up for a closer look, someone else steps forward to demand money for the “newly-found gift”. Or the scammer will leave the ring in plain sight and wait for someone to pick it up before they pounce.

7. China’s cringe-worthy teahouse scam
Australians have been the target of a number of scams in China, including being drugged and robbed after accepting offers of food, drink or transportation from strangers; and the increasingly common “teahouse scam”.
According to DFAT, this is how it goes down: “An increasing number of tourists are being approached and invited for a drink at a teahouse nearby for an number of reasons including ‘to practice English’. Afterwards the tourist is presented with a vastly inflated bill and is not permitted to leave until they pay the bill by credit card. Physical violence, including serious assault, and credit card skimming or duplication has occurred.”

8. All tied up in Europe
There are many variations of this scam. Typically, someone will approach a tourist and place something on them. This could be as innocuous as tying a piece of string around their wrist, putting a flower in their pocket or placing a trinket in their hand. However, the person will then demand payment for the object, in some cases very aggressively. They may even scream that the item is being stolen, making the traveller very uncomfortable.

9. Gypsy baby toss
Here a gypsy woman will approach travellers — usually single females — and toss what appears to be a young child (really a doll) into their arms. Fellow scammers then grab valuables from the
traveller amid the confusion. Move away quickly if approached by gypsy beggars. They may also attack with newspapers.

10. Spain’s sprig scam
In Spain there’s a popular scam where an older woman will offer a tourist a sprig of rosemary, as a sign of friendship. Then she’ll grab their hand, read their fortune and demand payment.

11. Good Samaritan scam
Scammers around the world often target tourists who look lost or having trouble communicating. They might approach with seemingly innocent intentions of helping out, but will then attempt to rob the unsuspecting tourists. The best thing to do is to look assertive and walk with a purpose, and refuse unwanted help. If you’re lost, go into a nearby restaurant or hotel for help.

12. Dual menus
Often a bar or restaurant will lure tourists in by providing a menu with cheap prices, then switching it with a pricier “tourist menu” once inside. It could see the bill double in the end. This scam is common in China and parts of southern Europe. Try to hold onto the menu first that is shown to you.

13. Bogus monks
Southeast Asia has its fair share of scams, but fake monks appear to pop up in almost all countries in the region. Dressed just like the real deal, these fake monks hit up tourist hot spots looking to collect “alms”, but they’re really after “financial donations”.

14. Driving you crazy
Travellers to small towns in East Africa may be approached by a bystander claiming their wheel bearing is spilling oil (or has some other problem). Lonely Planet co-founder Tony Wheeler explains: “In fact, the bystander has just sloshed a cup of oil onto your wheel, and tells you there’s a garage around the corner that’ll fix your problem.” The profit from the scam is shared between the bystander and the garage owner.

15. Fake police
Phony police officers are common in destinations such as Thailand and often falsely accuse travellers of committing crimes. For example, fake police may charge an on-the-spot fine of 5000 baht ($155) for putting out a cigarette in public. Make sure to check the officer’s ID and contact the real police if in doubt.
16. Paint the town red
In Argentina there’s a scam where someone will put paint (commonly a bright colour such as red) on a traveller’s bag, be very apologetic and try and wipe it off, then they grab it. If someone does this, hold onto your bag tightly and say you do not need help.

17. The ‘double-steal’
In Barcelona, a man on a bicycle may grab a seemingly random person’s bag and ride off with it. They may even cut it off. As the sympathetic bystander drops their bags to give chase, an accomplice will attempt to make off with the abandoned valuables.

18. Tuk-tuk trickery
This is most prevalent in Thailand, but common throughout Southeast Asia in general. A tourist may ask the driver to take them to a particular hotel, temple, or shop and he’ll say it’s closed/burned down/no good, but he just happens to know a better one close by! The driver gets a commission for delivering the tourist to the destination, and it’s usually a poor imitation of the desired destination.
There’s even an entire fake tourist centre not far from Bangkok airport, according to travel safety specialist at Travel Insurance Direct Phil Sylvester: “Here the travel agents will say they’ve never heard of your booked hotel, but thankfully they can arrange a room at another establishment. Phew, how lucky — NOT!”

19. Scoot away
Also in Thailand, tourists should be careful of where they leave a rented scooter. If it’s left outside a tourist attraction it may “disappear” and the hire company may try to make the visitor pay for the whole thing (when really it’s tucked away in the back of the shop again). Try to drive a good distance before you decide to stop and be vigilant.

20. Gemstones
A tuktuk driver may offer travellers a “special deal” on a ride to a local temple. But at these locations so-called strangers will approach them and casually mention the merits of gem trading. If a traveller show interest in the gems, they will be taken to a store to spend thousands on “jewels” that are actually just polished glass.
21. Turkey drop
“Turkey drop” scam: a person drops money in front of a victim while an accomplice waits for the money to be picked up and suggests splitting it. The first person returns and accuses both of stealing the money. This usually results in the victim’s money being stolen.

22. Fake artist
This one you see most often in France and Spain. Watch for the sidewalk artists with the huge chalked picture of the Mona Lisa at their knees. Notice their studied faces, how they hold the colored chalk just so. With great deliberation, they add a few strokes here, maybe just a touch there. Then they sit back and look at the work with what is clearly the artistic spirit of the true and pained artist. There is a hat nearby where admirers can contribute to the artist’s income. For just US$50 or so, you can even purchase a copy of this starving artist’s work.

The problem is that the picture is a print. If you get up early enough, you’ll see the (con) artist arrive. He’ll bring several Mona Lisa prints rolled up under his arm. He’ll lay one out in a prominent place on the sidewalk and then sit by it hour-after-hour with that incredibly good suffering-artist look, always about to add a little color here or there, pausing, considering, choosing another color. Perhaps this man does deserve your money for perpetrating such a great con, but certainly not for being an artist.

23. The False Crowd
In Moscow, groups of women and children are known to rush onto a metro car, tram, or bus in a distracting whirl of colorful scarves and skirts. They press up against you giving the false impression that the crowd is bigger than it really is. They deftly remove valuables from your pockets and exit before the doors close. In some places the organized pickpocket groups actually put up ‘Beware of Pickpockets’ signs. The signs cause patrons to subconsciously reach for their wallets, thus showing prospective crooks, which pockets to target.

Another version of this scam includes huskers pressing up against you to show you their wares. They usually have items displayed on a board or some other bulky item they can press against your stomach while their other hand goes to work in your front pockets under the board and out of your sight.

Tip: Wrapping rubber bands around your wallet increases the friction needed to remove it from your pocket, making it more difficult for a pickpocket to extract it.

24. The Istanbul Shoe Shine Scam
The scam is not elaborate nor complicated. It is simple and like many scams, it preys on the goodwill of people.

- The shoe shiner walks past tourists and drops one of his brushes
- A tourist picks it up and runs after the shoe shiner
- The shoe shiner is very grateful and offers to shine the shoes to show his appreciation
While he works, he tells about his poor family, sick wife and many poverty problems
End of the process and the price requested is a hefty amount. It is often ten times more than he would charge a Turk. One couple was charged 25 Turkish lira.
Tourist pays up because of guilt for the poor man who struggles to feed his family. Most of the shoe shiners are certainly not out to scam you. However if you are in Istanbul and a shoe shiner drops his brush while walking past you, ignore him.

So how can you avoid being taken advantage of while abroad?
Michael Callaghan, Executive General Manager at SureSave said Australian travellers should always be on the lookout for tricks.
“It’s very difficult to determine exactly how many people are victims of scams as many go unreported, but scammers are relatively common across regions such as Europe,” he said.
“There are scams that show up time and time again, including pickpocketing, card skimming, and various confidence tricks. It pays to be informed, aware and to be watchful at all times.”
Ultimately, if you find yourself in a dangerous situation it’s best to co-operate.
DFAT advises to never agree to let companies use your passport as a deposit or guarantee before hiring jet skis or motorbikes.

**Precautions you should take**

- Protect your luggage in crowded transportation areas. Keep it between your legs.
- Use a money belt, under clothes flat pouch, or a fake wallet stacked with advertising credit cards
- Don’t pay with too large a bill. If you do clearly state the value of the bill as you hand it over so there is no misunderstanding.
- Watch out for a money switch, they may give you a coin that looks like an EU coin but isn’t.
- Treat any commotion (a scuffle breaking out, a beggar in your face) as a potential scam.
- Say "No" to locals who may want to help you at an ATM or station locker.
- Official-looking railroad attendants may be looking for more than just helping you.
- Be suspicious when invited for a drink by someone you just met. If you want to go out together, suggest a place of your choosing.
- Fake police ask to check your wallet for counterfeit bills or "drug money." Never give your wallet to anyone.
- Steer clear of groups of raggedy clothed young people.
- Room "inspectors" are con men.
• Good-looking woman arguing with a street vendor strips to prove innocence and you'll find your wallet gone.
• Shop's cashier speaking phone takes a picture of your credit card.
• To not be overcharged by a taxi driver get a quote before you start and know the route that should be taken.
• Only buy gems, stones or precious metals at approved government outlets.
• It may be illegal to buy antiques older than a certain number of years, especially if sold by street vendors, e.g. military medals.
• If you are approached by someone in uniform with a request, make sure you move into a well-lit or crowded place, ask to see identification and write down the number.
• Taxi scam will claim they have to make a detour; they must take the auto route/motorway, starting the meter at a higher rate or the meter is broken (write down the agreed amount before you start).
• Cashiers who "slow count" with odd pauses in hopes the rushed tourist will gather up the money early.
July 22, 2014

Introduction

After the 1998 double bombing of U.S. embassies in Tanzania and Kenya, U.S. diplomatic missions across the globe began hardening their facilities as a way to deter and protect against future attacks. Terrorists took note and began shifting their focus to so-called softer targets where they could more easily inflict damage. Hotels unfortunately became an attractive target. Because of this, many Western hotels in high risk areas have also been “hardened.”

Yet to understand hotel security, there are a number of different issues worthy of consideration, and guarding against terrorism is only one of them. This report will address some of the most common issues of concern with regard to hotel security, and will also provide a list of best practices for travelers to consider.

Western vs. Non-Western Hotel Chains

There is a debate that asks whether or not travelers are at risk by staying at Western hotel chains in volatile parts of the world. U.S.-affiliated hotel chains can sometimes be seen as symbols of the country and what it represents, which has led to threats and deadly attacks in the past. It is important to note, however, that non-Western hotels have also been victims of attacks. In fact, over the last ten years, non-Western hotels made up the majority of attacks where 10 or more people were killed. For example, in June 2009, militants attacked the five-star Pearl Continental in Peshawar, Pakistan, killing 17 people. The previous year, militants from the Pakistani terror group Lashkar-e-Taiba attacked the Taj Mahal and Trident-Oberoi hotels in Mumbai as part of a larger terror attack, leaving a total of 62 people dead. In both Mumbai and Peshawar, the hotels were targeted due, in part, to their popularity among Western travelers, which leads to an important point; extremists do their homework. If Westerners are congregating at a particular location, hotel or otherwise, that location can be singled out, whether it’s Western-owned or not.

To reduce the risk to travelers in high-risk locations, many Western-brand hotel chains have implemented rigorous physical and procedural security measures which are not present at local hotels. So while one side of the debate might advocate that the Western “brand” might potentially make a particular hotel an attractive target, the other side of the debate might advocate that the physical and procedural security measures effectively mitigate this risk. Additionally, there are other safety considerations beyond just security --- such as fire safety, food safety, and hygiene which should also be considered in deciding the most appropriate hotels to use.

Limited Service Versus Full Service

When choosing a hotel overseas, there can be a temptation to make the choice based primarily on the hotel’s room rate. In the U.S., hotel patrons expect and usually receive a basic level of security, even at Limited-Service hotels (e.g. minimal staff, facilities, and services). Therefore, your security concerns may be less of a factor in considering where you stay. Overseas however, government fire and life-safety standards may be less rigorous or may be loosely enforced. In such environments, most Western hotel chains use comprehensive brand standards and other guidelines to ensure the integrity of the hotel's security, life-safety, and hygiene operations, as well as the comfort, safety and well-being of guests. This
often translates to qualified security staff, tested contingency and evacuation plans, fire safety arrangements, and buildings that are built to good specification.

