




Adventist Risk Management, Inc.



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3 Risk-Areas Every Missionary Should Consider

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When traveling for mission trips, there can be unique risks that you might not face on a regular vacation or business trip. Whether traveling by car or plane, overseas or out-of-state, it's essential to prepare for a variety of risks you might encounter while on your mission trip. While these three key areas are not exhaustive, they can increase safety for your mission team.

1. Learn About Your Destination

Conduct research on the location you will be visiting to ensure the safety and security of everyone on your trip. Compile a packet of information for all chaperones and attendees to review before your departure date. Include information on local customs, basic words in the local language, and what to do in emergencies. Conduct a pre-trip meeting to answer any questions and clarify essential items in the packet.

With the help of a trusted local contact, plan an itinerary, decide on transportation, and safe meet-up locations. Discuss security issues, travel requirements, and the availability of health services of the site you will be visiting. What should you pack in your personal first aid kit?

Each trip attendee should make copies of all travel documents before leaving. Keep a copy with you while you are traveling, and emergency contact information of someone who is not on the trip. Provide a list of each attendee's emergency contact to every trip leader. Make sure all emergency contacts are aware of the trip details.

2. Practice Situational Awareness

This mission trip may be your first time in this country or even the first mission for others in your group. Encourage everyone to be aware of their surroundings and to have an idea of what to do when confronted with a threat. Vary your team's travel routine to avoid thieves from predicting your schedule.

Monitor travel alerts and warnings from your country state department or it's equivalent. Provide everyone with contact information for

local law enforcement, your country's embassy, or a trusted local contact. Instruct volunteers to use this information in the event they become separated from the group. Vary your group's travel routine to avoid thieves from predicting your schedule

Avoid over-packing. Don't bring items that are unnecessary or prone to theft. Opt to leave your laptop or tablet at home. Switch out your fancy watch for a regular one. Leave your hand-held music devices at home. It is also advisable to leave identifying or branded clothing at home. Pack simple clothing and pack minimally, paying attention to the region's climate.

Choose a well-known hotel chain in a safe area when booking your accommodations. Check that all rooms for your attendees are safe and that all exits can be locked and secured. If there's any security issue, ask for a different room. Lock room doors at all times, and never leave valuables in the room. Avoid sharing travel plans, itineraries, or transportation times with anyone outside of your mission group.

Prepare all attendees for the heightened risk of kidnapping and carjacking. Chaperones and participants should establish a "buddy-system" and other tactics to ensure that the whereabouts of all attendees is always known. When walking on the street, be sure to walk towards the oncoming traffic rather than with the traffic. Avoid walking near the edge of the road. Your group should always stay together.

3. Practice Personal Wellness & Safety

If your trip requires a long flight or car ride, be intentional about stretching and staying hydrated to avoid deep vein thrombosis or blood clots. Stand, stretch, drink water, and move around every couple of hours to keep your blood flowing well.

When traveling, only choose vehicles that are safe, insured, and driven by trained professionals. Avoid nighttime travel, if possible. This is often the most dangerous time to travel in many countries. Use seatbelts during every trip and never overload vehicles. Before getting in the vehicle, check tire conditions. and ensure there is a spare, if needed. Is there a spare tire in case you have a flat? Is it aired up and ready for use? Additionally, make sure you have access to an emergency vehicle kit and emergency medical kit at all times.

Most likely, your team will have a safe and productive trip, but it's important to always prepare for losses. Know what kind of insurance you have, both medical and travel. Is the coverage adequate for your trip? Consider [short-term travel insurance](#) if your mission trip qualifies. Keep pertinent insurance information with you at all times in case of emergency.

For more information on travel and mission trip safety, visit [ARM's Prevention Resources page here](#).

References

¹Travel Safety Part 1: Being Prepared - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GMa5h0WFui0&list=PL4424116EE603E0D7>

²Travel Safety part 2: Health and Medical Care - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1OykqI6qm8>

³Travel Safety part 3: In Transit - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UiPIumyaCUo>

⁴ <http://blog.missionminder.com/10-safety-and-security-tips-for-mission-trips/>

⁵ http://www.shorttermmissions.com/articles/travel_safety_tips

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