

VIII. Safety Guidelines

Listed below are guidelines intended to assist you in living safely during your time abroad. These guidelines are adapted from “Responsible Study Abroad: Good Practices for Health and Safety,” prepared by the Interassociational Advisory Committee on Health and Safety and Study Abroad.

Responsibilities of Participants

Participants can have a major impact on their own health and safety abroad through the decisions they make before and during the program and by their day-to-day choices and behaviors.

Participants should:

1. Read and carefully consider all materials issued or recommended by the sponsor that relate to safety, health, legal, environmental, political, cultural, and religious conditions in host countries.
2. Consider their personal health and other personal circumstances when applying for or accepting a place in a program.
3. Make available to the sponsor accurate and complete physical and mental health information and any other personal data that is necessary in planning for a safe and healthy study abroad experience.
4. Assume responsibility for all the elements necessary for their personal preparation for the program and participate fully in orientations.
5. Obtain and maintain appropriate insurance policies and abide by any conditions imposed by the carriers.
6. Inform parents/guardians/families and any others who may need to know, about their participation in the study abroad program, provide them with emergency contact information, and keep them informed on an ongoing basis.
7. Understand and comply with the terms of participation, codes of conduct, and emergency procedures of the program, and obey host-country laws.
8. Be aware of local conditions and customs that may present health or safety risks when making daily choices and decisions. Promptly express any health or safety concerns to the program staff or other appropriate individuals.
9. Behave in a manner that is respectful of the rights and wellbeing of others, and encourage others to behave in a similar manner.
10. Accept responsibility for their own decisions and actions.
11. Become familiar with the procedures for obtaining emergency health and law enforcement services in the host country.
12. Follow the program policies for keeping program staff informed of their whereabouts and well being.

Recommendations to Parents/Guardians/Families

In study abroad as in other settings, parents, guardians and families can play an important role in the health and safety of participants by helping them make decisions and by influencing their behavior overseas.

When appropriate, parents and guardians should:

1. Obtain and carefully evaluate health and safety information related to the program, as provided by the sponsor and other sources.
2. Be involved in the decision of the participant to enroll in a particular program.
3. Engage the participant in a thorough discussion of safety and behavior issues, insurance needs, and emergency procedures related to living abroad.
4. Be responsive to requests from program providers for information needed regarding the participant.
5. Keep in touch with the participant.
6. Be aware that some information may most appropriately be provided by the participant rather than the program.

Additional Personal Crisis Planning Preparations

Review the CIA country profile of your host countries (<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/profileguide.html>), which has information about natural hazards (listed in the geography section). Students should research these hazards, since major environmental risks in their host countries and/or important precautions might be different from those in the US.

Take the time to determine where closest recommended hospital is. Know how to contact your home country embassy or consulate. Know how to contact local emergency numbers for police, fire, and other emergencies.

IX. U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs Travel Registration

Whenever traveling abroad, students (U.S. citizens) should register their travel using the Smart Traveler Enrollment (<https://step.state.gov/step/>). Travel registration is a free service provided by the US government to US citizens who are traveling to, or living in, a foreign country. Registration allows you to record information about your upcoming trip abroad that the Department of State can use to assist you in case of an emergency. Americans residing abroad can also get routine information from the nearest US embassy or consulate. Students who are American Citizens who participate in the Swarthmore Semester/Year Abroad program are required to register their travel with the Smart Traveler Enrollment program.

The Department of State provides a wealth of travel information (<http://travel.state.gov/>). Students are required to read the State Department consular information sheets for the countries to which they plan to travel. The consular information sheets contain important travel advice and detail risks to travelers and US citizens in particular including transportation and water safety.

Students are encouraged to read the following carefully:

International Travel Information <http://travel.state.gov>

Emergencies and Crises <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/emergencies.html>

Students Abroad <http://travel.state.gov/content/studentsabroad/en.html>

911 numbers in other countries: <http://travel.state.gov/content/studentsabroad/en/to-go/911-list.html>

X. What to do in a Health, Safety, or Legal Emergency

- Contact your Resident Director/International Program Office of your abroad program.
- Keep your parents informed.
- Notify OCS and Public Safety (610-328-8333) as appropriate.
- If you have CISI coverage call 203-399-5130 (calling from outside of the US, collect calls accepted)
- If this is a city or countrywide emergency, make sure to check with your embassy/consulate as well as the local/national authorities. For US citizens: Consular personnel at U.S. Embassies and Consulates abroad and in the U.S. are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to provide emergency assistance to U.S. citizens. Contact information for U.S. Embassies and Consulates appears on the Bureau of Consular Affairs website at <http://travel.state.gov>. Also note that the Office of Overseas Citizen Services in the State Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs may be reached for assistance with emergencies at 1-888-407-4747, if calling from the U.S. or Canada, or 202-501-4444, if calling from overseas.
- If you purchased the ISIC card it also provides basic travel insurance. They can be reached at 855-327-1408 (in US) and while abroad call collect 630-694-9755. Coverage includes emergency medical transportation; baggage and travel delay; travel documentation and passport replacement; sickness and hospital benefits; accidental death, dismemberment and repatriation of remains. **This is not a primary insurance. If you have CISI or another travel insurance through a study abroad program, call them first!**
- 911 numbers in other countries:
<http://travel.state.gov/content/studentsabroad/en/to-go/911-list.html>

How To Contact CISI

In cases of medical or security emergency, contact the emergency assistance provider.