**Host Government Involvement**

In some countries, guests will be monitored by the host government, be it person-to-person, electronically, or by some other means. This can also be done in their hotel. Where some travelers are mistaken is thinking that if a hotel is a Western-brand, it will not allow any such government activities. Most often, the hotel doesn’t have a choice. To operate in that country, or at least operate without running into government trouble, the hotel must comply with local law. In China, for example, it is legal for the government to conduct surveillance on citizens and foreigners alike; it is also illegal for you to try and stop it. Therefore, all hotel rooms, regardless of brand, are considered to be subject to on-site or remote technical monitoring at all times. Hotel rooms may also be accessed at any time without the occupants’ consent or knowledge. Visitors should have no expectation of privacy, and should conduct themselves accordingly. If travelers have questions about particular countries, OSAC’s Crime and Safety Reports are a great resource.

**Best Practices**

There are a number of best practices that travelers should consider when selecting an appropriately safe and secure hotel.

**In Selecting a Hotel…**

- Research the area you are travelling to understand its threat environment
- If you have one, seek advice from your company security team
- Look for hotels with a large perimeter; the more space between the hotel and the road, the better
- Verify that there are vehicle barriers in place
- Look to see that there are additional checkpoints beyond just vehicle barriers
- Hotels with shatter-proof glass are a plus as well
- Inform your company security team of your travel plans - where you are going, staying, and activities in country
- Finally, you should consider contacting OSAC’s Regional Analyst, who may be able to provide additional information on where other constituents report staying

**During Your Stay…**

- Walk the hotel to orientate yourself so you know what your options might be if a security incident occurs; have also a mental plan in place of how to respond to an incident
- Remain alert
- Do not ‘advertise’ your nationality
- Always keep hotel doors locked, and store valuables in secure areas
- Do not open the door for anybody you don’t recognize; if you have a concern or are seeking verification of a staff member, call the front desk
- Do not invite strangers into your room
- If possible, choose hotel rooms on the 2nd through the 6th floors; a room on the 1st floor of a hotel may provide easier access for criminals; rooms on the 7th floor and above may be difficult to escape in the event of a fire
- Take a few moments to locate the nearest exit that may be used in the event of an emergency
- Be careful when talking about which hotel room you are staying; while non-guests are usually denied access to patron floors, they can find ways to get around this
- If you see anything suspicious, report it immediately and directly to a member of staff, preferably to a manager and/or the front desk staff

The contents of this (U) presentation in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the United States Department of State, or the United States Government, except as otherwise noted (e.g., travel advisories, public statements). The presentation was compiled from various open sources and (U) embassy reporting. Please note that all OSAC products are for internal U.S. private sector security purposes only. Publishing or otherwise distributing OSAC-derived information in a manner inconsistent with this policy may result in the discontinuation of OSAC support.
For Further Information

Please direct any questions regarding this report to OSAC’s Cross Regional Analyst.
The following is based on open-source reporting.

April 4, 2015

Summary

In packing for a trip overseas of any duration, some travelers must consider how to handle health conditions that require medication. While most over-the-counter medication can be taken across national boundaries, some cannot. Most prescription drugs, particularly habit-forming and narcotics, require additional consideration.

Commonly prescribed medications in the United States could be unlicensed or controlled substances in other countries. Failing to follow specific guidance may result in confiscation, which could impact medical treatment, or stiff penalties, including imprisonment on charges for drug trafficking, with no available recourse from the U.S. government. Countries have different rules and regulations about the types of medicine allowed to be brought into the country and the maximum amount the traveler can bring. Please be sure to check Travel.state.gov before you start your trip.

Case Studies

On February 20, 2015, a U.S. citizen was arrested and incarcerated in Nagoya, Japan, for shipping a three-month supply of prescription Adderall from South Korea to Japan. Adderall, an amphetamine, is illegal in Japan, as is Ritalin; both are stimulants used widely in the U.S. to counteract ADHD. The citizen also ran afoul for repackaging her prescription from the original container, in an alleged attempt to maintain privacy and avoid stigmatization from her disorder. She was released after 18 days and heavy U.S. legislative- and diplomatic-level lobbying. For information on bringing medication into Japan, please visit the Japanese Consulate in Seattle or the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo. Many countries require a license prior to arrival.

The UAE has strict narcotics laws that have landed many travelers in prison: “Up to three months’ supply of a prescription item can be brought into the country by a visitor and 12 months’ supply by a resident if they can produce a doctor’s letter or a copy of the original prescription. Narcotic items can only be brought into the UAE in exceptional cases with prior permission from the director of medicine and pharmacy control...Visitors should contact the Ministry of Health drug control department to check whether their medication is on the controlled list, and needs prior permission for importation.”

Having as little as three grams of morphine in Singapore is sufficient for a death sentence. Similarly, drug offense convictions result in the death penalty in Turkey, Egypt, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thailand. Malaysia, Singapore, Iran, and Saudi Arabia can impose judicially-sanctioned caning, flogging, lashing, or whipping for drug offenses.

Notably, often Catholic-majority countries have conservative laws regarding oral contraceptives and devices, making them either illegal or very difficult to procure. Some countries will allow a three-month supply of oral contraception; others allow six months. In less-developed countries, access to such medications may be more difficult.

Also, traveling with an epi-Pen, which gives a dose of epinephrine (an adrenaline hormone), to counteract a severe allergic reaction may also be problematic. An OSAC staff member had difficulty in Paris finding a pharmacy that would fill an epi-Pen prescription and had to special order one to arrive at her next

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international destination. Careful consideration should be taken for groups of travelers who maintain a collective first aid kit that includes an epi-Pen not prescribed to one individual, particularly if an administrator has not been trained to use the device. Ideally, only those to whom the device has been prescribed should self-administer in case of an emergency; otherwise local laws may interpret use as unlawful.

On average, though, penalties for a drug offense include lengthy prison terms (including death or life sentences) in local jails, heavy fines, and deportation.

Many international regulations for controlled drugs can be found through the International Narcotics Control Board website. Further, Annex II and Annex III list narcotic and psychotropic drugs that generally would require a traveler to provide a certificate of need. If the country is not listed on this resource, the traveler should contact the country’s embassy in U.S.

Pre-Departure Guidance

Travelers should not assume that medications approved in the U.S. are approved in another country. At least two months before departure, the traveler should consult with the treating physician about specific medications and obtain a list of comparable, generic names, including their dosage and composition, in case there is a need for a refill if the medication is licensed.

Travelers should clarify whether their insurance plan will cover the cost of doctor’s visit(s) and medication prescribed and/or filled overseas. The traveler may need supplemental insurance coverage prior to departure.

Travelers should plan to travel with “requisite medical documentation,” which includes a letter (translated into the host language and certified if appropriate) from the prescribing doctor with his/her contact information/credentials, the diagnosis, the treatment, and the medication regimen, including need for needles/syringes. The name on the prescription, container, and traveler’s passport must match.

If medications contain narcotics, some countries will require an application to the local Narcotics Control Division for permission prior to entry. Some countries consider amphetamines illegal; if the traveler’s local U.S. doctor cannot make a switch before departure, the traveler will need to request permission in advance from the local country food and drug administration.

When planning to bring medications – especially in any sizable volume, if allowed by the country, and when they are psychotropics -- overseas, it is advisable to notify the RSO or medical officer at the closest U.S. embassy or consulate ahead of time so that the appropriate parties are aware should there be an issue upon arrival at Customs.

For travelers with chronic illness or with compromised immune systems, the CDC advises travelers to discuss travel plans with the treating physician and consider if the condition is sufficiently stable, if the traveler is sufficiently fit for travel, and if the destination has adequate medical resources to handle an emergency.

Keep documentation of any valid prescriptions or doctor’s notes, as they are required for all medication upon re-entering the U.S.

Packing and Transport

Medications should be packed in original containers with the traveler’s name on it (different medications cannot be combined in one container to save space), in a clear bag in a carry-on bag since checked baggage is occasionally lost or delayed.
Third parties should not carry prescription medications designated for another person, particularly if the medication contains controlled substances (i.e. a parent resupplying meds during an abroad program). Medications should not be mailed. The U.S. Postal Services restricts mailing medications, and the local customs authorities may stop the package. Both means of acquiring medication refills can be considered drug trafficking.

Travelers should not travel with more than personal-use quantities. Generally, this means no more than a 90-day supply (in some countries 30 days), provided the U.S. doctor can prescribe the whole amount and the insurance carrier will approve the quantity.

In-Country Guidance

When traveling abroad, travelers are subject to the laws of the country of destination. Ignorance -- willful or otherwise -- to local laws about medication legalities is insufficient when it comes to criminal charges, and violating local laws has serious repercussions.

Although travelers should always travel with an original prescription from their U.S. treating physician, many pharmacies in other countries will only fill prescriptions written in that country. Many local pharmacies will not dispense drugs without a prescription from a doctor licensed to practice in the country. If the traveler needs a refill while abroad, a local doctor must be seen to get a similar prescription that a local pharmacy will fill. It will be critical to have a letter from a U.S. doctor during this appointment explaining the diagnosis, treatment, and medication regimen. In some cases, the local physician will need to confirm the traveler’s diagnosis before issuing a prescription. Travelers should be leery of counterfeit medication in some countries.

Some medicines need to be kept at room temperature (below 25ºC) or refrigerated. If traveling to a warm, humid country, the traveler should get advice from a pharmacist or doctor about storing the medicine.

In cases of severe allergy or anaphylaxis, the traveler should wear a medical identification bracelet or necklace and carry a note from their U.S. physician. When possible, notify airline attendants of the condition to help avoid allergy triggers. The Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Alliance can offer additional guidance for international travel.

For Further Information

The Department of State Consular Affairs maintains the “Your Health Abroad” website with various guidance and considerations for medical emergencies.

Travelers may call TSA Cares, a help line to assist travelers with medical conditions, toll free at 1-855-787-2227. TSA Cares help line are Monday through Friday 8 a.m. – 11 p.m. Eastern Time and weekends and holidays 9 a.m. – 8 p.m. Eastern Time. Calls should be placed at least 72 hours before travel.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) also offers guidance for traveling with medication.

For additional information on health and pandemics, please contact OSAC’s Health and Disease Analyst. For country-specific concerns, please reach out to the appropriate regional analyst.
Laptop Loan Program

The Laptop Loan Program or LLP is a program initiated and operated by the Office of Research & Economic Development/Office of Research Security to provide “clean” laptops to MSU personnel traveling overseas on MSU business. The term “clean” means that there is no stored information on the unit other than the operating program and a select number of programs (Microsoft Office 2013, Adobe Acrobat, etc.). Any additional programming required by the user is their responsibility to install. When the units are returned they are completely reprogrammed, wiping out all information.

The units also have a commercially available full disc encryption program installed to protect the units if they are stolen but the program will not stand up against a determined hacker or a state sponsored hacking initiative.

To reserve a laptop please contact either Neil Lewis at nelewis@fso.msstate.edu or Debra Hicks at dlhicks@fso.msstate.edu at least 2 weeks before your planned travel. Units are issued on a first come first served basis and any request with less than the 2 week notification may not be filled.

When request a LLP reservation, please provide you contact information to include a telephone number, dates of travel and places to be visited (some countries do not allow the encryption software), and when you would like to pick-up the unit. All units are to be picked up and returned to the ORS office, room 110, Malcom A. Portera High Performance Computing Center between 7:00 AM – 3:00 PM.

If there are any questions on the above, please do not hesitate to contact ORS.
Helpful Websites

If you can do without the device, Do Not Take It!

Do not leave electronic devices unattended. Do not transport them (or anything valuable) in your checked baggage. Shield passwords from view. Avoid Wi-Fi networks if you can. In some countries they are controlled by security services; in all cases they are insecure.

Sanitize your laptop, telephone, & PDA, prior to travel and ensure no sensitive contact, research, or personal data is on them. Back-up all information you take and leave that at home. If feasible, use a different phone and a new email account while traveling.

Use up-to-date protections for antivirus, spyware, security patches, and firewalls. Don’t use thumb drives given to you – they may be compromised.

If your device is stolen, report it immediately to the local US Embassy or Consulate. Change all your passwords including your voicemail and check devices for malware when you return.

Report any unusual circumstances or noteworthy incidents to your study abroad program manager and to the FBI. Notifying the FBI will help ensure that future travel advisories take into consideration the circumstances and incidents you encountered. It is not uncommon for foreigners to contact you after your return. The FBI may be able to help you determine if these contacts pose any risk to you.

Important Numbers
US Embassy/Consulate Phone & Address:

POC in country:

Reminder

Our country will be judged by the impression you make. As an American abroad, you serve as a spokesperson for the United States.

Additional travel security tips and country threat assessments are available from the FBI upon request.

