



Founder Member of the Year Out Group
 TravelQuest Ltd, Reg Office as above. Reg Number 3072191

YOUR SAFETY: PERSONAL SAFETY GUIDE AND TRAVEL TIPS



PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

CHANGE HISTORY

Issue	Date of Issue	CR/DR Numbers	No. of Pages	Pages Changed and Reasons for Change
1	12 Feb 08		22	Re-issue – entire document changed. Please read full document.

PERSONAL SAFETY

Personal Safety and welfare issues form a large part of the ethos and thinking of Travellers and these issues are dealt with extensively throughout our literature. We take your safety very seriously and we urge you to read this booklet carefully to ensure that you are as prepared as possible for your travelling experience.

You'll find that some of the information contained within this booklet is pure **common sense**, but some of it will surprise you and you'll think, 'Oh, wow, I hadn't thought of *that!*'. It's amazing what we forget to do (or not do) when we go travelling. We have compiled these safety notes to help you prepare for as many situations as possible. However, this guide is not the font of all knowledge on travelling safety; we can suggest the most sensible precautions to take, but ultimately it is up to you to research safety issues while travelling. Familiarising yourself with the safety guidance given here, together with your own research into travel safety in general and safety in your particular destination country, will go a long way to decreasing risks while you're travelling.

When deciding to travel to a country with a different culture, please keep the following in mind:

- If you have any resentment against a particular religion or race then please **DO NOT** go.
- Our organisers are very hospitable, approachable and work very hard to look after your welfare needs, as do the families with whom you stay, but *remember it is not home from home*. It's a new culture, a new experience, and very different to what you're used to – but then, that's part of the excitement!

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BEFORE YOU GO:

Personal Safety begins before you leave. You should begin by carefully researching the country that you are visiting;

- Read the Information Book which we have prepared for you.
- Get a good guide book and look at the FCO country fact sheets (www.fco.gov.uk) for country specific advice on areas 'not to go'.
- Make sure you know about local laws especially relating to alcohol and drugs.
- Make sure you know about local culture especially relating to dress codes and accepted customs and pack and behave accordingly – following these rules will help ensure that you blend into the culture more easily.
- **Currency:** The more familiar you are with the currency concerned, the more confident you will be in handling it, which means you'll be less of a target. Sometimes US Dollars (\$) are more commonly used than the national currency. Check local exchange rates to see what value you are getting for your money (try www.xe.com).
- **Language:** If you are totally unfamiliar with the language, it is always good to learn a few essential words and phrases beforehand to ensure that you feel more comfortable when you arrive. Our organisers all speak good English, but we recommend that you take a good phrase book with you for whenever you go elsewhere and need to ask more detailed questions.
- **Religion:** This can be a defining part of your day-to-day life in your host country and an understanding of the religious requirements and respected conventions can prevent you causing offence in any way.

MONEY:

- Check the validity, expiry dates and cash available on your credit or debit card(s).
- Make a note of your card numbers and the 24-hour emergency numbers and keep them separately.
- Consider the relative merits regarding travellers cheques / cash / credit cards.
- As anywhere, it is never wise to carry excessive amounts of cash, however, it is suggested that you have back-up funds such as US dollars (accepted virtually everywhere), sterling or traveller's cheques. Keep these in separate bags during your travels.
- If you've made your own travel arrangements rather than have Travellers make them for you, have a return flight ticket (preferably changeable), or enough money to buy one.

GET ADEQUATE TRAVEL INSURANCE:

- If you've arranged your own travel insurance (instead of having Travellers do it for you), make sure it includes comprehensive medical and repatriation cover.
- Make sure it provides cover for your whole trip (whether one day or over a year).
- With either your own or our insurance please make sure you are covered for all activities, including hazardous sports if you are planning to do these.
- Disclose pre-existing medical conditions to your insurance company.
- Take your policy number and the 24-hour emergency number with you and keep these in a safe place.
- If you have any doubts about your cover, check with your insurer.

ENSURE YOU HAVE A VALID PASSPORT AND THE NECESSARY VISAS:

- Make sure your passport is valid for a minimum of six months as of the date that you intend to return – some countries won't allow you entry if your passport is within this expiration period.
- Write the full details of your next of kin in your passport.
- Make sure you have valid visas. Remember that overstaying your visa is a very serious matter in almost all countries – penalties can include fines, imprisonment and deportation.
- Take another form of ID with you (preferably with a photograph).

