ProtectUK

# Overseas travel advice

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## 1. Guidance for the organisation

Organisations have a duty of care towards those who travel overseas for work purposes. By having the right security policies and procedures in place, an organisation will be better prepared to support their traveller should a security situation, such as a terrorist incident, occur.

This guidance has been designed to support organisations in understanding how they are able to mitigate risk to their employees and how best to corporately respond should an incident occur. The guidance also contains tips for organisations communicating travel security messages to their employees; this is encouraged so that they can take responsibility for their own travel security.

### Risk assessment

You should conduct a risk assessment prior travel which should consider: Is travel necessary? Are there other, lower risk ways of meeting business objectives, for example through video conferencing? Conduct an up-to-date risk assessment of the destination and the proposed travel itinerary. Appraise the risk from a range of threats which will include terrorism amongst others. Use authoritative sources of information such as the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) website to inform the assessment.

Go to the FCO and Department for International Trade Overseas business risk webpage.

### Educating travellers

Where appropriate, provide security briefings for travellers specific to their travel destination, drawing on the authoritative advice determined as part of the risk assessment. Travellers should leave the

briefing understanding the risk and how they can keep themselves safe and secure.

Ensure travellers are aware of the support the organisation provides. This may include security advice, travel healthcare arrangements and what they should do in an emergency. Travellers may require wider relevant security advice, such as understanding how to manage their online profile, this may be particularly beneficial if they wish to maintain a low profile while overseas.

## Travel booking procedure

Procure travel and accommodation services through a reputable company. If your organisation allows employees to book their own travel, make sure that the proposed airlines and travel providers have a good safety and security record.

Consider how you may be able to access your in-house travel bookings to see details of who is scheduled to be at a particular destination and when. This is important for your organisation if you are to provide an effective, timely response in an emerging crisis.

## Maintaining contact with the traveller

Make sure that you have reliable systems in place to remain in touch with your employees when overseas.

Provide an emergency point of contact available to the traveller 24/7. Use an accessible format, such as providing a wallet card, so that the traveller is more likely to have your contact details with them.

Make sure there is an accessible record within the organisation of the detailed itinerary of the traveller. Encourage the traveller to check-in with the organisation at regular points and if their travel plans change.

It is good practice to have an emergency point of contact for the traveller’s home life. This will ensure effective communication should an incident arise.

Consider providing the traveller with a mobile phone that will work at their overseas destination.

## Emergency provisions

Prepare a proportionate risk-management and contingency plan that includes how to respond should the traveller be involved in a security incident overseas.

Make sure your organisation has a procedure in place for staying up-to-date with emerging security issues that may be relevant to overseas travellers, using trusted news sources. Have clearly identified roles and a chain of responsibility in case of a terrorist incident, ensuring there is someone available and able to make decisions to support travellers, such as accessing funds in an emergency.

Consider using medical and travel security assistance providers who can provide 24-hour services and advice in an emergency to travellers e.g. via specialised mobile applications or messaging services.

## Debriefing travellers

Make sure that you have appropriate systems and services in place to support travellers when they return, especially if they have been involved in an incident while overseas.

Give travellers an opportunity to provide feedback on their recent trip, as this is an important way of ensuring your travel policies and procedures remain fit-for-purpose for travellers.



### Tips for communicating travel security messages to travellers

- Make sure that your organisation’s travel security policies and procedures are straightforward for the traveller to find and follow
- Overseas work trips are often busy. Make it easier for your travellers to follow security advice by providing a manageable number of key security principles
- Make sure travellers are clear about the behaviours expected of them when they are overseas and that they understand why these will help to keep them safe
- When briefing the traveller, use case-studies and examples. This will assist the travellers understanding of the advice you are delivering
- Foster a sense of responsibility on the part of the traveller. Although the organisation will have certain protections in place, it is the traveller who will need to behave securely while they are overseas. Personal security is a personal responsibility
- Provide security messages in accessible formats to travellers. Think about whether security advice can be included in the booking process, for example at briefings or when booking travel
- Make the security messages relevant for travellers in their personal lives to increase engagement with the security advice

