

Travel Preparation

When planning travel abroad, visit the [State Department's website](#) to stay updated on current travel alerts (which are typically posted on their homepage).

Register with the [State Department's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#) which provides timely updates on [travel warnings and alerts](#) via email.

Keep your own emergency contact information on you in case you are incapacitated and someone needs to reach out to your designated emergency contact person.

Make copies of your Passport Information Page, all your tickets plus any other important documentation (i.e. credit cards, driver's license, etc.) and keep them in a secure area in your carry-on – and separate from the bag/wallet where the originals are so you have information to replace them and/or cancel them immediately if the originals are stolen or lost.

US Embassy or Consulate

Learn where the American [embassies and consulates](#) are located in your host country and carry this information with you at all times.

911 emergency equivalent phone numbers

http://travel.state.gov/content/dam/students-abroad/pdfs/911_ABROAD.pdf

Cultural awareness of your destination(s)

Research the language, dress, habits, taboos and customs.

Immigration

Customs Documentation required, Visas, Permits, etc.

Immunizations

Plan what immunizations are needed how far in advance of your departure date

Chronic Illness management

Carry your personal medications in their original containers

First Aid

Carry a personal first-aid kit in your luggage

Insurance

Personal, College/University, Special for program? What does it cover?

Stay Connected

Monitor the State Department's website at travel.state.gov where [Worldwide Caution](#), Country Specific Information, [Travel Warnings](#) and [Travel Alerts](#) are found. Also, you can follow the State Department on [Twitter](#) (@travelgov) and the Bureau of Consular Affairs on [Facebook](#).

Download the free Smart Traveler app, available through [iTunes](#) or [Google Play](#) to have important travel information at your fingertips. **Keep your mobile phone fully charged at all times.**

If your electronics don't support the voltages in the countries you are visiting, you may also need a power converter. To save space, we recommend an all-in-one travel power adapter, which often includes a USB port, rather than individual plugs.

Monitor local media to stay on top of security issues.

Communication

Set up a regular check in with parent, friend or sponsor back home so they know where you are and what you are doing. Wi-Fi based texting apps (such as "WhatsApp") are great, inexpensive alternatives to landline calls or texting subject to international rates. Similarly, "Skype"-like apps are good alternatives to using an international enabled phone. Check with your carrier before you go to find out if your phone has international capability in the countries you are visiting and whether you need to update your mobile phone roaming/software capabilities, or enable international features, before you leave. Often this cannot be done once you have left the country.

Logistics

- Transportation (air, land and sea) – viability and usability
- Food & Water reliability – Can you drink the water and eat the food?
- Housing standards – Where will you be staying?

Emergency contact(s)

Names and several phone numbers – work, home, cell (What's app or equivalent)

Emergency plan

Know the Program/University emergency plan and home campus crisis responders

Evacuation

Who makes arrangements and how? If you are unable to communicate with anyone due to any circumstance (technological / communication equipment failures, etc.), have you set up alternate meeting sites in advance?

Personal safety

If your trip requires travel to an area with rising security threats, dress down and blend in to downplay the fact that you're a tourist or visitor (it's a good idea to research your destination's [dress code](#) before you travel).

Avoid civil disturbances and obey local laws. Don't be lured by the excitement or seeming anonymity of a big crowd. It's best to stay away from large crowds and activities like sporting events or festivals during travel alerts.

Finally

Students (and your administrative team!) should practice how they would handle an emergency abroad based on your own guidelines. Be sure students (as well as administration) have an understanding of the proper protocols to take to ensure their safety or to help a fellow traveler.

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
- FBI Student Travel Brochure: <https://www.fbi.gov/about-us/investigate/counterintelligence/student-travel-brochure-pdf>