Your local FBI office #:

www.fbi.gov

SAFETY AND SECURITY for US Students Traveling Abroad

Living and studying in another country will be an enriching and rewarding experience, especially if you are prepared and take certain precautions. This brochure will introduce you to threats you may face and provide tips on avoiding unsafe situations. Following these precautions will reduce your risk of encountering problems.

Did You Know?

Groups of children and teens may swarm you and forcibly steal your personal belongings.

“Act Smart. Be Safe.”

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.
Before You Go

Familiarize yourself with local laws and customs in the areas you plan to travel. You are expected to obey their laws, which may include dress standards, photography restrictions, telecommunication restrictions, curfews, etc.

Do not take unnecessary identification or credit cards in case they are stolen. Take only what is necessary. Obtain traveler’s checks if needed.

Establish points of contact for your family to contact and for your foreign hosts to contact in the event of an emergency. Register your trip with the State Department.

Take any necessary medications with you in their original containers and keep them in your carry-on luggage (not checked baggage) during the flight. Verify you have adequate medical insurance.

Establish points of contact for your family to contact and for your foreign hosts to contact in the event of an emergency. Register your trip with the State Department.

Obtain specific pre-travel country risk assessments for the country/countries you plan to visit from your study abroad program manager, the State Department, and/or the FBI. There may be specific issues you should be aware of and prepare for that will ensure your safety and peace of mind.

Useful websites:
- State Department Students Abroad: www.studentsabroad.state.gov
- State Department travel website: www.state.gov/travel
- Center for Disease Control for Travelers’ Health: www.cdc.gov

During Your Stay

Protect your passport! Theft of American tourist passports is on the rise. It is recommended that you carry your passport in a front pants pocket or in a pouch hidden in your clothes, and that it remain with you at all times. Some hotels require you to leave it at the desk during your stay and they may use it to register you with the local police—a routine policy. Ask for a receipt and be sure to retrieve your passport before continuing your trip. If your passport is lost or stolen, report the situation immediately to the nearest US Embassy or Consulate.

Do not invite strangers into your room.

Be courteous and cooperative when processing through customs. Do not leave your bags unattended. Stay alert.

Avoid long waits in lobbies and terminals, if possible. These areas may harbor pickpockets, thieves, and violent offenders. Laptop theft is especially common in airports.

In an international airport, a thief positioned himself to walk in front of a traveler who was walking with his roll bag. The thief stopped abruptly in front of the traveler causing the traveler to also stop. A second thief was following and quickly removed the traveler’s laptop from his roll bag and disappeared.

Avoid civil disturbances and obey local laws. If you come upon a demonstration or rally, be careful; in the confusion you could be arrested or detained even though you are a bystander. Be mindful that in many countries, it is prohibited to speak derogatorily of the government and its leaders. It may be illegal to take photographs of train stations, government buildings, religious symbols, and military installations.

Avoid actions that are illegal, improper or indiscreet. Avoid offers of sexual companionship; they may lead to a road raid, photography, and blackmail. Do not attempt to keep up with your hosts in social drinking. Do not engage in black market activities. Do not sell your possessions. Do not bring in or purchase illegal drugs or pornography. Do not seek out political or religious dissidents. Do not accept packages or letters for delivery to another person.

Use only authorized taxis. Passengers have been robbed or kidnapped when using “gypsy” taxis.

Avoid traveling alone, especially after dark. Be conscious of your surroundings and avoid areas you believe may put your personal safety at risk. Be wary of street vendors and innocent-looking youngsters. While one person has your attention, another may be picking your pocket.

Do not carry large amounts of cash. Always deal with reputable currency exchange officials or you run the risk of receiving counterfeit currency. Keep a record of your financial transactions.

Do not leave drinks unattended — someone could slip a drug into it that causes amnesia and sleep.

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An American was given a letter by a man he had never seen. He tried to return the letter but the man ran away. That evening, national security officers visited the American, admonished him for taking the letter, and required him to sign a statement concerning the event.

If you are arrested for any reason, ask to notify the nearest US Embassy or Consulate. A consular officer cannot arrange for free legal aid or provide bail money, but they can assist you. Do not admit to wrongdoing or sign anything. Do not agree to help your detainer.

Keep a low profile and shun publicity. Do not discuss personal or family information with local news media, and as a general rule, be careful what information you share with foreigners. They may have been directed to obtain information about you for duplicitous purposes and may use what they learn to target or use against you.

Evade criminals and terrorists by being aware of your surroundings and alert to the possibility of surveillance. Take mental notes of anyone following you and promptly report it to the appropriate security officials and/or the US Embassy or Consulate. In general, criminals will strike when their target seems most vulnerable and lax about his/her security. If anyone grabs you, make a scene—yell, fight and try to get away! If you are kidnapped, remain alert and establish a program of mental and physical activity for yourself; try to remain calm and non-threatening.

“Turkey drop” scam: a person drops money in front of a victim while an accomplice waits for the money to be picked up and suggests splitting it. The first person returns and accuses both of stealing the money. This usually results in the victim’s money being stolen.

Beware of new acquaintances who probe for information about you or who attempt to get you involved in what could become a compromising situation.

Do not gossip about character flaws, financial problems, emotional relationships, or other difficulties of your fellow Americans or yourself. This information is eagerly sought by those who want to exploit you or your fellow travelers.

Beware that your conversations may not be private or secure. Unlike the United States, most other countries do not have legal restrictions against technical surveillance. Most foreign security services have various means of screening incoming visitors to identify persons of potential intelligence interest. They also have well established contacts with hotels and common hosts that can assist in various forms of monitoring you.

Two American students on study abroad talked privately about the lighting in their apartment. The next day, a light that had been out for weeks was working.

State Department’s travel website: www.state.gov/travel

Center for Disease Control for Travelers’ Health: www.cdc.gov
The following travel Do’s and Don’ts are from the University of Notre Dame.

**DO AND DON’T DO WHEN TRAVELING ABROAD**

**Do**

1. Remain what you are – friendly, courteous, polite and dignified.
2. Travel in small groups – three to five persons with both genders present.
3. Bring a book to read when using public transportation – you will not be the only person reading and it is an easy way to fit in.
4. Make a photo copy of your passport and credit card numbers and keep them separate from your passport and credit cards – give a copy to your family.
5. Bring your prescription drugs with you in their original containers – don’t pack them in your check-in luggage. Also bring additional contacts/glasses or your corrective lens prescription with you.
6. If you require medicine containing habit-forming substances carry a doctor’s certificate attesting to this fact.
7. Notify a foreign contact of any medical issues including food allergies.
8. Carry some identification – a tag, bracelet, or card – if you have a medical condition that might require emergency care.
9. Understand completely what your health insurance covers and does not cover while you are traveling. Chances are that you will have to pay for services and get reimbursed when you return home unless you have purchased HTH Worldwide Insurance Services, and obtain treatment from an HTH approved physician.
10. Dial _________________ for fire, police, and medical emergencies.
11. For serious problems take a cab or ambulance and ask for the nearest hospital.
12. Only take the credit card(s) you need – you will not need all those other cards that you generally carry in the States.
13. Mark all your bags inside and out with your name and address – both home address and your foreign address.
14. Bring two passport size photos and a photocopy of birth certificate and/or baptismal certificate, just in case you lose your passport.
15. Make a photo copy of your flight tickets – keep separate.
16. Keep a wallet-sized card with you that includes Emergency Phone Numbers, U. S. Embassy Phone Numbers and other contact information in the U.S. and the countries in which you will be traveling. Leave copies of the card with a contact in the U.S. and abroad.
17. If you see an unattended package, move away from it and call the police.
18. Avoid protest groups’ activities and potential volatile situations.
19. Keep abreast of local and international news that might tell you of potential civil unrest.

20. Know as much as possible about each country you plan to visit, including its history, religion, geography and government.

21. Report any suspicious person in and around your residence to the Local Police Department.

22. Check the US Embassy web pages for travel advisories.

23. Ask permission before photographing strangers who you find “interesting”.

24. Use common sense.

25. For private health care call (Physician’s name, phone number & address)

26. For dental problems call (Dentist’s name, phone number & address).

Don’t

1. Do not wear any clothing with the “Fighting Irish” logo or “Fighting Irish” in print.

2. Do not become the “ugly American stereotype” – loud and or boorish

3. * Here are some positive and negative stereotypes associated with Americans:
   - Outgoing and friendly
   - Informal
   - Loud, rude, boorish
   - Immature
   - Hard working
   - Extravagant
   - Sure they have all the answers
   - Disrespectful of authority
   - Wealthy
   - Generous
   Pick out those characteristics that you would like to be remembered by, and avoid the others.

4. Avoid attracting attention to you – that is, avoid traveling alone or in a large group of a dozen or more.

5. Do not expect eye contact on the streets in certain countries – indeed, in some locations this may result in “unexpected or unwanted” invitations.

6. Do not stand and/or plan to gather on the steps of your residence.

7. Never, ever leave your residence unlocked.

8. Do not draw attention to yourself when you are returning to your residence late at night.

9. Do not pack your essential documents or medicines in checked baggage – luggage gets lost.

10. Never carry large amounts of cash.

11. Do not bring expensive jewelry with you.

12. Most places are safe in most countries, BUT don’t wander down dark alleys or into areas that are known to be high risk. Avoid restaurants and entertainment places where Americans are known to congregate.

13. Also avoid baggage tags that would clearly identify you as an American.
14. Do not impair your judgment with excessive consumption of alcohol.
15. Women are sometimes targets of harassment – don’t become a target:
   * Travel with some men
   * Dress conservatively
   * Do not agree to meet strangers in non-public places
16. Don’t let your “natural friendliness” be mistaken for flirtations.
17. Do not lose your passport, it will not be the end of the world, but it may seem like it is.
18. Do not joke about bombs or about smuggled items – airport authorities will not find that funny nor will you.
Security & General Tips

The following advice on security and laws and customs can help you stay out of trouble while you are abroad.

Security

- Be security conscious and take sensible precautions
- Be alert to unattended baggage in public places
- Look out for people acting suspiciously near ‘Western’ institutions or gatherings
- Avoid political and other demonstrations or gatherings
- Check cars and other vehicles thoroughly for explosive devices before use; especially if the vehicle has been left unguarded for any time
- Vary your route if making regular journeys
- Avoid unlit streets at night
- Carry only the minimum amount of cash that you need for the day
- Leave your valuables and spare cash in the hotel safe or other secure place
- Do not flaunt your (relative) wealth
- Never resist violent theft
- Check your guidebook, with your hotel or tour guide for warnings on local scams
- Should you lose your Hotel Room Key Card, bear in mind that information stored on it may include your name, partial home address, hotel room number, check in and check out dates and credit card number and expiry date.
- Keep abreast of the local and regional political scene in the media

Obey the law

- Find out about local laws and customs.
- Remember that the laws and procedures which apply are those of the country you are in, not the UK’s. However, in the case of sexual offences against children, extra territorial legislation can be used to prosecute offenders in the UK, under UK law, even when the sexual offence has been committed overseas. For further information on combating Child Sex Tourism see ECPAT UK and World Vision UK websites.
- Do not overstay your visa. You can extend your visa in most places; if you do not you can be imprisoned or fined.
- Do not work illegally. You can be deported, fined and imprisoned if you do. You may also be prevented from entering the country again in the future.
- Hobbies that involve the use of cameras and binoculars (like bird watching and train or plane spotting) can be misunderstood (particularly near military sites). If you are not sure, don’t do it – it is not worth the risk of being wrongly arrested for spying.
- Try to be aware of any locally endangered animals and plants within your destination. Be careful when buying wildlife souvenirs so that you don’t unwittingly purchase souvenirs made from endangered plants or animals in which trade may be regulated or banned.

Drugs
• DO NOT get involved with drugs
• Obey local laws. Penalties are often severe and include massive fines and long prison sentences in grim conditions. You can receive the death penalty in some countries. We cannot get you out.
• NEVER carry packages through Customs for other people.
• Do not sit in anyone else’s vehicle when going through Customs or crossing a border – always get out and walk.
• Always pack your own baggage and never leave it unattended.
• If driving do not lend your vehicle to anyone else.
• Do not give medicines prescribed for you by a doctor to people you meet on your travels.

Alcohol

• Be aware of the local laws and attitudes to alcohol.
• Do not try to import alcohol into a country where it is prohibited - penalties can be severe.
• Public drunkenness is frowned on wherever you are.