## 2. Guidance for the traveller

The following security advice has been provided to help you communicate key security messages to your travellers:

> *The chances of being caught up in a terrorist incident are low, but when travelling overseas, the security situation on the ground can change rapidly and unexpectedly. As a traveller, you may be less familiar with how to behave should an incident occur, than you would be if you were in the UK. There are important practical steps that you can take to reduce the likelihood of being directly involved in a terrorist incident and to be best prepared should a situation arise. The security advice provided here has been designed for those who travel overseas for work purposes. You may also find these tips helpful to keep you and your co-travellers safe during your own personal travel.*

## Before you travel




- Use authoritative, sources such as Foreign, Commonwealth and Developments Office's travel advice to check the latest advice, for your destination
- Avoid mentioning that you are travelling or providing details of your trip online (including on social media). This will prevent others from having the opportunity to plan to target you when overseas
- Choose your travel route to avoid additional security risk. Can you avoid a layover in a high-risk country? Does your airline or travel provider have a good reputation for safety and security?
- Think about whether your plans involve arriving at your destination late at night or early in the morning. If so, what onwards transport options will be available to you?
- Have an emergency contact at home and share a detailed itinerary with them so that someone knows where you are in case of emergency. If you are travelling for work purposes,

make sure that you arrange for the same with your organisation
- Make copies of your passport and travel documents and keep these separate. This will make the process of applying for replacements easier if required
- Make sure that you are covered by appropriate health insurance. Share the details with your emergency contacts and take a copy with you
- Take a mobile phone with details for your emergency contacts at home and within your destination country. Would you know how to contact the emergency services if an incident occurred?
- Where possible, do not take expensive items with you (e.g. jewellery, designer clothing and unnecessary electronic devices) as they may make you appear to be an attractive target to criminals and others with hostile intent

## While travelling

- Keep a charged mobile phone with you so that you are contactable in an emergency. Consider taking a portable battery charger with you
- Monitor local sources of news to make sure you are aware of any developing situations which could impact your personal security
- Keep your points of contact up-to-date if your travel plans change

- Maintain awareness of your surroundings; avoid distractions such as using headphones as they will slow your reaction should you encounter a threat. Appearing alert will also help deter potential attackers and criminals



- Look out for those acting suspiciously and for unattended items such as bags and packages. If something doesn’t feel right, trust your instincts and report it to a security guard or law enforcement official as soon as you can
- Avoid setting patterns in your day-to-day activity that could be used to target you. Vary timings, modes of transport and routes where possible
- Be wary of those showing you undue attention and asking a lot of questions that are personal in nature
- Try to minimise the time you spend in public areas within airports. At your earliest convenience, move through security to a safer area
- Where possible, avoid crowded areas where you may stand out or be targeted as a foreigner such as at protests and other civil unrest scenarios
- Avoid clothing or personal behaviour that may draw attention to yourself
- Use only licenced vehicles
- Where possible, avoid walking alone at night
- If driving overseas, make sure that your vehicle is in good working condition before starting each journey and there are no signs of tampering. While driving make sure windows and doors are locked

- Be sure of the identity of visitors before opening your hotel room door. Use security chains and locks as appropriate when you are inside your room
  Refuse to accept unexpected packages
- Consider utilising a door jammer or door wedge
- Identify potential emergency exits and routes to safety so that you will be prepared if a situation arises
- Familiarise yourself with guidance on how to behave if you become involved in a terrorist incident:
    - **RUN** to a place of safety. If you can't do this,
    - **HIDE** turn your phone to silent and barricade yourself in if possible.
    - **TELL** the police when it is safe for you to do so.

## When you return




Let your emergency points of contact know when you have returned safely. If you are travelling for

work purposes, your organisation may be interested in any feedback you may have to help to improve security advice for future travellers. Report any suspicious incidents that occurred overseas.

**KEYWORDS**
RISK ASSESSMENT
PERSONAL SECURITY
SUSPICIOUS BEHAVIOUR
EMERGENCY PLANNING
PALS GUIDANCE
PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE LOCATIONS