

International Travel Guidelines and Procedures

When students and faculty travel overseas on Stanford University programs or funding, the concern for their safety is given careful attention. While it is understood that there is always some level of risk involved in travel, the majority of these risks can be minimized through careful preparation. This handout is designed to help you “manage risk” to the greatest extent possible.

We know that this is a long and dense document, but all of the information in it is *very* important. So, bear with us so we can make sure you have safe and happy travels.

Part I: Before You Go

Documents

Carefully consider what documents might be relevant to you as you travel.

- **Passport**
Make sure your passport is valid for your travel and re-entry to the U.S. (usually, it must be valid for 6 months after your return date).
- **Visa (if applicable)**
Be sure to check visa requirements for the country you will be serving in as well as transit visa requirements for any country through which your flight(s) may connect. Visa requirements are constantly in flux and obtaining a visa can be a time-consuming process. Please begin promptly.
Visa Central (www.visacentral.com/stanford) is the recommended agency for students and faculty. Feel free to contact them with any visa questions.
- **ISIC International Student Identification Card**
Consider purchasing an ISIC (www.isic.org). This card is recognizable worldwide and will often make you eligible for discounts that a Stanford ID will not. In addition, it comes with some basic travel insurance.
- **Proof of Vaccinations, Immunizations, Medication**
Depending on where you are going, you may also need documentation of vaccinations or an International Certificate of Vaccination or Prophylaxis. Check the guidelines for your country through its consulate website and the U.S. Department of State’s Country Specific information page.
If you have any physical condition that may require emergency care (diabetes, epilepsy, etc.), carry some type of identification tag, bracelet or card on your person at all times, indicating the specific nature of your problem and what should be done in the event you are unconscious or unable to communicate.

TIP: Make copies!

Having copies of important documents is very important and will make replacing a lost or stolen document infinitely easier. Make several copies of ALL important documents before leaving home. When carrying documents on your person, consider placing them in a pouch or belt worn under your clothes. In addition, you should keep copies of these documents in a safe place, other than on your person. While there is no one rule for storing documents, try to disperse them among your luggage, person, and lodging in such a way that not all copies could be lost or stolen at once. A copy of important documents should also be left at home with a trusted relative or friend.

Register Your Travel

Before you depart, it is very important that you register your travel with the appropriate departments. It will be extremely helpful to you in case of an emergency or if someone happens to urgently need to get in contact with you.

- **REQUIRED: Office of International Affairs** (<https://oia.stanford.edu/>)
In the box that says “Email a copy of my registration to,” you **MUST** email a copy of your registration to Hilary Douglas, hilaryd@stanford.edu
- **SUGGESTED: U.S. Department of State’s Smart Traveler Enrollment Program** (<https://step.state.gov/step/pages/common/citizenship.aspx>) (for U.S. citizens)
OR Embassy or Consulate of the country that issued your passport (for non-U.S. citizens).

Insurance

Consult carefully with your insurance provider, whether through Cardinal Care or otherwise, to determine what insurance coverage will be extended to you over the course of your travels.

- **REQUIRED:** Sufficient health, accident, disability, trip, interruption/cancellation, hospitalization, and personal property insurance to cover yourself during participation in a Stanford University-funded program.
- **SUGGESTED:** Emergency evacuation, accidental death, and baggage delay insurance.

TIP: *Know your coverage!*

Make sure you understand what your coverage is. Several providers, including the ISIC card, STA Travel (statravel.com) and Travel Guard (travelguard.com) offer a variety of packages that can help you to obtain complete insurance coverage.

Additionally, you should read the guidelines from Stanford University on ISOS, On-Call International, or Medex to understand the level of non-medical assistance you will receive in-country. More information can be found at <https://internationaltravel.stanford.edu/home>

Health, Vaccinations, Immunizations, Medications

- **Center for Disease Control** (<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list/>)
Consider obtaining all immunizations recommended by the Center for Disease Control. Specific guidelines for the region of your destination can be found on their website.
- **Consult with on-campus resources**
 - Vaden Health Center (<https://vaden.stanford.edu/health-resources/travel>)
- **Prescription Medication**
If you take medication, plan ahead and obtain prescriptions from your primary physician for the entire duration of your stay. Some medications may not be readily available overseas.