Driving

• DO NOT drink and drive.
• Make sure you know the driving laws, licence requirements and driving conditions specific to the country you are visiting.
• Make sure your UK driving licence is current and valid. Some countries require you to hold an International Driving Permit (IDP) with your UK licence.
• If you are staying for an extended period of time or for any reason other than tourism check what the driving licence requirements are.
• Be aware that in many countries there are on-the-spot fines for traffic offences. Exceptions are not made for foreigners.

If there is a natural disaster or trouble flares up

• Contact your family and friends to let them know that you are safe and healthy.
• Do this even if you are not near the area – remember family and friends will not know exactly where you are but they will worry if they think you are in potential danger.

Money & Credit Cards

• Use a money belt or secure inside pocket. If you have to carry a lot of money ask your partner or a friend to carry some for you.
• Don’t carry all your cards with you – leave at least one in the hotel safe. If you lose or have your credit card stolen cancel it immediately by phoning the relevant 24-hour emergency number.
• Change money in banks or legal foreign exchange dealers. It is often illegal to change with unauthorised persons, and you run the risk of receiving fake currency and arrest.
• Keep all exchange receipts, as you may have to prove you obtained your local currency legally.
• Ensure your credit card bills are paid and kept up-to-date whilst travelling.
• Consider where your money goes. Try and put money into local people’s hands;
try local drinks rather than imported brands; stay in locally-owned accommodation and try to eat in locally-owned restaurants.

Travel documents

- Keep your passport in the hotel safe and carry a photocopy with you.
- Keep your travel tickets in a safe place.

If you have anything stolen

- If your money, passport or anything else is stolen report it at once to the local police.
- Obtain a police statement about the loss; you will need one to claim against your insurance.
- Theft of money – phone your bank at home to transfer money or to cancel your credit card using the relevant 24-hour emergency number.
- Theft of traveller’s cheques – contact the issuing agent.
- Theft of tickets – see your tour representative or airline agent.

Respect the local Environment

- Think about what happens to your rubbish e.g. take biodegradable products and a water filter bottle to cut down on plastic waste.
- Help preserve local wildlife and habitats by respecting rules and regulations. Be aware that buying any wildlife souvenirs or products is highly risky – If in doubt don’t buy! See the UK Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) Souvenir Alert! Campaign, which highlights the pitfalls of buying wildlife souvenirs abroad and also Trade Hotspots.
- Customs throughout the world confiscate illegal souvenirs and in the UK you could face a criminal prosecution and unlimited fines.

Cultural Awareness

- Get a good guidebook. This will tell you about the country you are visiting. Find out about local laws, customs and culture.
- Take a phrase book and try speaking the local language.
- Respect local customs and dress codes. Think about what you wear and how you fit in. Ask your tour operator or guide if you are unsure.
- Be discreet about your views on cultural differences and behave and dress appropriately, particularly when visiting religious sites, markets and rural communities.
- Particular care should be taken not to offend Islamic codes of dress and behaviour with regard to sexual relations, alcohol and drugs.
- Always ask an individual’s permission before you take a photograph and respect their reply. In some cultures you should not attempt to photograph women.
- Don’t haggle too aggressively. In most countries where haggling is the norm, it is done with good humour and not for too long. Although prices are usually inflated for tourists, it’s also important to remember that the discount you are haggling over could be a few pence for you but a significant means of income for a seller.
- It is always best to err on the side of caution. Behaviour that would be regarded as innocuous elsewhere can lead to serious trouble.
A handbook for overseas personnel and their families to prepare for crises, react in emergencies, and begin recovery.
A disaster supplies kit is a collection of basic items you and your household may need in the event of an emergency, and is sometimes referred to as a “go bag.” You will need to assemble your kit, or “go bag,” well in advance of an emergency as you will probably not have time to search or shop for supplies during and immediately after a disaster.

You may need to survive on your own after an emergency. This means having your own food, water and other supplies in sufficient quantity to last for at least 72 hours. You could get help in hours or it might take days.

Additionally, basic services such as electricity, gas, water, sewage treatment and telephones may be cut off for days or even a week, or longer. Your supplies kit should contain items to help you manage during these outages.

The State Department’s Bureau of Diplomatic Security compiled this guide in November 2014 from various U.S. Government preparedness publications to communicate best practices to our employees who work overseas. While some information may only pertain to U.S. Government employees, we hope you find this guide valuable while working overseas.
Basic Disaster Supplies Kit

A basic emergency supply kit could include the following recommended items—

- Water, one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days, for drinking and sanitation.
- Food, at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food.
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio with a horn or siren and extra batteries.
- Flashlight and extra batteries.
- First aid kit.
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation.
- Dust mask to help filter contaminated air and plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place.
- Whistle to signal for help.
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities.
- Manual can opener for food.
- Local maps.
- Cell phone with chargers, inverter or solar charger.
- E&E (Emergency & Evacuation) Radio, if it is offered by your organization.

Additional Emergency Supplies

Once you have gathered the supplies for a basic emergency kit, you may want to consider adding the following items—

- Prescription medications and glasses.
- Infant formula and diapers.
- Pet food and extra water for your pet.
- Cash or traveler's checks and change.
- Important family documents such as copies of insurance policies, identification and bank account records in a waterproof, portable container. Emergency reference material such as a first aid book.
- Sleeping bag or warm blanket for each person. Consider additional bedding if you live in a cold-weather climate.
- Complete change of clothing including a long sleeved shirt, long pants and sturdy shoes. Consider additional clothing if you live in a cold-weather climate.
- Household chlorine bleach and medicine dropper – when diluted, nine parts water to one part bleach, bleach can be used as a disinfectant. Or in an emergency, you can use it to treat water by using 16 drops of regular household liquid bleach per gallon of water. Do not use scented, color safe or bleaches with added cleaners.
- Fire extinguisher.
- Matches in a waterproof container.
- Feminine supplies and personal hygiene items.
- Mess kits, paper cups, plates, paper towels and plastic utensils.
- Paper and pencil.
- Books, games, puzzles or other activities for children.
First Aid Kit

In any emergency a family member or you yourself may suffer an injury. If you have these basic first aid supplies you are better prepared to help your loved ones when they are hurt.

Knowing how to treat minor injuries can make a difference in an emergency. You may consider taking a first aid class, but simply having the following things can help you stop bleeding, prevent infection and assist in decontamination—

- Two pairs of Latex or other sterile gloves if you are allergic to Latex.
- Sterile dressings to stop bleeding.
- Cleansing agent/soap and antibiotic towelettes.
- Antibiotic ointment.
- Burn ointment.
- Adhesive bandages in a variety of sizes.
- Eye wash solution to flush the eyes or as general decontaminant.
- Thermometer.
- Prescription medications you take every day such as insulin, heart medicine and asthma inhalers. You should periodically rotate medicines to account for expiration dates.
- Prescribed medical supplies such as glucose and blood pressure monitoring equipment and supplies.

Non-prescription drugs—
- Aspirin or non-aspirin pain reliever.
- Anti-diarrhea medication.
- Antacid.
- Laxative.

Other first aid supplies—
- Scissors.
- Tweezers.
- Tube of petroleum jelly or other lubricant.
- Two pairs of Latex or other sterile gloves if you are allergic to Latex.
- Sterile dressings to stop bleeding.
- Cleansing agent/soap and antibiotic towelettes.
- Antibiotic ointment.
- Burn ointment.
- Adhesive bandages in a variety of sizes.
- Eye wash solution to flush the eyes or as general decontaminant.
- Thermometer.
- Prescription medications you take every day such as insulin, heart medicine and asthma inhalers. You should periodically rotate medicines to account for expiration dates.
- Prescribed medical supplies such as glucose and blood pressure monitoring equipment and supplies.

Supplies for Unique Needs

Remember the unique needs of your family members, including growing children, when making your emergency supply kit and family emergency plan.

For Baby —
- Formula
- Diapers
- Bottles

For Adults —
- Powdered milk
- Medications
- Moist towelettes
- Denture needs
- Contact lenses and supplies
- Extra eye glasses

Ask your doctor about storing prescription medications such as heart and high blood pressure medication, insulin and other prescription drugs.

If you live in a cold climate, you must think about warmth. It is possible that you will not have heat. Think about your clothing and bedding supplies. Be sure to include one complete change of clothing and shoes per person, including:

- Jacket or coat
- Long pants
- Long sleeve shirt
Make A Plan

Your family may not be together when a disaster strikes so it is important to plan in advance: how you will get to a safe place; how you will contact one another; how you will get back together; and what you will do in different situations.

You should also inquire about emergency plans at places where your family spends time: work, daycare and school, faith organizations, sports events and commuting. If no plans exist, consider volunteering to help create one. Consider talking with your colleagues, neighbors and members of faith or civic organizations about how you can work together in the event of an emergency. You will be better prepared to safely reunite your family and loved ones during an emergency if you think ahead and communicate with others in advance.

Considerations for Individuals with Access & Functional Needs

Each person’s needs and abilities are unique, but every individual can take important steps to prepare for all kinds of emergencies and put plans in place. By evaluating your own personal needs and making an emergency plan, you can be better prepared for any situation.

A commitment to planning today will help you prepare for any emergency situation.

- Consider how a disaster might affect your individual needs.
- Plan to make it on your own, at least for a period of time. It’s possible that you will not have access to a medical facility or even a drugstore.
- Identify what kind of resources you use on a daily basis and what you might do if they are limited or not available.
- Build a kit with your unique consideration in mind. What do you need to maintain your health, safety and independence?

If you or someone close to you has a disability or other access or functional need, you may have to take additional steps to protect yourself and your family.

Find out about individual assistance that may be available in your community. Check with your organization for guidance on working with local emergency services, the local fire department, other agencies or non-profit groups. Tell them of your individual needs or those of a family member and find out what assistance, help or services can be provided.

Who are Individuals with Access & Functional Needs?

- Those who are deaf or hard of hearing may need to make special arrangements to receive emergency warnings.
- People without vehicles may need to make arrangements for transportation.
- People with special dietary needs should take precautions to have an adequate emergency food supply.
Infants & Young Children

Remember the unique needs of your family members when making your emergency supply kit and family emergency plan.

Try to make emergency planning fun for young children. Gather your family members together for a quick family meeting, maybe over a pizza or before watching your favorite movie. Talk about what you will do in an emergency and make a list of your family’s solutions. Find more planning information at www.ready.gov/kids.

Seniors

There are also measures older U.S. citizens can take to start preparing for emergencies before they happen.

Seniors should keep specialized items ready, including extra wheelchair batteries, oxygen, catheters, medication, food for service animals and any other items you might need. Keep a list of the type and model numbers of the medical devices you require. Be sure to make provisions for medications that require refrigeration. Make arrangements for any assistance to get to a shelter.

For more information, read Ready.gov’s Preparing Makes Sense For Older Americans or visit the Red Cross website at www.redcross.org.

Caring for Animals

The likelihood that you and your animals will survive an emergency such as a fire or flood, tornado or terrorist attack depends largely on emergency planning done today. Some of the things you can do to prepare for the unexpected, such as assembling an animal emergency supply kit and developing a pet care buddy system, are the same for any emergency. Whether you decide to stay put in an emergency or evacuate to a safer location, you will need to make plans in advance for your pets. Keep in mind that what’s best for you is typically what’s best for your animals.

If you evacuate your home, DO NOT LEAVE YOUR PETS BEHIND! Pets most likely cannot survive on their own and if by some remote chance they do, you may not be able to find them when you return.

Consider your evacuation plan. If you or your family members depart using commercial transportation, strongly consider taking your pets. If you wait until the U.S. government charters transports, they may not be able to accommodate pets. If pets can board the transport, there may be difficulty bringing them into the designated Safe Haven location. Traveling with pets often requires very specific veterinary records and pets may be quarantined for extended periods of time.

If you go to a public shelter, it is important to understand that animals may not be allowed inside. Plan in advance for shelter alternatives that will work for both you and your pets; consider loved ones or friends outside of your immediate area who would be willing to host you and your pets in an emergency.

Make a back-up emergency plan in case you can’t care for your animals yourself. Develop a buddy system with neighbors, friends and relatives to make sure that someone is available to care for or evacuate your pets if you are unable to do so. Be prepared to improvise and use what you have on hand to make it on your own for at least three days, maybe longer.

