

An introduction to Risk Management for your Business Trip

Most business trips pass off without incident, but people travelling in unfamiliar places will face some risks. In this document we will provide some basic advice which you should follow whenever you are travelling to reduce the risks you might face during your trip.

The advice in this section is generic: for some destinations, the guidance will not be enough to address the complexity of the risks you might face therefore please refer to How to check if you are planning to travel to an at Risk country for further details on how to check for specific country or city information);

The Basic Principals when travelling are:

- **Prepare.** Make sure you know what you are going to be doing, and take what you need – including medicines, identification documents, communications devices – and power supplies.
- **Be aware.** Understand your destination: wherever you are going, you must understand the nature of the risks, and the appropriate advice to mitigate their impact. Be vigilant when you're travelling, to ensure you can adapt to any changes.
- **Understand the basic geography of your destination,** and ensure you familiarise yourselves with key routes: avoid high-crime or low-income areas if possible. If you find yourself disorientated, be discreet when consulting a map – or ask for directions from someone in a public, client-facing role, such a shop assistant or police officer.
- **Avoid disputes, demonstrations, political rallies** and commotions on the street. Do not stay to watch or photograph them.
- **Don't stand out.** By displaying ostentatious displays of wealth. Avoid displaying money, wearing jewellery or carrying valuables such as laptop computers or cameras. When walking in the street, keep your bags and briefcases away from passing traffic. Criminals or terrorists are more likely to target the rich or the unwary, rather than those who give the impression of being familiar with their surroundings.
- **Carry cash in more than one pocket,** and keep a small amount in a top pocket to hand over to a criminal who confronts you. A dummy wallet – with a small amount of local currency, an expired credit card and some useless receipts – can be useful to satisfy a mugger.
- **Memorise important local phrases** (yes, no, how much, stop here etc).
- **Stay in touch.** Keep a fully-charged communications device with you. As well as checking in with your contacts, it's essential if you ever need to request assistance. Programme your emergency numbers - and keep a hard copy just in case.
- **Do not give out personal information.** Do not discuss your plans with strangers. Do not carry unnecessary amounts of information, either in hard copy or on laptops, removable drives etc
- **Ignore verbal 'bait'** from passers-by – do not get into an argument – and avoid eye contact with strangers. If you suspect that you are being followed, enter any busy public place and call for help.
- **Limit your alcohol intake:** it is likely to reduce your level of awareness and judgment.
- **Do not accept food or drinks from strangers.** Always keep your food and drink in sight in entertainment venues.
- You should **consult our country- and city-specific information** to ensure you understand the general risks in a given location. This can be viewed at www.travelsecurity.com using the University's log in details or the Foreign office advice page at <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>

Additional Advice for Women Travellers

- Observe and respect local clothing customs. Dress modestly to avoid drawing attention.
- In some countries, a lone female traveller is a source of curiosity: you may be stared at if travelling alone. As a precaution, avoid eye contact with strangers, especially on the street and on public transport. If travelling alone, restrict evening entertainment to business-class hotels or membership clubs.
- A wedding ring – even a fake one – can reduce levels of unwanted male attention.
- Decline politely but firmly any invitations which make you feel uncomfortable, even if faced by amicable pressure to accept.
- Ignore suggestive comments.
- Ensure your hotel only allows guest access to accommodation floors.
- Check the available transport options at your destination, and if there are any additional precautions advised for women – such as not using a taxi alone, or where to sit on a bus.

Pre-Travel Preparation and Planning

Before you travel, research local conditions and risks, and identify events that may cause disruption, such as national holidays, elections or planned strikes and demonstrations. Relevant information can be obtained by visiting www.travelsecurity.com or <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice> or by contacting the University's Travel Office. Ensure that you are aware of any important local customs, and political or religious issues. Ensure you have contacted ITS service desk regarding using your University issued mobile device whilst travelling aboard.

What to take

- Passport and visa (if required – see Vis information or the University's Travel Office for advise). Check that the passport is valid for the period of visit. Check visa dates and whether you need a multi-entry visa. Photocopy your visa and appropriate pages of your passport and keep these with you at all times in a different place from the originals. Additionally, scan relevant pages and send to an email account that you can access while abroad. Take spare passport photographs with you.
- If appropriate, your national and international driving licenses and copies.
- Credit cards. Consider reducing the limit to what you need for an emergency.
- Local currency (if it is legal to do so), or 'hard' currency (usually US dollars), including small denominations
- Traveler cash Passport if you prefer and it is appropriate.
- A dictionary/phrasebook if you cannot communicate in the local language. You may also be able to download a translator app onto your phone.
- A city map and route map.
- Consider bringing a small torch (flashlight).
- Do not carry items that could cause offence at your destination (such as alcohol or magazines that may be viewed as 'pornographic').

Flights

Check-in

- Before you leave for the airport, confirm that flight times have not changed. www.flightaware.com is a great flight tracking app
- Your airline may also provide an online check-in facilities around 24 hours prior to your flight departure check your airlines website for more details.
- Dress casually; do not attract attention to yourself.
- Examine your ticket to ensure that your baggage receipt bears your correct destination, particularly if making connecting flights. Check that additional coupons have not been removed.
- During security screening procedures, keep your laptop in view.
- Move to the departure lounge as soon as possible.