TIP: *Proactive Prevention*

Malaria is a serious but preventable infection that can be fatal. If you are traveling to a region in which malaria is a threat, obtain a prescription anti-malarial drug from your health care provider and take it responsibly. Students should update the prescriptions for any medications that they take routinely, and carry written prescriptions using generic names to facilitate getting them refilled overseas, should this be necessary. You may also be able to contact your insurance company to get an override, so that you can get all of your medications before heading out of the country.

Money

Money should be carried in a variety of widely accepted ways.

- **ATM cards**
Most countries have ATMs, and this is often the easiest way to get cash while abroad at a good exchange rate. Make sure to notify your banks and credit card companies of your travel plans to avoid fraud alerts and frozen assets.
- **Local Currency**
Consider obtaining a modest amount of foreign currency prior to your departure in case your arrival time does not coincide with the business hours of the currency exchange office at your destination airport. For conversion information, see <http://www.xe.com/>
- **U.S. Dollars**
It is also a common practice to carry \$50 to \$100 in U.S. currency in small denominations in case of an emergency, as U.S. dollars may be accepted in some countries.

Packing

Packing lists will vary but here are a few things to consider as you begin to pack your bags.

- **Climate and cultural standards**
Dress in both a comfortable and respectful manner. Always try to dress on the conservative side. Even when you are not at work, you still represent yourself and Stanford.
- **Convenience in packing/cleaning**
On the upside, jeans are durable, can be dressed up or down and are a staple around the world. On the downside, they're bulky to pack and can take a long time to dry (remember many countries do not use dryers but rather line dry their clothes).
- **Electronics**
What do you absolutely need? Try to use technology as little as possible and your experience will be more immersive and fulfilling. If you bring your electronics, plan how you will secure digital devices (including any information they may contain). Determine what type of adapter or converter you may need to charge your electronics. Find out how to minimize international data charges while abroad.
- **First Aid Kit**
Including, but not limited to, pain reliever, Pepto-Bismol tablets, band-aids, antiseptic, rubber gloves.
- **Odds and Ends**
Small flashlight, collapsible umbrella, hand sanitizer, sunscreen

TIP: *Get what you can when you arrive*

Find out what you'll be able to obtain there so that you don't have to take more luggage than necessary.

Do Your Research

Read as much as possible about the *history and politics* of the nation to which you are traveling. Reach out to professors in a field related to your research or fellowship or area of travel and ask them about their experiences and knowledge on related topics.

- **Check the U.S. Department of State International Travel Pages**
Refer to country specific information pages:
(<http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/country.html>)
As well as the warnings and alerts:
(<http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/alertswarnings.html>)

- **Stanford University International Travel Policy**
Read the letter on dangerous conditions from the Office of the Provost (<https://provost.stanford.edu/announcements/international-travel-policy>)

Part II: In-Country Guidelines

**Remember that these are *general* guidelines. They are meant to serve as a guide, not a rulebook. Some of these may not apply to you, depending on where you're traveling and with whom you are traveling.

Conduct

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a responsible and mature manner at all times. This includes being aware and sensitive to cultural dress, norms, and behavior in the sites visited. Remember that mature behavior and the exercise of sound judgement enhance your personal safety.

Practical Security Measures

- **Register with the American Consulate**
Provide them with your address and telephone number. In the event of an emergency, the Consulate can contact you and advise you of any appropriate action you should take.
- **Carry important phone numbers and a calling card**
Carry a short list of any phone numbers (police, fire, taxi, hospital, residence, in-country supervisor, in-country contact, etc.) and a pre-paid public phone card (make sure you know how to use it!).

Transportation

Motor vehicle accidents are one of the leading causes of death in the developing world. Always consider the relative safety of your transport options, and, when possible, consider taking a taxi/cab over a public bus. Avoid night travel. Always try to wear a seatbelt.

There are risks involved in operating any motor vehicle. It is strongly recommended that students do not operate a motor vehicle in another country. In some countries, an international driver's license is required. If an accident occurs, you may find yourself responsible for all damages and costs.