MEDICAL PREPARATION:

- Speak to your GP about vaccinations as far in advance as possible – a minimum of 3 months is often recommended. Whilst we are always at hand to answer your questions and give you advice, please remember that advice regarding vaccinations and any medical issues must be sought from your **GP** or a suitably qualified medical practitioner.
- If you intend doing some travelling around/exploring in your host country, check to see if extra health precautions are needed for the regions you will be visiting (e.g. malaria zones).
- If you are on any medication, order extra prescriptions to cover the entire period of your stay and check if your medication is legal in the country you are visiting – in some cases you may need to carry a copy of your prescription with you and a GP's letter stating what this medicine is used for.
- Pack medication in your hand luggage.
- **Stay healthy.** If you need to take medicine, ensure you continue to do so and ensure that you tell Travellers about what you are taking – this is a requirement.

- If you are prone to certain medical conditions (i.e. migraines, thrush etc) take medication with you as a precaution. It is unlikely you will be able to buy brand named medication on your travels.

MAKE COPIES OF IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

- A copy of your passport and details of your next of kin.
- A copy of your insurance document plus the 24-hour emergency number.
- A copy of your ticket details.
- A copy of your itinerary
- A copy of your driving licence and International Driving Permit
- A copy of your medical vaccination certificate
- **Leave copies** with a trusted friend or relative and **take copies with you** as well - keep them separately from the originals.
- Take spare passport photos with you.
- You may want to consider e-mailing yourself important information and documentation such as insurance details so that you can store these online.

POSSESSIONS:

- Travel as lightly as possible. We know that you won't use everything you take with you! When you've finally finished packing ... unpack it all again and remove half. Also keep in mind that you have to lug all your stuff around with you, particularly if you've finished your placement and you want to explore the country for a couple of weeks. And do you know how much 50 lbs of gear weighs when you've been carrying it for a couple of hours?!
- Again, the point is made about being armed with pertinent information before you set off. **Please read the Information Book we sent you.** The information on things like local weather, seasons, availability of goods, etc., will have a material bearing on how much you will take with you. For example, in July, the southern hemisphere can be cold and rainy. The more thought you put into this aspect of your trip, the less you will have to carry. Take clothing relevant to your type of placement. **Travel light, you'll appreciate it later!**
- Ideally do not take expensive equipment unless necessary and your insurance covers you for it.

WHEN YOU ARE THERE:

CUSTOMS SECURITY

- Never carry anything through Customs for other people - especially when flying, no matter how nice the people appear to be.
- Always pack your own baggage and never leave it unattended
- Do not sit in anyone else's vehicle when going through Customs, or crossing a border; **always get out and walk.**
- Theft from luggage during baggage handling takes place all over the world. We recommend that all valuables are removed from suitcases, and suitcases locked prior to submitting them at check-in both when departing the UK and when departing.
- If you're driving, do not lend your vehicle to anyone else.
- Spread your belongings between suitcases so if some of your luggage is delayed you have a couple of day's worth of outfits to keep you going. Keep a set of clothes and the essentials with you onboard as well.
- Where available, take advantage of airport shrink-wrap facilities this may help discourage tampering once your bags are out of sight. It will also help to maintain your luggage in transit.

STAY IN TOUCH:

- **Phone Home!** Tell your family that you've arrived safely and try to stay in touch regularly - if you are going to be out of touch try and let loved ones know in advance so that they don't worry.
- **If there is a natural disaster or if trouble flares up** contact your family and friends to let them know that you are safe and healthy. Do this even if you are not that close to the problem - remember family and friends will not know exactly where you are but they will worry if they think you are in potential danger. You should also contact your Travellers Organiser ASAP, even if you've completed your placement and are exploring/travelling on your own. Just because we're no longer responsible for you doesn't mean that we won't help you. We will do everything we can to help you in case of problems like civil unrest or any other unforeseen circumstance. *Please contact us.*
- If you go off on your own sightseeing or for whatever the reason, **always** tell someone where you are going, and write the information down for him or her if necessary. You should **ALWAYS tell our Local Organiser where you're going, even if your placement is finished.** Just because you're responsible for yourself outside the project doesn't mean that you shouldn't give us information on where you're going. *You may need our help!*
- **Always keep your Travellers ID card and a mobile phone on you at all times.** If you are injured or lost, then someone will have a local representative's contact details.
- It is recommended that you set up an **In Case of Emergency (ICE)** number on your phone in case you are involved in an accident of some sort.

- You can use the **International Poste Restante** service for receiving letters and packages abroad.