Luggage

- Travel light if possible and do not take unnecessary valuables. Travelling with hand baggage may only be advisable if arriving at airports with lengthy waits for baggage and poor security.
- Once packed, keep your bag in sight at all times. Serviceable but inconspicuous luggage and briefcase is less likely to attract attention.
- Pack important or confidential documents, glasses or contact lenses, prescription drugs (in the original packaging with a copy of the prescription) and a change of clothes in hand luggage.
- Label luggage with a personal email address only so the airline can contact you, but without giving away unnecessary personal information.

On Board

- Only drink alcohol in moderation.
- Avoid detailed discussions with strangers, and do not reveal information about yourself, your company or journey.
- Do not photograph the airport, even from the aircraft.

Arrival

- Stay alert. You may be tired, but be aware of your surroundings.
- Be polite and stay calm when dealing with police and immigration officials, who can be officious and heavy-handed.
- If necessary, change some money inside the airport: enough for a taxi if your transport does not arrive. Do not display cash in public areas.
- On a first visit, try to arrange to be met and ensure that you will be able to recognise the person sent to meet you. Ensure that you have a contact number for your hotel or host. Alternatively, use a hotel courtesy bus.
- If using a taxi, find out from local contacts which are the safest and most reliable, and how much you should expect to be charged. Use an official booth or queue.
- If there is no meter, agree a price beforehand.
- Do not allow airport employees to walk away with your baggage. Supervise the loading of luggage into buses or taxis – do not leave it to the driver. Keep important items with you.
- Do not leave the airport with anyone whose identity is in doubt. If in doubt, ask an airport official.
- Display an air of confidence.

Onward Travel and Getting Around

Taxis and minicabs

- Use only licensed/regulated companies.
- Ask local contacts/hotel staff about any different tariff levels (for different times of day).
- Ask your contacts or hotel to recommend a reliable minicab company. On ordering, ask for the vehicle registration number and the driver's name. Do not get into a minicab that you have not ordered.
- In unmetered taxis, agree the fare before starting the journey. Hotel staff or local contacts will be able to advise on appropriate fares.
- If you are unable to communicate with the driver, ask someone to give him instructions or write down the address. If possible, ask a local colleague to write down important addresses in the local language, and carry them at all times.
- Sit in the rear of the taxi. Always wear a seat belt. Do not discuss personal details with the driver.
- If you feel uneasy with the driving or the route (or the driver), instruct the driver to stop at the first secure or busy place.
- Do not display large amounts of cash when paying.

Rental cars

- Use a trustworthy local driver, especially if you are new to a country. The driver should know areas to avoid and be able to carry out basic maintenance.
- If possible, select an older, more basic vehicle to avoid attracting attention. Thieves may favour particular models; local contacts should know which ones.
- Choose a vehicle with robust locks and central locking, a lockable fuel cap, a front seat passenger rear-view mirror, and vehicle alarm.
- Make sure your vehicle is appropriate for the local conditions.
- Use a reliable company offering 24-hour emergency service, and ensure that you have the contact details for the service.
- Ensure that you have an inflated spare tyre that you know how to change, a maker's toolkit; and appropriate insurance, and that any security equipment is functioning.

Driving

- Keep all doors locked and windows closed, particularly when stationary.
- Keep items of value, such as briefcases or cell phones, out of sight. Ideally place them by your feet: do not leave on an empty seat.
- Keep a good distance away from the vehicle in front (at least half a car's length when in traffic, more at speed) to give room for manoeuvre in the event of trouble.
- Be alert to ploys such as cars that lightly bump you, bogus accidents or roadblocks. Drive on and notify the police when it is safe to stop.
- Avoid driving alone, especially at night.
- Be especially vigilant at vulnerable points, such as road junctions and traffic lights, especially if you see suspicious persons loitering in the area.
- Ignore beggars or street vendors who approach you or your vehicle.

Parking

- Park in an area monitored by security personnel and illuminated at night.
- If secure garaging is not available, park in an area that is overlooked, well-lit and that offers no hiding place for an attacker.
- If your car is parked in an insecure place, and has been unsupervised, approach with caution and walk past if suspicious persons are nearby. Approach the vehicle with your keys to hand.
- Set the alarm system whenever the vehicle is parked.

Driving and the law

- Carry your driving license, vehicle registration papers and insurance certificate.
- Be familiar with traffic laws and traffic accident procedures.
- Do not drink and drive.
- If involved in a serious accident, keep calm but be aware that onlookers are likely to side with the local person. In some places, angry crowds can gather quickly: it may be advisable to continue to the nearest police station to report the accident.
- When dealing with the police, do not sign any documents until you know what they say, even if this means waiting for a translator. If police are unwilling to find a translator, insist politely, but firmly. Inform your embassy.
- Police in some countries may demand cash as a fine for a 'traffic violation', which may or may not have occurred. Insisting on a receipt might deter casual requests for bribes.

On foot

- Ask your host or hotel if it's OK to walk around – during daylight or after dark.
- Ask the concierge about reliable transport and areas to avoid. Obtain a local map and mark these areas, the location your hotel and embassy/consulate. Carry the map and a list of important telephone numbers, especially at night.
- Carry only what you need for the day: keep valuables, such as wallet or purse, in an inside pocket. Separate items of value. It is useful to have a small amount of money – or even a wallet with expired cards – in an accessible pocket that can be handed over to a mugger.
- Avoid walking in deserted areas or along dark streets, especially when on your own or in unfamiliar areas.
- If it is essential to walk in or through a trouble-spot, do not go alone. If you have any concerns, leave the area immediately.
- Never accept a lift from a stranger.
- Be wary of strangers who offer to accompany you in an unfamiliar area.