

# SAFETY AND HEALTH

## GENERAL INFORMATION

The safety and health of participants in study abroad is of primary concern to Anderson University. Participants need to be aware that there is additional safety and health risk related to living in another country. However, there are precautions that you can take to significantly reduce the risk. This document summarizes some basic guidelines and procedures for a safe study abroad.

Study abroad participants should:

- Read and carefully consider all materials issued by the study abroad program that relate to safety, health, legal, environmental, political, cultural, and religious conditions in host countries.
- Consider their health and other personal circumstances when applying for or accepting a place in a program.
- 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.
- Assume responsibility for all the elements necessary for their personal preparation for the program and participate fully in orientations.
- Obtain and maintain appropriate insurance coverage and abide by any conditions imposed by the carriers.
- 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.
- Understand and comply with the terms of participation, codes of conduct, and emergency procedures of the program, and obey host-country laws.
- 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.
- Behave in a manner that is respectful of the rights and well-being of others, and encourage others to behave in a similar manner.
- Become familiar with the procedures for obtaining emergency health and law enforcement services in the host country.
- Follow the program policies for keeping program staff informed of their whereabouts and well-being.

### ***Before You Go***

Safety begins when you pack. To avoid being a target, dress conservatively. As much as possible, avoid the appearance of affluence.

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

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

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

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

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

Consider getting a telephone calling card. It is a convenient way of keeping in touch. If you have one, verify that you can use it from your overseas location(s). Find out your access number before you go.

Don't bring anything you would hate to lose. Leave at home valuable or expensive-looking jewelry, irreplaceable family objects, and all unnecessary credit cards.

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

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

### ***Documentation for Medications***

If you go abroad with preexisting medical problems, you should carry a letter from your doctor describing your condition, including information on any prescription medicines that you must take. You should also have the generic names of the drugs. Leave medicines in their original, labeled containers. These precautions make customs processing easier. A doctor's certificate, however, may not suffice as authorization to transport all prescription drugs to all foreign countries. To ensure that you do not violate the drug laws of the countries that you visit, you may consult the embassy or consulate of those countries for precise information before you leave the United States.

If you have allergies, reactions to certain medicines, or other unique medical problems, you may consider wearing a medical alert bracelet or carrying a similar warning.

### ***Immunizations***

At least four months prior to your travel, consult with your physician regarding immunizations and general health precautions. Be sure that you are up to date on basic childhood immunizations (tetanus, polio, diphtheria, etc.). If you will be traveling to a developing country,

then typhoid fever, hepatitis A and B, cholera and yellow fever are frequently recommended immunizations. Also, anti-malarial medicine may be recommended if traveling to malarial areas.

Some countries require specific immunizations for entry, while others do not. These requirements can change according to the health conditions within the country. You will want to monitor the immunization and vaccination requirements of the country. Even if some immunizations are not required for entry, you still may want to get them. Be sure to discuss this with your doctor.

You may be required to present an official record of immunizations upon entry to a country. An "International Certificate of Vaccinations" is the most common form used. It is issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and is approved by the World Health Organization. You can get the form from your local Department of Health, travel clinic, passport offices and from many physicians.

### ***Health and Accident Insurance***

Check to see if your health insurance covers you abroad. Even if your health insurance will reimburse you for medical care that you pay for abroad, normal health insurance does not pay for medical evacuation from a remote area or from a country where medical facilities are inadequate. Consider purchasing one of the short-term health and emergency assistance policies designed for travelers. Also, make sure that the plan you purchase includes medical evacuation in the event of an accident or serious illness.

### ***Local Laws and Customs***

When you leave the United States, you are subject to the laws of the country where you are. Therefore, before you go, learn as much as you can about the local laws and customs of the places you plan to visit. Good resources are your library, your travel agent, and the embassies, consulates or tourist bureaus of the countries you will visit. In addition, keep track of what is being reported in the media about recent developments in those countries.

### ***Money Matters***

If you take travelers' checks, be sure to sign each one immediately after you purchase them. They should not be countersigned until they are used and then only when the person who is accepting them is watching. Keep the list of check numbers in a separate place from the checks.

Major credit cards may be used to pay for larger purchases and emergencies. You can also use ATM machines to get cash in the local currency. Find out from your bank which system their cash card is on (Cirrus, MAC, etc.) and ask if they have ATM locations where you will be studying. Look for that symbol on the ATM machine before using it abroad. Banks will charge you a service fee for each transaction. You can avoid surprises on your bank statement by finding out about these charges *before* you travel. Keep a copy of credit card and ATM numbers, as well as the telephone number of card offices, in a safe location that is separate from where you keep your cards.