



EVANGELICAL FRIENDS MISSION
SHORT TERM MISSION TRIP
CRISIS GUIDE

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INTRODUCTION

*Before you leave the US you should contact the State Department online and register with the US Embassy or Consular group in the country you are going to.

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/list-of-posts.html>

<https://www.usembassy.gov>

They will want the names of everyone and the dates of your travel and how to contact you. They will text you during your time in the country of any emergencies (transportation issues, general strikes, riots, etc.) as they learn about them. Since they know you are in the country and you have their 24-hour contact information, you can contact them with any issues, and they will assist you.

When anything happens that was not part of the plan, you should contact your key person back in the states and give them the details. Your team members' families should not be contacting you directly but through your key person back in the states. It limits misunderstandings, misinformation, and rumors. It is better than everyone talking to everyone else. This key person can then keep appropriate families informed and help them through whatever crises.

It is recommended that each team leaving the country appoint three individuals to leadership roles (team leader, Sub-leader 1, and sub-leader 2.) There are several occasions where this is helpful in travel and daily movement of the team. It is especially important in the case where a team member, for whatever reason, has to remain in the visiting country. Reasons may include: illness, hospitalization, incapacitated from travel, and the like. Examples will be mentioned below.

In all cases/situations described below, pray for wisdom, discernment, and guidance. Continue to pray until the issue is resolved.

WHAT IF A PASSPORT IS LOST?

1. When traveling overseas, you should always have at least two copies of your passport (you only need the two pages that contain your signature, your picture, and information about you). Also, have a backup image of your passport on your smartphone.
2. Your trip leader should have one copy to travel with and one should be remain with responsible point-person at the home-base (church, school, etc.) who can fax it or scan it and send it if necessary.
3. As soon as a passport is lost, file a police report and contact the US Embassy or US Consular Affairs in that country, and they will be able to generate a short-term passport for you. Be prepared to pay the application fee – approx. \$150.

WHAT IF A TEAM MEMBER/S TEST POSITIVE FOR COVID-19/NEEDS MEDICAL TREATMENT, OR DIES?

1. Before your trip, contract with an international travel/health insurance company.
 - a. We suggest GeoBlue Travel Insurance (<https://geobluetravelinsurance.com>)
2. Most international travel/health insurance companies can connect you to the nearest English-speaking, Western-trained doctor. Also, check with your local contact or host to ensure proper medical services before/during the trip.
3. If a team member experiences any of the symptoms associated with COVID-19 (or whatever variant is currently spreading), the first step is to self-isolate to lower the risk of spreading infection. A COVID-19 test should be administered so that the team leadership can decide and take any necessary steps for the protection of all.
4. Notify home-base point person so others may be in prayer for the situation.
5. If one contracts COVID-19, you will need to work with the guidelines of that country. It may be wise to immediately begin a contact tracing document. Contact tracing is the process of identifying people who may have been exposed to the individual(s) on your travel team has been infected with the COVID-19 virus. Contact tracing and quarantine of contacts identified can help interrupt the transmission process and help to control the virus. Contact tracing can also help high risk people know earlier that they have been exposed therefore allowing them to get medical care quicker if they develop symptoms.
6. It is recommended that prior to leaving the country that three individuals are recognized with leadership roles (team leader, Sub-leader 1, and sub-leader 2.) If a team member becomes ill or hospitalized and is unable to leave the country when the team returns, to the US, the team leader or sub-leader #1 should remain with the team member. (Sub-leader #2 is in place in case the ill individual is the team leader or sub-leader #1.)
7. Most insurance provides medical flights out of the country and repatriation of remains should there be a death.
8. In case of death, work with the local US Embassy and/or Consular to help return the body (if possible).

WHAT IF YOUR TEAM GETS SEPARATED OR LOST (AND HOW TO AVOID THAT)