For additional information, visit the humane society at www.humanesociety.org/issues/animal_rescue/tips/pets-disaster.html
Hurricanes, typhoons, and cyclones are all the same weather phenomenon; we just use different names for these storms depending on their location. In the Atlantic and Northeast Pacific, the term “hurricane” is used, in the Northwest Pacific it is called a “typhoon”, and in the South Pacific and Indian Ocean it is called a “cyclone.” These storms can cause catastrophic damage from coastlines to areas several hundred miles inland. They can produce winds exceeding 155 miles per hour as well as tornadoes and microbursts. They can create storm surges along the coast and cause extensive damage from heavy rainfall. Floods and flying debris from the excessive winds are often the deadly and destructive results of these weather events. Excessive rain can trigger flooding and landslides.

A Hurricane, Typhoon, or Cyclone

Before

To prepare, you should take the following measures:

- Make plans to secure your property. Be prepared to board up windows with 5/8” marine plywood, cut to fit and ready to install. Tape does not prevent windows from breaking.
- Be sure trees and shrubs around your home are well trimmed.
- Clear loose and clogged rain gutters and downspouts.
- Consider preparing a safe room.

During

If a hurricane, typhoon, or cyclone is likely in your area, you should:

- Continually monitor the radio or TV for information.
- Secure your home, close storm shutters, and secure outdoor objects or bring them indoors.
- Turn the refrigerator thermostat to its coldest setting and keep its doors closed.
- Turn off propane tanks.
- Avoid using the phone, except for serious emergencies.
- Ensure an adequate supply of water. Fill a bathtub or other large containers with water.

You should evacuate under the following conditions:

- If you are directed to do so.
- If you live in a high-rise building—winds are stronger at higher elevations.
- If you live on the coast, on a floodplain, near a river, or on an inland waterway.
- If you feel you are in danger.

Continued
During a Hurricane, Typhoon, or Cyclone Supplies (Continued)

If you are unable to evacuate, go to your safe room. If you do not have one, follow these guidelines:

- Stay indoors and away from windows and glass doors.
- Close all interior doors—secure and brace external doors.
- Keep curtains and blinds closed. Do not be fooled if there is a lull; it could be the eye of the storm - winds will pick up again.
- Take refuge in a small interior room, closet, or hallway on the lowest level.
- Lie on the floor under a table or another sturdy object.

A Hurricane, Typhoon, or Cyclone

- Continue listening to the local news for the latest updates.
- Stay alert for extended rainfall and subsequent flooding even after storm has ended.
- If you evacuated, return home only when local officials say it is safe or you have told to do so by U.S. government officials. If the guidance of local officials is different than that of the U.S. government, follow the guidance of the U.S. government.
- Drive only if necessary and avoid flooded roads and washed out bridges. Stay off the streets. If you must go out watch for fallen objects; downed electrical wires; and weakened walls, bridges, roads, and sidewalks.
- Keep away from loose or dangling power lines and report them immediately.
- Walk carefully around the outside your home and check for loose power lines, gas leaks and structural damage before entering.
- Stay out of any building if you smell gas or floodwaters remain around the building.
- Use battery-powered flashlights in the dark. Do NOT use candles. Note: The flashlight should be turned on outside before entering - the battery may produce a spark that could ignite leaking gas, if present.
- Watch your pets closely and keep them under your direct control. Watch out for wild animals, especially poisonous snakes. Use a stick to poke through debris.
- Avoid drinking or preparing food with tap water until you are sure it's not contaminated.
- Check refrigerated food for spoilage. If in doubt, throw it out.
- Wear protective clothing and be cautious when cleaning up to avoid injury.
- Use the telephone only for emergency calls.
- NEVER use a generator inside homes, garages, sheds, or similar areas, even when using fans or opening doors and windows for ventilation.
Although there are no guarantees of safety during an earthquake, identifying potential hazards ahead of time can save lives and significantly reduce injuries and property damage.

**Before An Earthquake**

The following are things you can do to protect yourself, your family and your property in the event of an earthquake—

- Make sure shelves are fastened securely to walls.
- Place large or heavy objects on lower shelves.
- Store breakable items such as bottled foods, glass, and china in low, closed cabinets with latches.
- Fasten heavy items such as pictures and mirrors securely to walls and away from beds, couches and anywhere people sit.
- Brace overhead light fixtures and top heavy objects.
- Store weed killers, pesticides, and flammable products securely in closed cabinets with latches and on bottom shelves.
- Locate safe spots in each room under a sturdy table or against an inside wall. Reinforce this information by moving to these places during each drill.
- Hold earthquake drills with your family members: Drop, cover and hold on.

**Know the Terms**

Familiarize yourself with these terms to help identify an earthquake hazard—

- **Aftershock** – An earthquake of similar or lesser intensity that follows the main earthquake.
- **Earthquake** – A sudden slipping or movement of a portion of the earth’s crust, accompanied and followed by a series of vibrations.
- **Epicenter** – The place on the earth’s surface directly above the point on the fault where the earthquake rupture began.
- **Fault** – The fracture across which displacement has occurred during an earthquake. The slippage may range from less than an inch to more than 10 yards in a severe earthquake.
- **Magnitude** – The amount of energy released during an earthquake, which is computed from the amplitude of the seismic waves. A magnitude of 7.0 on the Richter Scale indicates an extremely strong earthquake. Each whole number on the scale represents an increase of about 30 times more energy released than the previous whole number represents. Therefore, an earthquake measuring 6.0 is about 30 times more powerful than one measuring 5.0.
**During**  

## An Earthquake

### Drop, Cover and Hold On.

#### If Indoors

- **DROP** to the ground; take **COVER** by getting under a sturdy table or other piece of furniture; and **HOLD ON** until the shaking stops.
- Stay away from glass, windows, outside doors and walls, and anything that could fall, such as lighting fixtures or furniture.
- Stay in bed if you are there when the earthquake strikes. Hold on and protect your head with a pillow, unless you are under a heavy light fixture that could fall. In that case, move to the nearest safe place.
- Do not use a doorway except if you know it is a strongly supported, load-bearing doorway and it is close to you.
- Stay inside until the shaking stops and it is safe to go outside. Do not exit a building during the shaking. Research has shown that most injuries occur when people inside buildings attempt to move to a different location inside the building or try to leave.
- **DO NOT** use the elevators.

#### If Outdoors

- Stay there.
- Move away from buildings, streetlights, and utility wires.
- Once in the open, stay there until the shaking stops. The greatest danger exists directly outside buildings, at exits and alongside exterior walls. Many of the 120 fatalities from the 1933 Long Beach earthquake occurred when people ran outside of buildings only to be killed by falling debris from collapsing walls.

#### If in a Moving Vehicle

- Stop as quickly as safety permits and stay in the vehicle. Avoid stopping near or under buildings, trees, overpasses, and utility wires.
- Proceed cautiously once the earthquake has stopped. Avoid roads, bridges, or ramps that might have been damaged by the earthquake.

#### If Trapped Under Debris

- Do not light a match.
- Do not move about or kick up dust.
- Cover your mouth with a handkerchief or clothing.
- Tap on a pipe or wall so rescuers can locate you. Use a whistle if one is available. Shout only as a last resort. Shouting can cause you to inhale dangerous amounts of dust.
An Earthquake

- Expect aftershocks. These are usually less violent than the main quake but can be strong enough to do additional damage and can occur weeks, or even months after.
- Help injured or trapped persons. Remember to help your neighbors who may require special assistance such as infants, the elderly and people with access and functional needs. Give first aid where appropriate. Do not move seriously injured persons unless they are in immediate danger of further injury. Call for help.
- Look for and extinguish small fires. Fire is the most common hazard after an earthquake.
- Listen to a battery-operated radio or television for the latest emergency information.
- Be aware of possible tsunamis if you live in coastal areas and stay away from the beach. If a local tsunami warning system exists and authorities issue a warning, assume that a series of dangerous waves is on the way.
- Use the telephone only for emergency calls.
- Stay away from damaged areas. Return home only when local authorities or U.S. government officials say it is safe. If there is a conflict between the guidance of local authorities and U.S. government officials, follow the U.S. government guidance.
- Be careful when driving after an earthquake and anticipate traffic light outages.

- Open cabinets cautiously. Beware of objects that can fall off shelves.
- Clean up spilled medicines, bleaches, gasoline or other flammable liquids immediately. Leave the area if you smell gas or fumes from other chemicals.

- Inspect utilities—
  - **Check for gas leaks.** If you smell gas or hear blowing or hissing noise, open a window and quickly leave the building. Turn off the gas at the outside main valve if you can and call the gas company from a neighbor’s home. If you turn off the gas for any reason, it must be turned back on by a professional.
  - **Look for electrical system damage.** If you see sparks or broken or frayed wires, or if you smell hot insulation, turn off the electricity at the main fuse box or circuit breaker. If you have to step in water to get to the fuse box or circuit breaker, stop and call a professional.
  - **Check for sewage and water line damage.** If you suspect sewage lines are damaged, avoid using the toilets and contact a professional. Avoid using water from the tap if your water pipes are damaged. You can obtain safe water by melting ice cubes.
Tsunamis (pronounced soo-ná-meə), also known as seismic sea waves (mistakenly called "tidal waves"), are a series of enormous waves created by an underwater disturbance such as an earthquake, landslide, volcanic eruption, or meteorite. A tsunami can move hundreds of miles per hour in the open ocean and smash into land with waves as high as 100 feet or more.

From the area where the tsunami originates, waves travel outward in all directions. Once the wave approaches the shore, it builds in height. The topography of the coastline and the ocean floor will influence the size of the wave. There may be more than one wave and the succeeding one may be larger than the one before. That is why a small tsunami at one beach can be a giant wave a few miles away.

Earthquake-induced movement of the ocean floor most often generates tsunamis. If a major earthquake or landslide occurs close to shore, the first wave in a series could reach the beach in a few minutes, even before a warning has been issued. Areas are at greater risk if they are less than 25 feet above sea level and within a mile of the shoreline. Drowning is the most common cause of death associated with a tsunami. Other hazards include flooding, contamination of drinking water, and fires from gas lines or ruptured tanks.

Before a Tsunami

The following are things you can do to protect yourself, your family and your property from the effects of a tsunami—

- Determine if your location has a tsunami warning system. Make sure you are familiar with local community's warning systems and disaster plans, including evacuation routes.

- Know the height of your street above sea level and the distance of your street from the coast or other high-risk waters. Evacuation orders may be based on these numbers.

- Familiarize yourself with local tsunami evacuation protocols, if they exist. You may be able to safely evacuate to the third floor and higher in reinforced concrete hotel structures.

- If an earthquake occurs and you are in a coastal area, be aware that a tsunami may occur and be prepared to seek higher ground. Stay aware of local tsunami warning systems and guidance if it exists.
A Tsunami

During

- If local tsunami warning and evacuation system exists, follow the orders of local authorities and evacuate immediately if told to do so. Take your animals with you.
- Move inland to higher ground immediately. Pick areas 100 feet (30 meters) above sea level or go as far as 2 miles (3 kilometers) inland, away from the coastline. If you cannot get this high or far, go as high or far as you can. Every foot inland or upward may make a difference.
- Stay away from the beach. Never go down to the beach to watch a tsunami come in. If you can see the wave you are too close to escape it. **CAUTION** - If there is noticeable recession in water away from the shoreline this is nature’s tsunami warning and it should be heeded. You should move away immediately.
- Save yourself - not your possessions.
- Remember to help your neighbors who may require special assistance - infants, elderly people, and individuals with access or functional needs.

A Tsunami

After

- Return home only after local authorities or U.S. government officials tell you it is safe.
  - A tsunami is a series of waves that may continue for hours. Do not assume that after one wave the danger is over. The next wave may be larger than the first one.
  - If there is a conflict between the guidance of local authorities and U.S. government officials, follow the guidance issued by the U.S. government.
- Avoid disaster areas. Your presence might interfere with emergency response operations and put you at further risk from the residual effects of floods.
- Stay away from debris in the water; it may pose a safety hazard to people or pets.
- Check yourself for injuries and get first aid as needed before helping injured or trapped persons.
- If someone needs to be rescued, call local emergency services with the right equipment to help. Many people have been killed or injured trying to rescue others.
- Help people who require special assistance—infants, elderly people, those without transportation, people with access and functional needs and large families who may need additional help in an emergency situation.
- Stay out of any building that has water around it. Tsunami water can cause floors to crack or walls to collapse.
- Use caution when re-entering buildings or homes. Tsunami-driven floodwater may have damaged buildings where you least expect it. Carefully watch every step you take.
- To avoid injury, wear protective clothing and be cautious when cleaning up.
Floods are one of the most common hazards in the world. Flood effects can be local, impacting a neighborhood or community, or very large, affecting entire river basins and multiple states.