Lodging

If you are staying in a hotel, locate fire exits and familiarize yourself with hotel services and surroundings. Put your "Do Not Disturb" sign on your door when you leave your room at night. Always keep your room locked, both when you are in your room and after you leave; lock all the windows before leaving. Do not open your door to people you don't know. Be wary of who you give your hotel name and room number or residence location to. Check your belongings regularly and do not leave money or valuables in your room unless it has a reliable safe.

Food, Water, Alcohol

Eating is one of the best ways to experience a new culture. However, contaminated food and drink are the major causes of stomach or intestinal illness while traveling and can really dampen your experience.

- **Food**
Food should be selected with care. Raw food could be contaminated, particularly in areas of poor sanitation. Foods of particular concern include salads, uncooked vegetables and fruits, unpasteurized milk and milk products, raw meat, and shellfish. If you peel fruit yourself, it is

generally safe. Cooked food that is still hot is generally safe. Some fish are not guaranteed to be safe even when cooked because of the presence of toxins in their flesh.

- **Water**

In areas with poor sanitation, only the following beverages may be safe to drink: boiled water, hot beverages (such as coffee or tea) made with boiled water, bottled water, canned or bottled carbonated beverages, beer, and wine.

It is safer to drink from a can or bottle of beverage than to drink from a container that was not known to be clean and dry. However, water on the surface of a can or bottle may also be contaminated. Therefore, the area of a can or bottle that will touch the mouth should be wiped clean and dry.

Ice may be made from unsafe water and should be avoided.

In areas where water is contaminated, travelers should not brush their teeth with tap water.

Water can be treated through boiling, chemical disinfection, and portable filters.

- **Drugs & Alcohol**

Do not let a friendly nature and the use of alcohol overcome your good sense and capacity when it comes to socializing.

Do not purchase or use drugs.

Crime Prevention

While you may not directly encounter thieves, they will have their eyes on travelers like you.

- **Use a money belt or neck safe**

It is a great way to hold your passports, cash, and other valuables. In general, it's wise to keep your valuables in front of you.

- **Be vocal but not aggressive**

If a situation makes you feel uncomfortable, shout or scream to break communication. If someone tries to take your purse, backpack, or other property by force, let them have it. Your personal safety is far more important than any property. Never pursue the robber.

- **Be aware of your surroundings**

Pickpockets do not usually work alone. Be aware of distractions by strangers, as the "lift" often follows. Be particularly cautious in internet cafés and high tourist areas as they are often targeted by thieves.

- **Report crimes**

If any of your possessions are lost or stolen, report the loss immediately to the police. Give them as much information as possible, and file a police report in the event of an insurance claim. Then take the typical steps of canceling credit cards, etc.

Keep a copy of the police report for insurance claims, and an explanation of your experience.

In case of arrest

It is highly unlikely that someone exercising sound judgement and acting responsibly will have any problems with law enforcement authorities of any country. However, isolated incidents do occur. Should you find yourself in such a situation, remember that, outside the borders of the United States, you have no other civil and legal rights than anyone else living in the country you are visiting. Should you find yourself in police custody, stay calm, maintain your dignity, and do nothing to provoke the attending officer. Admit nothing, do not volunteer any statements, or sign anything. Ask to contact a trusted friend or relative and the American Consulate. Do not make any decisions before consulting one of these

parties or an attorney. Do not fall for the ruse of helping those detaining you in exchange for your release.

Part III: Campus Resources

Stanford University resources are available while you are away from campus.

Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS): +1 (650) 723-3785

Stanford Sexual Assault Hotline: +1 (650) 725-9955

Conclusion

In assessing the risks of international travel, it is important to maintain a realistically comparative perspective of the United States and the world. The United States is known around the world as a comparatively dangerous country. No country in the world has as many guns or gun-related injuries and deaths; U.S. drug and alcohol abuse is among the highest in the world. Although international visitors come in great numbers to visit the United States, many arrive concerned about what they will find. Still, most Americans maintain that life at home is safer than life elsewhere. U.S. media coverage of the rest of the world focuses on overseas political upheavals, violent strife and natural disasters, rather than on positive political and social. While travel abroad requires prudence, the suggestions in this handout are not intended to fuel fears or foster concerns. It is hoped that this information will help you to recognize your personal responsibility, further investigate your destinations, and respond to each situation you encounter with sound judgement.