1. Everyone needs to pay attention to the rules and regulations for traveling in the country.
2. The team leader needs to watch over their team and assign other team members to help keep watch of the group, especially when your team is traveling in airports, cities, markets, etc.
 - a. For example, if traveling with a large group, break into small groups of four-six with a squad leader in each group. Team leader looks to the squad leaders for a 'thumbs up' if all members are present in their squad. Team leader does not exit the current location until all are present. When traveling by foot (whether at airport or on land) team leader walks in front and a designated squad leader is very last. The tail-end squad leader NEVER lets anyone else walk slower. Team leader can look to the tail squad leader and know that all the team is present between the head and the tail.
3. Each team member should carry on their person the cell number of the team leader, the in-country ministry base/host address, and ministry base/host phone number.
4. If someone becomes lost while in-country, if possible, call the local ministry leader for help. Otherwise, contact the local police.
5. Learn basic phrases in the local language to ask for help, police, etc.
6. No one should ever be out on their own. They should always be in approved groups of at least two or three, often with a local guide.
7. The leader should have clear directions of where a team is going.
8. If the leader does not know the area, hire a trusted guide/host to direct you.
9. If you become lost or separated, ask to use local contacts (with caution for safety) that can immediately call via phone or guide you back to where you need to be. Each team member should have their contact and in-country Host contact information.

WHAT IF ALL FLIGHTS ARE CANCELLED OR YOUR TEAM IS STUCK IN-COUNTRY?

1. Contact the home-base (USA) point-person. This person should communicate to the prayer chain a need for discernment, wisdom and guidance for the important and quick decisions that will need to be made. The point-person should also help in navigating the situation and may need to contact federal authorities to assist.
2. If necessary, arrange for additional travel funds to be provided for the expenses incurred as a part of the rescheduling.
3. If you made your reservations with a travel agents contact them asap to re-book your group on new flights. This can be done by the home-base point-person working with the team leader.
4. Engage the assistance of the in-country ministry contact person to help with rescheduling of logistics. Contact the US Embassy or local Consular to help you find a place to stay and or find flights out of the country.
5. Check with your local in-country contact to help you find lodging while you work on the issue.

WHAT IF A RIOT BREAKS, BATTLES, OR NATURAL DISASTERS OCCUR?

1. Check your travel insurance contractor prior to departure from USA. Some do include emergency help in times of political uprisings and natural disasters. They will send in a trained, experienced international team to get you out of the country.
2. If you are traveling during political unrest, The US Embassy or Consular will inform you of possible tensions and travel warnings/restrictions. Contact them ahead of time to be aware of travel warnings/restrictions, etc.
3. If you see or hear a riot or disturbance, you first want to move away from the area quickly. If you cannot get away, your second choice is to quickly find a building that you can shelter in as you start communicating with the US Embassy or Consular group and your local contacts.
4. While in-country:
 - a. Stay informed of areas to stay away from. Avoid riot prone areas. If must enter area, have a planned escape route.
 - b. It is extremely important to follow the guidelines for group travel (mentioned above) so that no one becomes separated from the group. Stay close together. There is strength in numbers. Move away from riot, with the flow of traffic.
 - c. Don't get involved with the riot. Attempt to not stand out. Stay close to walls. Avoid bottleneck areas.
 - d. If in a car or bus, remain there, unless that is the focus of the riot. Keep calmly driving at a moderate speed. If on foot, move to a safe area, not out in the open (a place that will help hide you). As possible, stay informed of the area and places to avoid.
 - e. Carry a small amount of cash for emergency transportation, pay looters, personal needs, etc.

WHAT IF YOU NEED EMERGENCY ACCESS TO MORE CASH THAN YOU HAVE (OR YOU ARE ROBBED)?

1. This should be discussed with the sending group in the US prior to departure. A policy should be in place as to what to do in emergency situations. The home-base point-person should be familiar with the policy.
2. You should always have reserved cash with your team, preferably scattered among several people, possibly with your hosts or local contacts, or safe at a hotel.
3. Following the policy discussed in #1, if you still end up in this situation, you should have a credit card that you can get money from an ATM or possibly a bank.
4. You can also contact the US Embassy or Consular group, who can help arrange for money to be wired to you from your key contact back in the US.
5. (It may be advantageous to add information/training notes on how to avoid pick-pocketers, as well of oversight of personal items when out on a day of ministry where team has personal backpacks, team equipment, etc.)

WHAT IF YOU ARE KIDNAPPED?

1. Ahead of time:
 - a. Do not publicize your travel plans and details.
 - b. Do not wear flashy clothes or jewelry.
 - c. Do not flaunt that you are from the US.
 - d. Vary your travel times.
 - e. Keep passports somewhere safe.
 - f. Be aware of your surroundings. Avoid isolated rural areas.
2. Do not fight your captors. Your team members or your host or contact person in the country should immediately contact the US Embassy or Consular group and the local government. These groups have experience with these situations and will know what to do.
3. Pray for your captors and that the grace of God would move them to release you/your party without harm.