However, all floods are not alike. Some floods develop slowly, sometimes over a period of days. But flash floods can develop quickly, sometimes in just a few minutes and without any visible signs of rain. Flash floods often have a dangerous wall of roaring water that carries rocks, mud, and other debris and can sweep away most things in its path. Overland flooding occurs outside a defined river or stream, such as when a levee is breached, but still can be destructive. Flooding can also occur when a dam breaks, producing effects similar to flash floods.

Be aware of flood hazards no matter where you live. Even very small streams, gullies, creeks, culverts, dry streambeds, or low-lying ground that appears harmless in dry weather can flood. Every country is at risk from this hazard.

Before a Flood

Be aware of the Causes of Flooding

**Storms** — Hurricanes, typhoons, cyclones, and tropical storms pack a triple punch: high winds, soaking rain, and flying debris. They can cause storm surges to coastal areas, as well as create heavy rainfall which in turn causes flooding hundreds of miles inland. When hurricanes weaken into tropical storms, they generate rainfall and flooding that can be especially damaging since the rain collects in one place. In 2001, Tropical Storm Allison produced more than 30 inches of rainfall in Houston in just a few days, flooding over 70,000 houses and destroying 2,744 homes.

**Spring Thaw** — During the spring, frozen land prevents melting snow or rainfall from seeping into the ground. Each cubic foot of compacted snow contains gallons of water and once the snow melts, it can result in the overflow of streams, rivers, and lakes.

**Heavy Rains** — Many areas of the globe are at heightened risk for flooding due to heavy rains. Excessive amounts of rainfall can happen throughout the year, putting your property at risk.

**Levees & Dams** — Levees are designed to protect hold back a certain level of water. However, levees can and do fail; and when they fail, they can fail catastrophically. Weakening of levees over time, or as a result of weather events exceeding the levee’s level of support, can cause the levee to be overtopped or breached, thus increasing the chance for flooding.

**Flash Floods** — Flash floods are one of the most dangerous weather-related killers since they can roll boulders, tear out trees, and destroy buildings and bridges. A flash flood is a rapid flooding of low-lying areas in less than six hours, which is caused by intense rainfall from a thunderstorm or several thunderstorms.

**New Development** — Construction and development can change the natural drainage and create brand new flood risks. That’s because new buildings, parking lots, and roads mean less land to absorb excess precipitation from heavy rains, hurricanes, and tropical storms.

Continued
Before a Flood (Continued)

What would you do if your property were flooded? Are you prepared?

Even if you feel you live in a community with a low risk of flooding, remember that anywhere it rains, it can flood. Just because you haven’t experienced a flood in the past, doesn’t mean you won’t in the future. Flood risk isn’t just based on history; it’s also based on a number of factors including rainfall, topography, flood-control measures, river-flow and tidal-surge data, and changes due to new construction and development.

During

A Flood

- Look for information on the local radio, television, or announcements from your organization.
- Be aware that flash flooding can occur. If there is any possibility of a flash flood, move immediately to higher ground. Do not wait for instructions to move.
- Be aware of stream, drainage channels, canyons and other areas known to flood suddenly. Flash floods can occur in these

If you must prepare to evacuate, you should do the following—

- Secure your home. If you have time, bring in outdoor furniture. Move essential items to an upper floor.
- Turn off utilities at the main switches or valves if instructed to do so. Disconnect electrical appliances. Do not touch electrical equipment if you are wet or standing in water.

If you have to leave your home, remember these evacuation tips—

- Do not walk through moving water. Six inches of moving water can make you fall. If you have to walk in water, walk where the water is not moving. Use a stick to check the firmness of the ground in front of you.
- Do not drive into flooded areas. If floodwaters rise around your car, abandon the car and move to higher ground if you can do so safely. You and the vehicle can be swept away quickly.
- Do not camp or park your vehicle along streams, rivers or creeks, particularly during threatening conditions.

The following are important points to remember when driving in flood conditions—

- Six inches of water will reach the bottom of most passenger cars causing loss of control and possible stalling.
- A foot of water will float many vehicles.
- Two feet of rushing water can carry away most vehicles including sport utility vehicles (SUV’s).
- Do not attempt to drive through a flooded road. The depth of water is not always obvious. The road bed may be washed out under the water, and you could be stranded or trapped.
- Do not drive around a barricade. Barricades are there for your protection. Turn around and go the other way.
- Be especially cautious driving at night when it is harder to recognize flood dangers.
A Flood

- Use local alerts and warning systems or guidance from your organization to get information and expert informed advice as soon as available.
- Avoid moving water.
- Stay away from damaged areas unless your assistance has been specifically requested by local authorities or U.S. government officials.
- Emergency workers will be assisting people in flooded areas. You can help them by staying off the roads and out of the way.
- Play it safe. Additional flooding or flash floods can occur. Listen for local warnings and information. If your car stalls in rapidly rising waters, get out immediately and climb to higher ground.
- Return home only when authorities indicate it is safe.
- Roads may still be closed because they have been damaged or are covered by water. Barricades have been placed for your protection. If you come upon a barricade or a flooded road, go another way.
- If you must walk or drive in areas that have been flooded—
  - Stay on firm ground. Moving water only 6 inches deep can sweep you off your feet. Standing water may be electrically charged from underground or downed power lines.
  - Flooding may have caused familiar places to change. Floodwaters often erode roads and walkways. Flood debris may hide animals and broken bottles, and it's also slippery. Avoid walking or driving through it.
- Be aware of areas where floodwaters have receded. Roads may have weakened and could collapse under the weight of a car.
- Stay out of any building if it is surrounded by floodwaters.
- Use extreme caution when entering buildings; there may be hidden damage, particularly in foundations.
- Avoid floodwaters; water may be contaminated by oil, gasoline or raw sewage.
- Look for guidance from your organization to learn whether the community's water supply is safe.
- Clean and disinfect everything that got wet. Mud left from floodwaters can contain sewage and chemicals.
Landslides can occur in nearly any environment and can be caused by a variety of factors including earthquakes, storms, volcanic eruptions, fire and by human modification of land. Landslides can occur quickly, often with little notice and the best way to prepare is to stay informed about changes in and around your home that could signal that a landslide is likely to occur.

### A Landslide

The following are things you can do to protect yourself, your family and your property from the effects of a landslide or debris flow —

- Become familiar with the land around you.
- Learn whether debris flows have occurred in your area by contacting local officials.
  - Slopes where debris flows have occurred in the past are likely to experience them in the future.

### Recognize Landslide Warning Signs

- Changes occur in your landscape such as patterns of storm-water drainage on slopes (especially the places where runoff water converges) land movement, small slides, flows, or progressively leaning trees.
- Doors or windows stick or jam for the first time.
- New cracks appear in plaster, tile, brick, or foundations.
- Outside walls, walks, or stairs begin pulling away from the building.
- Slowly developing, widening cracks appear on the ground or on paved areas such as streets or driveways.
- Underground utility lines break.
- Bulging ground appears at the base of a slope.
- Water breaks through the ground surface in new locations.
- Fences, retaining walls, utility poles, or trees tilt or move.
- A faint rumbling sound that increases in volume is noticeable as the landslide nears.
- The ground slopes downward in one direction and may begin shifting in that direction under your feet.
- Unusual sounds, such as trees cracking or boulders knocking together, might indicate moving debris.
- Collapsed pavement, mud, fallen rocks, and other indications of possible debris flow can be seen when driving (embankments along roadsides are particularly susceptible to landslides).
A Landslide

During

- During a severe storm, stay alert and awake. Many deaths from landslides occur while people are sleeping.
- Listen to local news stations on a battery-powered radio for warnings of heavy rainfall.
- Listen for unusual sounds that might indicate moving debris, such as trees cracking or boulders knocking together.
- Move away from the path of a landslide or debris flow as quickly as possible. The danger from a mudflow increases near stream channels and with prolonged heavy rains. Mudflows can move faster than you can walk or run. Look upstream before crossing a bridge and do not cross the bridge if a mudflow is approaching.
- Avoid river valleys and low-lying areas.
- If you are near a stream or channel, be alert for any sudden increase or decrease in water flow and notice whether the water changes from clear to muddy. Such changes may mean there is debris flow activity upstream so be prepared to move quickly.
- Curl into a tight ball and protect your head if escape is not possible.

A Landslide

After

- Stay away from the slide area. There may be danger of additional slides.
- Listen to local radio, television stations, or guidance from your organization for the latest emergency information.
- Watch for flooding, which may occur after a landslide or debris flow. Floods sometimes follow landslides and debris flows because they may both be started by the same event.
- Check for injured and trapped persons near the slide, without entering the direct slide area. Direct rescuers to their locations.
- Look for and report broken utility lines and damaged roadways and railways to appropriate authorities. Reporting potential hazards will get the utilities turned off as quickly as possible, preventing further hazard and injury.
- Check the building foundation, chimney, and surrounding land for damage. Damage to foundations, chimneys, or surrounding land may help you assess the safety of the area.
To protect yourself, it is important to understand the basic characteristics of fire. Fire spreads quickly; there is no time to gather valuables or make a phone call. In just two minutes, a fire can become life-threatening. In five minutes, a residence can be completely engulfed in flames.

Heat and smoke from fire can be more dangerous than the flames. Inhaling the super-hot air can sear your lungs. Fire produces poisonous gases that make you disoriented and drowsy. Instead of being awakened by a fire, you may fall into a deeper sleep. Asphyxiation is the leading cause of fire deaths, exceeding burns by a three-to-one ratio.

Before A Fire

In the event of a fire, remember that every second counts, so you and your family must always be prepared. Escape plans help you get out of your home quickly.

Twice each year, practice your home fire escape plan. Some tips to consider when preparing this plan include—

- Find two ways to get out of each room.
- If the primary way is blocked by fire or smoke, you will need a second way out. A secondary route might be a window onto a neighboring roof or a collapsible ladder for escape from upper story windows.
- Make sure that windows are not stuck, screens can be taken out quickly, and that security bars can be properly opened.
- Practice feeling your way out of the house in the dark or with your eyes closed.
- Make sure everyone in the family understands and practices how to properly operate and open locked or barred doors and windows.
- Teach children not to hide from firefighters.

Home Smoke Alarms

A properly installed and maintained smoke alarm is the only thing in your home that can alert you and your family to a fire 24 hours a day, seven days a week. A working smoke alarm significantly increases your chances of surviving a deadly home fire.

- Test batteries monthly.
- Replace batteries in battery-powered and hard-wired smoke alarms at least once a year (except non-replaceable 10-year lithium batteries).
- Never disable a smoke alarm while cooking – it can be a deadly mistake. Open a window or door and press the "hush" button, wave a towel at the alarm to clear the air, or move the entire alarm several feet away from the location.
If you are the one who discovers the fire, close the doors in the immediate area to help slow the fire from spreading.

If you are in a building with a fire alarm, immediately activate the alarm to notify others. Call the fire department or other available emergency services as soon as you have time.

If you are in a building with a fire extinguisher and you feel comfortable using the extinguisher:

- Locate the nearest fire extinguisher and follow the instructions listed on the device to activate the extinguisher.
  - Never attempt to extinguish the fire alone. Ensure someone is with you.
  - Point the extinguisher toward the base of the fire and remember to not let the fire get between you and the exit.
  - Sweep the nozzle back and forth at the base of the fire.
  - If the fire cannot be extinguished using one extinguisher then evacuate the building.
  - Only attempt to use the extinguisher if you believe you can stop the fire; if it is too large or spreading too quickly then immediately evacuate the building.

If you hear a smoke alarm sound, get out fast. You may have only seconds to escape safely.

If you must evacuate through smoke, crawl low under the smoke to your exit - heavy smoke and poisonous gases collect first along the ceiling.

If there is smoke blocking your door or first way out, use your second way out.

Before opening a door, feel the doorknob and door. If either is hot, leave the door closed and use your second way out.

If there is smoke coming around the door, leave the door closed and use your second way out.

If you open a door, open it slowly. Be ready to shut it quickly if heavy smoke or fire is present.

If you can't get to someone needing assistance, leave the home and call the local fire department. Tell the emergency operator where the person is located.

If pets are trapped inside your home, tell firefighters right away.

If you can't get out, close the door and cover vents and cracks around doors with cloth or tape to keep smoke out. Call your fire department. Say where you are and signal for help at the window with a light-colored cloth or a flashlight.