Policy Number: 15 GLM NO6566212

Emergency Assistance Provider, AXA ASSISTANCE

Phone: 855-327-1411 (calling toll-free within the US). 312-935-1703 (calling from outside of the US, collect calls accepted)

Email: MEDASSIST-USA@AXA-ASSISTANCE.US

If you have any questions regarding your benefits or the claims submission to not hesitate to contact CISI. Be sure to include your policy number on all communications by email or mail.

Phone: 800-303-8120 ext. 5130 (calling toll-free from within the US) 203-399-5130 (calling from outside of the US, collect calls accepted) Email:

claimhelp@culturalinsurance.com

Mail: 1 High Ridge Park, Stamford, CT 06905

Emergency Preparation

Students should keep in mind what they might need in an emergency. Some items you should always carry: hand sanitizer, money, ID, photocopy of passport and visa, hard copy of important phone numbers and addresses (of program director, other local contacts, American contacts, embassy etc.). It is important for the numbers and addresses to be a hard copy in case phone is lost or out of battery or the network is down.

Other items like extra local money or USD, passport, flashlight, medicine and/or other first aid supplies, iodine, glasses/extra contact lenses are specific to particular emergency situations and not practical to carry around everyday, but students should be aware of these items in case they need to find them quickly in an emergency or carry them during extended emergency situations.

XI. Water Safety

The following is excerpted from the University of California Education Abroad Guide to Study Abroad.

Swimming safety

Follow these basic tips for keeping safe:

- Do not swim in unfamiliar bodies of water or at isolated beaches.
- Never swim alone.
- Never swim while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Never dive headfirst.
- Check local information for details of tides, currents, and pollution. Tide changes can produce powerful currents.
- Rip currents and undertows can be very common at many beaches.
- Do not swim where there are no lifeguards present.
- Check for possible hazards from jellyfish, sea urchins, coral, sea snakes, sharks, and venomous fish. Saltwater crocodiles live in coastal estuaries in many countries.
- Human sewage and animal feces make some beaches no-go areas for swimming or even wading.
- If you find yourself unable to reach shore, wave your arms and yell for assistance.

How to Avoid and Survive Rip Currents (Source: National Weather Service)

Rip currents are particularly dangerous for weak or non-swimmers. Rip current speeds are typically 1-2 feet per second. However, speeds as high as 8 feet per second have been measured; this is faster than an Olympic swimmer. Thus, rip currents can sweep even the strongest swimmer out to sea. The following tips will help you play at safe.

When at the beach:

- Whenever possible, swim at a lifeguard protected beach.
- Never swim alone.
- Learn how to swim in the surf. It's not the same as swimming in a pool or lake.
- Be cautious at all times, especially when swimming at unguarded beaches. If in doubt, don't go out!

- Obey all instructions and orders from lifeguards. Lifeguards are trained to identify potential hazards. Ask a lifeguard about the conditions before entering the water. This is part of their job.
- Stay at least 100 feet away from piers and jetties. Permanent rip currents often exist along side these structures.
- Consider using polarized sunglasses when at the beach. They will help you to spot signatures of rip currents by cutting down glare and reflected sunlight off the ocean's surface.
- Pay especially close attention to children and elderly when at the beach. Even in shallow water, wave action can cause loss of footing.
- If caught in a rip current:
- Remain calm to conserve energy and think clearly.
- Never fight the current. Think of it like a treadmill that cannot be turned off, of which you need to step to the side.
- Swim out of the current in a direction following the shoreline. When out of the current, swim at an angle -- away from the current -- towards shore.
- If you are unable to swim out of the rip current, float or calmly tread water. When out of the current, swim towards shore.
- If you are still unable to reach shore, draw attention to yourself by waving your arm and yelling for help.
- If you see someone in trouble, don't become a victim too:
- Get help from a lifeguard.
- If a lifeguard is not available, have someone call the local emergency number
- Throw the rip current victim something that floats -- a lifejacket, a cooler, an inflatable ball.
- Yell instructions on how to escape.
- Remember, many people drown while trying to save someone else from a rip current.

