

Health, Safety, and Security Overseas...



Congratulations on your upcoming mission experience! While you are out of the USA or Puerto Rico, there are some basic things you should know to stay healthy and safe. Remembering these basics can keep you out of the hospital, make you less vulnerable, and ensure that your experience is one to remember...in a positive light!

The information below consists of excerpts from the "Going with God" toolkit. We highly recommend you utilize this resource as you prepare for this mission experience. If you are interested in receiving training and/or purchasing this toolkit on CD, please email bimvolunteers@abc-usa.org or call 1-800-222-3872 ext 2366.

What to Expect While You are There

1. Get information from your hosts on what the conditions will be in the host country:
 - ✚ housing
 - ✚ food (be willing to try new things, always be gracious)
 - ✚ transportation
2. Be aware of health and hygiene issues. A good source of information can be found at: <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/default.aspx> Select your host country and read about the latest health alerts and how to stay healthy in the country. If one of your team members has travel experience, ask them to share suggestions for staying healthy. Common sense suggestions in many countries include:
 - ✚ drink only boiled, bottled, or treated water, and drink lots of it
 - ✚ avoid ice unless you're sure it's safe
 - ✚ brush your teeth with safe water
 - ✚ eat food that is thoroughly cooked and hot
 - ✚ avoid fresh salads, fruit or raw vegetables (unless you peel them)
 - ✚ avoid street vendor food unless you can get the food that has just come off the fire
 - ✚ wash your hands every time you get a chance (a squeeze bottle of hand disinfectant works great)
 - ✚ wear insect repellent that contains no more than 35% DEET
 - ✚ wear sunscreen (SPF 30 or higher)
 - ✚ on the work site, wear eye and ear protection when needed
 - ✚ be careful with power tools and use ladders carefully
 - ✚ get help with heavy loads
 - ✚ know your own limits and don't exceed them
3. Know common safety measures when traveling in unfamiliar places. For additional information, see: <http://www.cie.uci.edu/prepare/safety.shtml>. The measures might include:
 - ✚ Always go with a buddy. Don't go wandering around alone.
 - ✚ Always let your team leader know where you are going.
 - ✚ Obey the team leader's instructions.
 - ✚ Stay alert but not paranoid.
 - ✚ Stay with the crowds and the traffic.
 - ✚ Don't leave your bags unattended.
 - ✚ Carry only small amounts of cash (carry your "secret stash" somewhere else on your body, don't expose the hiding place in public)
 - ✚ Keep a hand on your bag; carry your wallet in a front pocket.

Emergency Medical Plan

Check with your hosts about their plan for responding to a medical emergency should the need arise (eg. the location of the closet medical facility, how long it takes to get there, and the best route). Thank them for preparing for such a contingency.

In the event that a team member needs medical treatment, your team's Emergency Coordinator and Team Medic and a member of the host team should accompany the injured person to the hospital and be an advocate for him/her; they will report progress to the rest of the team.

Crisis Management Notes

There is a slight chance that your team will be in a country facing serious political turmoil or natural disaster.

1. Check with your hosts regarding the likelihood of political disturbance or natural disaster.
2. Establish a contingency or evacuation plan with your host.
3. Make sure you understand your host's advice about what to do should a crisis or natural disaster occur.
4. The team leader should have a small amount of emergency funds tucked away to cover transportation costs should the need arise.

NOTE: In the very unlikely event that a hostage situation should occur, International Ministries will make every effort to negotiate release. However, like other mission agencies, International Ministries has made it a policy not to pay ransom.