If your clothes catch fire, stop, drop, and roll – stop immediately, drop to the ground, and cover your face with your hands. Roll over and over or back and forth until the fire is out. If you or someone else cannot stop, drop, and roll, smother the flames with a blanket or towel. Use cool water to treat the burn immediately for 3 to 5 minutes. Cover with a clean, dry cloth. Get medical help right away.
A Fire

- If the fire occurred in your residence, check with officials to make sure your residence is safe to enter before you return.
- Be watchful of any structural damage caused by the fire.
- The fire department should see that utilities are either safe to use or are disconnected before they leave the site.
  - **DO NOT** attempt to reconnect utilities yourself.
  - Contact a professional for guidance.
Explosive devices can be highly portable, using vehicles and humans as a means of transport. They are also easily detonated from remote locations or by suicide bombers. Conventional bombs have been used to damage and destroy financial, political, social, and religious institutions. Attacks have occurred in public places and on city streets with thousands of people around the world injured and killed.

Nevertheless, there are things you can do to prepare for the unexpected. Preparing for such events will reduce the stress that you may feel now, and later, should another emergency arise.

### A Bomb or Explosion

#### Bomb Threats
If you receive a telephoned bomb threat, you should do the following—

- Get as much information from the caller as possible. Try to ask the following questions:
  - When is it going to explode?
  - Where is it right now?
  - What does it look like?
  - What kind of bomb is it?
  - What will cause it to explode?
  - Did you place the bomb?
- Keep the caller on the line and record everything that is said.
  - If possible, use a tape recorder or other means to record the threatening call.
- Notify security personnel at your organization immediately.
- Complete a Bomb Threat Report Card.

#### If You Find a Suspicious Item
- Do not touch the item.
- Do not change the environment (i.e. turning on or off lights, opening windows, etc.).
- Back away from the item.
- Prevent others from approaching the item.
- Notify security personnel that a suspicious item has been found and give a complete description of the item.

#### Packages and Letters
Be wary of suspicious packages and letters. They can contain explosives, chemical or biological agents. Be particularly cautious at your place of employment.

Some typical characteristics which ought to trigger suspicion include parcels that—

- Are unexpected or from someone unfamiliar to you.
- Have no return address or a return address that can’t be verified as legitimate.
- Are marked with restrictive endorsements such as "Personal," "Confidential," or "Do not X-ray."
- Have protruding wires or aluminum foil, strange odors or stains.
- Show a city or state in the postmark that doesn’t match the return address.
- Are of unusual weight given their size or are lopsided or oddly shaped.

Continued
Before a Bomb or Explosion (Continued)
Some typical characteristics which ought to trigger suspicion include parcels that—

- Are marked with threatening language.
- Have inappropriate or unusual labeling.
- Have misspellings of common words.
- Are not addressed to a specific person.
- Are addressed to someone no longer with your organization or are otherwise outdated.
- Have incorrect titles or titles without a name.

A Bomb or Explosion

**During**

- Get under a sturdy table or desk if things are falling around you.
- The explosion may be part of an attack, be aware that there may be secondary threats. Before you leave the building be cognizant of additional threats and listen for guidance to remain where you are.
- Do not use elevators.
- Move away from sidewalks or streets to be used by emergency officials or others still exiting the building.
- If you are trapped in debris, use a flashlight, if possible, to signal your location to rescuers.
- Tap on a pipe or wall so rescuers can hear where you are.
- If possible, use a whistle to signal rescuers.
- Shout only as a last resort. Shouting can cause a person to inhale dangerous amounts of dust.
- Avoid unnecessary movement so you don’t kick up dust.
- Cover your nose and mouth with anything you have on hand. (Dense-weave cotton material can act as a good filter. Try to breathe through the material.)

A Bomb or Explosion

**After**

- There may be a significant numbers of casualties and/or damage to buildings and infrastructure.
- Heavy law enforcement involvement follows a terrorist attack due to the event’s criminal nature.
- You and your family or household may have to evacuate an area, avoiding roads blocked for your safety.
- Make sure you notify your organization and your loved ones that you have survived, they may be looking for you and unaware of your status.
Whether it is accidental release or an intentional attack, the release of chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear (CBRN) material has great potential to cause harm to an unprepared or unprotected population. A better understanding of CBRN incidents, and the hazards involved, will help protect you and your family when and if it is needed.

**Chemical** – The release of a toxic chemical in the form of a gas, liquid, or solid.

**Biological** – The release of bacteria, toxins, viruses. Many of these agents must be inhaled, enter through a cut in the skin, or be ingested to make you sick.

**Radiological** – The release of radioactive material from either a nuclear power station incident, a radiological dispersal device (dirty bomb) or a powerful radiological source.

**Nuclear** – A nuclear detonation that creates intense light and heat, destructive pressure wave, and the potential for radioactive contamination in the air, water, and ground surfaces.

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## Recognizing a CBRN Incident

You may not receive prior warning of a CBRN incident or attack, so pay close attention to indicators that may appear suddenly or seem out of place, such as powders, liquids, or strange smells, outside or within a building, with or without an immediate effect on people. Because some agents are odorless and colorless a CBRN incident may not be immediately apparent. Dependent on the type of release, CBRN agents may contaminate surfaces, structures, food and water supplies. The information below will assist you in making a preliminary assessment of possible CBRN exposure.

- **Chemical Incident** – Indicated by the rapid onset (minutes to hours) of symptoms that may include runny nose, nausea, difficulty breathing, rashes, blisters, seizure, and other patterns of illness inconsistent with a natural disease. Observable signs of dispersion may include unusual liquid sprays or vapors, oily droplets on surfaces, dead insects and animals, low-lying clouds or fog unrelated to weather, unexplained odors, or multiple people exhibiting similar symptoms.

- **Biological Incident** – Indicated by the gradual onset (hours to days) of symptoms that may include fever, chills, fatigue, coughing, and other non-specific initial symptoms. Observable signs of dispersion may include an abandoned spray device, unscheduled or unusual spraying with people wearing breathing protection, unusual numbers of sick or dying people or animals. Biological agents may not have an odor or color and can be in liquid or solid (powder) form.

- **Radiological/Nuclear Incident** – Onset of symptoms following a radiological incident may include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, redness of skin, blistering, fatigue, hair loss, and other illnesses. Symptoms may take days, weeks, or longer to manifest. There may be no signs that an incident has taken place as radiation is odorless and invisible. Signs that a nuclear incident has taken place may include a significant blast with intense light and heat and a damaging pressure wave.

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## During a CBRN Incident

Protection of the respiratory system, evacuation (if possible) and decontamination are the most important defensive actions to take following a CBRN incident. Once an incident has been recognized, put on an emergency escape mask or, if lacking a mask, cover your nose and mouth with a folded handkerchief (or available fabric material) and evacuate the area. If CBRN exposure is suspected, seek decontamination and medical attention as soon as possible.

*Continued*
**During a CBRN Incident (Continued)**

**Here are a few items to remember—**

- **Time:** reduce the time you are exposed to a CBRN agent by evacuating the area quickly.
- **Distance:** move away from the area to increase your distance from the hazard.
- **Shielding:** shield your body by maneuvering or placing objects between you and the hazard.
- If possible, move upwind and uphill from the incident area.
- If you must remain inside, seek an interior room on a higher floor as many chemicals are heavier than air and will stay closer to the ground.
  - If inside due to a radioactive material release, seek an interior room on the lowest level.
- Ensure windows and exterior doors are closed and ventilation systems are shut down (unless equipped with a full chemical/biological filtration system).
- If in a vehicle, shut off air intake vents and close windows.

**Decontamination**

Decontamination is the process of physical removal and or neutralization of CBRN agents from the body to stop or reduce further exposure and subsequent harm. In addition, decontamination is necessary to protect emergency responders, medical personnel, and other unexposed personnel.

**Basic decontamination measures —**

- Decontaminate as soon as possible after evacuation to maximize effectiveness.
- Use soap and water to clean exposed areas (hands, then face).
- Remove contaminated clothing and place it into plastic bags and seal.
- Shower or clean entire body using soap and water.

**Shelter-in-Place**

If chemical, biological, or radiological contaminants are released into the air outside, you may receive instructions to shelter-in-place. This is to minimize your exposure, whether at home, work, or elsewhere. Some general guidelines follow, but always begin with protecting your respiratory system.

**Choosing a room—**

- If taking shelter from a chemical release, seek an interior room on a higher floor or a pre-designated area (without windows or with few windows) as many agents are heavier than air.
- If a radioactive material is released, seek an interior room on the lowest level or underground.
- Choose a room with access to a bathroom and preferably containing a telephone.
- Avoid rooms with window or through wall air conditioners as they are more difficult to seal.

**Sealing a room—**

- Lock doors and close windows, air vents, and fireplace dampers. Also close shades, blinds, or curtains if there is potential danger from explosion.
- Turn off ventilation systems (unless equipped with a full chemical/biological filtration system).
- Cover all windows, doors, and air vents with plastic sheeting (ideally 2-6 mils) and duct tape.
Civil disorder can be a dangerous event that may begin peacefully and rapidly become chaotic. Civil disorders may evolve from many situations such as a general strike, an anniversary of a highly emotional or controversial incident, major holidays, demonstrations, coups d’état, or any other politically inspired activity. Civil disorder is very dangerous regardless of whether the incident involves U.S. citizens or interests.

**Before**

- Stay informed. Pay close attention to local television and radio broadcasts and articles in local newspapers. In addition, listen for warnings and alerts issued by local governments, police, or civil protection agencies.
- If you know that a protest or demonstration is going to occur at a certain place or time, or you are aware that an incident affecting health and safety has occurred, make every effort to avoid the affected area.
- Plan alternate routes to work, school, or any other destination that you might frequent.
- Should an episode of unrest or any incident cause a disruption to electrical, water, or sanitation services, you should have enough food and water to sustain you and your family for at least three days.
- In cases of local unrest, have an emergency kit, or “go bag,” ready for each member of the family for evacuation on short notice.
- For emergencies, keep on hand an appropriate amount of money and/or traveler’s checks.
- Consolidate important personal records and documents for easy access and transportation. Keep passports and necessary visas up to date.

If you receive notification of a planned or ongoing civil disorder, try to obtain as much information as possible. Here are some questions to answer —

- When will the event take place?
- Where will the event take place?
- How large is it expected to be?
- What is the reason, goal, or objective?
- How long is it expected to last?

If not all of this information is available, report as much as possible to the your organization’s security professional as quickly as possible rather than spending time attempting to gain more details.

**During**

If you do find yourself caught in the middle of a situation of civil unrest, remember to —

- Stay away from the windows. If possible, relocate to a room that offers the greatest degree of safety from outside gunfire.
- When necessary, seek added protection by lying on the floor behind a durable piece of furniture.
- Stay aware of locations of emergency egress in the event of a forced evacuation, have your emergency kit ready to go.
- If you are in the open or on the street, seek cover and remain close to the ground.
- Stay in contact with the embassy and monitor local media station for news updates.
In every country in the world, there exists the threat of a situation that includes the holding of people against their will, whether the kidnapping of an individual person, the hijacking of an airplane, or a hostage standoff involving a large group of people with a structured list of demands. The State Department regularly posts Travel Warning and Travel Alerts with information about country specific threats to U.S. citizens, make sure you regularly check State.gov for advisories in your country. Additionally, the RSO or other designated officer at the embassy or consulate can provide country specific information on the following—

- The nature, if any, of the general threat in your country.
- Specific areas of the cities or countryside that are considered dangerous for U.S. citizens.
- Inform you of any recent incidents involving the targeting of U.S. citizens.

In addition to any information that the embassy RSO is able to provide, the following are some general security suggestions that should be considered when traveling or residing in an area that may be at risk of hostage taking or kidnapping:

- Be aware of your surroundings. Be alert to activities or situations that are abnormal.
- To the extent possible, avoid establishing a pattern in routes and times of your movements. Kidnappers generally keep victims under surveillance for substantial periods of time (several days to several months) to discover travel patterns and arrange a suitable time and place for the kidnapping. Unpredictability is one of your best weapons.
- Avoid traveling alone. Try to travel with a group of people, there is safety in numbers.
- If possible, travel in a convoy, particularly while traveling long distances.
- When possible, travel only on busy, well-traveled thoroughfares staying away from isolated back-country roads. Avoid dangerous areas of the city.
- Keep all your doors locked when driving.
- Avoid actions that might identify you as a U.S. citizen or someone who is wealthy.
- Make sure that both you and your family know to report any incident immediately to the Embassy and do not talk to the media. Talking the media without consulting with the Embassy can have a negative impact on the situation.