XII. Fire Safety

The following is excerpted from the University of California Education Abroad Guide to Study Abroad. Additional information is also available from the Jasmine Jahanshahi Fire Safety Foundation – www.firesafetyfoundation.org.

Fire safety involves thinking ahead, knowing what to do, and keeping fear under control. Do not take fire safety for granted. Fire safety standards differ drastically around the world. Many overseas locations do not meet U.S. standards in terms of fire protection and regulations (e.g., fire sprinklers, smoke alarms, fire extinguishers, etc.), means of escape, and fire-fighting capability. Some older buildings are constructed to minimal standards. Although many fire departments around the world have equipment that can reach above a second floor, most do not have equipment to reach beyond a seventh floor. If you live in a multi-story building, request a room no higher than the seventh floor. Fire safety is a shared responsibility between UCEAP (orientation and training of students), the community (well-trained and prepared emergency responders), and the individual student. You are ultimately responsible for your own safety during a

fire. Know how to react should a fire occur. Practice a fire escape plan and fire-safe behavior on a regular basis. During a fire, you may have less than one minute to get safely out of a building. Knowing what to do can mean the difference between life and death. Always consider fire precautions in any building you visit, particularly the means of escape. Take the time to inspect your lodging for possible safety hazards, including lack of smoke detectors, exposed wires, and improperly operating heating and cooking equipment.

Prevention

Taking a few sensible precautions, you can help protect yourself, and others, from injury—or worse:

- Ensure you have a working smoke alarm and test it weekly (Pack a portable, battery- operated smoke detector for use in private lodgings and/or hotel rooms while traveling during breaks.) A smoke detector should be temporarily located as close to the ceiling as possible in a hotel room, but should be permanently attached to the ceiling in your place of residence.
- Never smoke in bed; when you finish a cigarette, put it out completely and make sure all cigarette ends are cold before emptying ashtrays into bins
- Be aware of where fire alarms are located and fire equipment is kept
- Draw an escape route. Plan and practice it with your housemates
- Keep a flashlight on hand to help guide you through smoke

If you live in halls of residence

If you have any concerns or questions about fire safety in halls (e.g., you've spotted a fire risk) speak to officials at your host institution.

If you have a disability and would need assistance during a fire, let the university or college health and safety officer know when you arrive.

You should also:

- check what the fire safety rules are, such as any ban on candles in rooms

If you live in privately rented accommodation

If you live in a private house or apartment, make sure it's fitted with smoke alarms on each level of the property and that they are tested regularly. If there are no smoke alarms, purchase one, and install it. If you cannot mount the alarm on a wall, place it on a high surface, with the top of the alarm not closer than 4 inches or more than 12 inches from the ceiling. Check that your escape route is clear. For example, make sure there are no bikes blocking your exit in the hallway, and be aware of any windows that are barred. If you are studying in England, you can request a home fire safety visit from your local Fire and Rescue Service. They may provide and fit a smoke alarm for free.

Identifiable Fire Hazards:

- Identify potential fire hazards (see below for partial list) and take steps to minimize or eliminate hazards. Eliminating fire hazards associated with electricity, natural gas, and flammable liquids will go a long way toward reducing your fire risk.

- Smoking in bed or careless smoking. Careless smoking is known to be one of the primary causes of home fires. If you don't discard a cigarette properly, loose embers that are hot can ignite when they come in contact with a flammable surface.
- Other significant hazards include:
 - Smoke alarms that do not work.
 - Expired or inoperable fire extinguisher.
 - No escape plan.
 - Overloaded extension cord. Overloaded electrical outlets.
 - Using a space heater that is not laboratory tested and approved
 - Frayed cord plugged into wall socket.
 - Electrical cords under carpets or across high-traffic areas.
 - Electrical appliances left on (hair iron, etc.)
 - "Daisy-chained" power strips (one plugged into another).
 - Power strip without circuit breaker.
 - Flammables close to a source of ignition.
 - Unattended candle, fireplace, or space heater.

XIII. Earthquakes

Stay low to the ground – hands and knees are good so you can move or cover head and neck. If outside, go to open space away from buildings and other structures that can collapse, rocks that can fall etc. If inside, go under a sturdy table or bed, or stand in a doorway. Stay away from glass windows and objects that might fall from above. Even when the shaking seems to have stopped, remain aware of surroundings, continue to stay away from possible falling objects, and be prepared to drop to hands and knees again in the case of big aftershocks that might follow the earthquake.

[Note: this advice might be good for most places in the US and Europe and maybe most big cities around the world, but in some areas where buildings are less sturdy, it might be better to carefully and quickly get outside to an open space if possible.]

<http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/earthquakes/specificsituations.asp> has information for what to do in some more specific situations.