**Carjacking**

All drivers (male or female, young or old) may be targeted for a carjacking. To keep yourself safe here are a few items to remember—

- Carjackers often use diversion to conceal their attack (e.g., asking for the time, begging, washing car windows, selling newspapers).
- New cars and luxury or sports-utility vehicles are major targets of carjackers.
- Carjacking occurs primarily at night but also happens during the day.
- Gas stations, parking garages, and a victim’s home are all desirable “seizure” locations, as are places where one might park a car and leave the motor running.
- If you believe another car has been following you, and the driver “bumps” into you at a light or a traffic sign, particularly if the suspect vehicle is occupied by two or more men, do not get out of your vehicle. Drive to the Embassy, police station, or other safe location and report the incident.
Receiving a Threat
Here is some information you should always follow if you receive a threat to yourself or information regarding the holding of one or more people against their will—

- Immediately contact the embassy and report the threat to the RSO.
- If possible, use a tape recorder or other means to record any threatening phone calls.
- Obtain as much information as possible: Who, Where, When, How.
- Preserve any written communications as evidence.

Being Taken Hostage
There are no one set of rules to follow if you are kidnapped or taken hostage, but if you ever find yourself being kidnapped or taken hostage regardless of the means or method, here are some important things to remember—

- Only you can decide if you should fight back, run, or comply. You must make a judgment based upon your individual abilities and the situation at hand.
  - If you do not have extensive training and an ability to defend yourself then passive cooperation may be your best defense.
  - While first being taken captive, if feasible, scream and move about to draw attention to yourself. Try to involve others and ask someone to call the authorities.
- Under all circumstances attempt to stay calm and be alert to situations that you can exploit to your advantage. Remember that the primary objective of your family and the U.S. government will be to secure your safe return as quickly as possible.
- Leave evidence of your presence in each location. Examples include strands of hair, fingerprints, blood, bits of fingernails, etc.
- If asked to produce evidence of proof of life, such as a photo or a video, it is advisable to do so as it confirms the individual’s continued survival to family and aids in the negotiation process.
- Remember it is essential to avoid internal conflicts within the group and maintain a unified approach with the captors.
- Make a mental note of all movements, including time in transit, direction, distances, speeds, landmarks along the way, special odors, and distinctive sounds like bells, construction, voices, etc.
- Whenever possible, take mental note of the characteristics of your abductors, their habits, surroundings, speech, mannerisms, and what contacts they make.
- Generally, you cannot expect to have a good opportunity to escape. No attempt to escape should be made unless it has been carefully calculated to ensure the best possible odds for success.
- Avoid making provocative remarks to your abductors. As noted, they may be unstable individuals who react irrationally.
- Request special medicines or medical attention immediately if you have a disease or physical condition that requires treatment.
- Try to establish a rapport with your captors. Many people who have been held captive in the past have had success in attempting to build a relationship with their captors for the sake of better treatment and favors.

Continued
Captors may be seeking information to be used against the United States or of your fellow hostages. Do not discuss classified or sensitive information with your fellow hostages. You should be guided by the knowledge that whatever you say may be used to mislead or punish colleagues and that your actions may result in reprisals.

**Avoiding Capture or Attempting Escape**

The decision to try avoiding capture or attempting escape is one only you can make. Fellow hostages could be jeopardized. Before attempting such actions, there are factors to consider.

To have any chance of success, you should—

- Be in excellent physical condition and mentally prepared to react before the terrorists consolidate their position.
- Have a plan in mind, and possibly have been trained in special driving tactics or other survival skills.
- Take terrorists by surprise and you may survive. (If their organization has a poor track record of hostage safety, it may be worth the risk.)

**Rescue**

The termination of any terrorist incident is extremely tense. If an assault force makes a rescue attempt—

- Remain calm and get low to the ground and out of the way.
- Make no sudden moves. You could be mistaken for a terrorist and risk being shot.
- Even in a voluntary release or surrender by the terrorists, tensions are charged and tempers are volatile. Precise instructions will be given to the hostages, either by the captors or by the police.
- Follow instructions explicitly. You may be asked to exit with hands in the air, and you may be searched by the rescue team. You may experience rough treatment until you are identified and the situation has been stabilized.
Active Shooter events can happen in any community at any time. Because active shooter situations are often over within 10 to 15 minutes before law enforcement arrives on the scene, individuals must be prepared both mentally and physically to deal with active shooter situations.

**RUN – HIDE – FIGHT**

Quickly determine the most reasonable way to protect your own life. Remember that visitors are likely to follow the lead of employees and managers during an active shooter incident. In short, the immediate actions are RUN, HIDE, or FIGHT; further details on these actions are provided below.

**RUN**
- If there is an accessible escape path, attempt to evacuate the premises. Be sure to:
  - Have an escape route and plan in mind.
  - Evacuate immediately and leave your belongings behind.
  - Help others escape, if possible.
- Prevent individuals from entering an area where the active shooter may be.
- Keep your hands visible.
- Follow the instructions of any police officers.
- Do not attempt to move wounded people.
- Call your organization when you are safe.

**HIDE**

If evacuation is not possible, find a place to hide where the active shooter is less likely to find you. Make sure to silence your cell phone before hiding and text your location if you are safe to do so. Take some time now to examine your surroundings to determine where would be good place to hide, or a good place to avoid.

**Your hiding place should**—
- Be out of the active shooter’s view.
- Provide concealment and as much protection as possible in case shots are fired in your direction (e.g., an office with a closed door).
- Not trap you or restrict your options for movement.
- Lock the door to prevent the active shooter from entering your hiding place.
- Blockade the door with heavy furniture.

**If active shooter is nearby**—
- Silence your cell phone and/or pager.
- Turn off any source of noise (e.g., radios, televisions).
- Hide behind large items (e.g., cabinets, desks).
- Remain quiet if evacuation is not possible.
- Remain calm.
- If you can, alert the police to the active shooter’s location. If you cannot speak, leave the line open and allow the dispatcher to listen.

**FIGHT**

If you cannot run and cannot hide, and only when your life is in imminent danger, attempt to disrupt and/or incapacitate the active shooter. Act as aggressively as possible. Use whatever improvised weapons you can. Commit to your actions and incapacitate the shooter as quickly as possible.
Every day U.S. citizens living and working abroad live with the possibility of a sudden departure from an overseas location – in response to political unrest, natural disaster, a death in the family, divorce, a family member in crisis, or a medical emergency. Occasionally, you may need to shelter-in-place at your home for a few days rather than leave the country. Personal, political, family, and medical emergencies are more complicated when they happen overseas; being prepared will help you cope.

Some evacuations are brief; others last up to six months. Depending on the event that leads to an evacuation, you may travel to a nearby country to safehaven or you may return directly to the U.S. No matter how calm things are now, you should not be lulled into thinking that “it can’t happen here.”

Having a personal preparedness plan will help you, or you and your family, be ready to leave quickly with many arrangements in place.
Before a Drawdown and Evacuation

Organize Your Personal Affairs
In order to be properly prepared for an unexpected departure you should have your legal and medical affairs in order. Ask trusted friends, family members, and financial professionals to help you with preparations before you arrive. You should consider having a meeting with your bank or financial advisor, insurance representative, and family attorney to discuss the need to—

- Execute a Power of Attorney for each adult family member; have several originals and copies made.
- Establish individual credit cards for emergencies.
- Make sure you have a credit limit or access to at least $20,000 in the event you initially need to cover costs associated with a sudden departure. It may take several weeks to receive voucher reimbursements.
- Get an automated teller machine (ATM) card for your bank account that can be used worldwide. Make sure your spouse/partner knows the personal identification number (PIN). Consider the risks in the country where assigned and associated with the use of ATM, check, and debit cards that pull funds directly from your bank account.
- Create online automatic banking (whenever possible), including direct deposit of paychecks and bill payments.
- Purchase medical evacuation insurance for Members of Household.
- Purchase personal property insurance for your storage and your household effects (HHE), making sure it provides adequate coverage for all events including flooding and acts of war.

What to Hand Carry/Pack
Part of being prepared for an unexpected departure involves making sure you bring the right things with you, and also leave the right things behind.

- Decide what to take to take and what to put into storage. Consider storing items that can’t be replaced, including sentimental photos. Keep a photo inventory of all your possessions, also those going into storage, including valuables such as artwork and jewelry.
- Update all personal address lists and store them on a thumb drive or CD, or upload to a cloud site.
- Hand-carry employment documents for adult family members including resumes and references.
- Bring school records, report cards, test scores, current samples of work, and Individual Education Plans (IEP) for special needs children.
- Pack some seasonal clothing, winter and summer, regardless of the weather in country.
Before a Drawdown and Evacuation (Continued)

If you have children in local schools, check the school’s emergency evacuation plan. Choose a trusted colleague or friend and give that person a current power of attorney for medical or other emergencies in the event you need him/her to care for your children unexpectedly. You also should have a plan for pets. The U.S. government does not evacuate pets. Make advance arrangements for their care.

Sheltering-in-Place

Be prepared to shelter-in-place for up to 72 hours by creating an emergency kit for you and your family. The kit should include: food, clothing, water, medication, cash, supplies and important documents in case you need to shelter-in-place in the event of an emergency. Families with children may want to include small toys/games in the kit, as they will provide some comfort and entertainment during a stressful time. Plan to update your emergency kit every six months to ensure that all food, water and medication are fresh (not expired), all clothing fits, credit cards are up-to-date and batteries are charged. Place these items in a waterproof container that is easy to carry, such as a waterproof duffle bag or a large backpack. For more information on building a emergency kit, see chapter 1.

Cellular telephone equipment may be overwhelmed or damaged during an emergency. Aim to have a hard-wired telephone in the rooms where you plan to shelter-in-place. Take your radio, 72-hour emergency kit, or “go bag,” with you when you shelter-in-place. Listen to radio stations until you are told all is safe or given further instructions for an evacuation.

A Drawdown and Evacuation

If evacuation becomes a reality, you will follow the emergency evacuation plan for your organization. You will receive your evacuation travel orders. Before proceeding to your evacuation point, you may want to do a few last-minute checks to see if everything is in order. Put checkbooks, bankbooks, credit cards, and as much cash as you think you may need for a few days in a secure (but easily accessible) place. Ensure that passports and visas to enter the U.S. for non-U.S. citizen family members are in order. Arrange for pick-up or forwarding of mail and plan for the care of household and domestic employees. Don’t forget about your pets. Since you may not be traveling directly to the U.S., be prepared for an interim stopover.

Make your carry-on your “go bag” with all your important documents (including a CD and/or thumb drive with scanned copies, just in case). Don’t forget to pack prescriptions, toys, wipes, water, snacks, cash, any necessary chargers, and several changes of clothes, as well as something to read. Think about whether you might be evacuating to a place with a different climate, or where the climate might change in the near future.
During a Drawdown and Evacuation (Continued)

Important Documents and Reference Information—

- Passport information: passport number and date of issue
- Visa information for non-U.S. citizen family members for entry into the U.S.
- U.S. driver’s license number
- Social Security number
- Bank account numbers
- Credit card numbers
- Insurance policy numbers
- Car registration, title, serial number and car insurance
- Current prescriptions, including eyeglasses and contact lenses

Copy these documents to bring with you (leave the originals in a safe deposit box)—

- Copy of will(s)
- Power of attorney (one of the originals)
- Birth and marriage certificates
- Naturalization papers
- Deeds
- Mortgage documents
- Stocks and bonds (or leave with broker in case you want to sell)
- Insurance papers: life, car, house, medical, and household effects (HHE)


Recommended emergency contact information

**Home**
Address: ____________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________ Telephone #:________________________
Name: ____________________________________________________________ Telephone #:________________________
Name: ____________________________________________________________ Telephone #:________________________
Name: ____________________________________________________________ Telephone #:________________________

**Day Care**
Name: ____________________________________________________________ Telephone #:________________________

**School**
Name: ____________________________________________________________ Telephone #:________________________

**Hospital**
Name: ____________________________________________________________ Telephone #:________________________
Address: __________________________________________________________

**Work Emergency Number**
Telephone #:________________________

**Local Contacts**
Police Telephone #:________________________ Fire Telephone #:________________________
Local Neighbor/Contact: __________________________ Telephone #:________________________

**Stateside Contacts**
Next of Kin Contact: __________________________ Telephone #:________________________
U.S. Lawyer/Attorney: __________________________ Telephone #:________________________
U.S. Doctor: __________________________ Telephone #:________________________

State Department Operations Center 202-647-1512