ACCOMMODATION:

- It is your responsibility to make yourself familiar with the location of fire exits and any first aid equipment. You should also find out where the nearest hospital, police and fire station are situated and make a note of this.
- If any windows or doors are locked, find out where keys are placed in case of emergency evacuation.
- Please ensure you take care in bathrooms as they can become slippery when wet.
- If there is lack of lighting around accommodation premises please use your common sense and take care. Torches are very useful – always take one with you. Do not walk on your own in poor lit areas, especially on conservation projects.
- If there is any form of gas heater in your room, or any other potentially dangerous source of gas, keep your windows open.
- Do not visit strangers' accommodation without informing our organiser where you are going.
- If camping please follow the general camping rules such as not storing food in your tent as it attracts animals.

FOOD AND DRINK:

- Ascertain whether the water is safe to drink – assume that it may not be safe and carry plenty of bottled water with you. Some destinations are very hot and you can become easily dehydrated so it's important to drink plenty of water.
- Ascertain whether strange-looking food is likely to affect your stomach – *before* eating it!
- Don't drink liquids from unsealed bottles.
- Be extremely cautious eating from roadside stalls.
- When preparing food please ensure it is in date and prepared on a clean surface.
- Be conscious of sanitation and complete things such as washing hands before any meal.
- Always wash fruit and salads before eating.
- Watch your drinking, and the signs you may be giving to other people with your words and your body language - especially if you are on your own - never leave drinks unattended because drugs can be placed in them.

THE LAW:

- **Familiarise yourself with local laws and obey them during your placement.** You can be imprisoned, fined or deported for offences that incur only a caution in the UK or other Western countries and **consular staff cannot get you out of prison abroad.**
- Make sure you are fully aware of what you are allowed to bring in and out of the country, from a reliable source such as the local embassy. Many countries won't allow the import or export of any form of animal products, including food.
- **DO NOT drink and drive.** Be aware of the local laws and attitudes to alcohol.
- Do not import alcohol into a country where it is prohibited - penalties can be severe.
- **Do not work illegally.** You can be deported, fined and imprisoned if you do. You may also be prevented from entering the country again in the future. One of the reasons why Travellers offers *voluntary* work is because it's illegal to do paid work in most of the countries where we run our programmes.
- **If you work abroad,** comply with relevant employment regulation – you may have to pay tax.
- **Do not overstay your visa.** You can extend your visa in most places; if you don't, you can be imprisoned or fined. In some countries, if you don't renew your visa in time, you will be imprisoned and then repatriated ... and you pay all the costs involved in your repatriation, not just your air fare!
- **DO NOT GET INVOLVED WITH DRUGS.** DO NOT even think about taking any risks in the naive hope that you will get away with it. Almost all of the countries in which we operate have severe penalties for drugs offences. Even minor offences incur can incur imprisonment in very grim conditions. **Not even your Embassy or Foreign Office can get you out ...** for serious offences involving smuggling or supplying; many countries, particularly in East Asia, have the Death Penalty – no less. And they really do mean it!
- If you do get involved with drugs, no matter how innocently, Travellers will immediately cancel your placement and you will be repatriated.
- It is suggested that when you travel anywhere you should always have some form of ID on you – a photocopy of the photo page of your passport is usually sufficient.

INSECTS, SNAKES AND WILD ANIMALS:

- Protect yourself! Always use a mosquito net in malarial areas and take sensible precautions (clothing and insect repellent) to avoid being bitten.
- **Don't** get close to any animals unless you've been told it is safe to do so by an accredited person in charge of the animals.
- Whatever country you're in, check with an accredited authority about local spiders, snakes, animals, insects and poisonous plants.

LOCAL CUSTOMS:

- Seek as much local knowledge as possible. Make this an objective when you arrive.
- **Respect local customs and dress codes.** Think about what you wear and how you fit in and are viewed by locals. You are a visitor in someone else's country and you should adhere to their culture as much as possible during your stay. This is particularly important when visiting religious sites, markets and rural communities.
- Be discreet about your views on cultural differences/religions.
- Before approaching children for photos, or even just to talk to them, you should check (or ask your tour guide to check) with an adult that this is acceptable. However, if you are in any doubt, refrain from doing so. You may be asked to pay a small amount of money to take photographs of both children and adults.

MONEY:

- **Change money in banks** or legal foreign exchange dealers. It is often illegal to change with unauthorised persons, and you run the risk of receiving fake currency and arrest.
- Keep all receipts, as you may have to prove you obtained your local currency legally.
- **Ensure your credit card bills are paid** and kept up-to-date whilst travelling.
- **Be security conscious.** Carry only the minimum amount of cash when sightseeing.
- Don't flash your money around – in many countries it'll be pretty obvious that you're a visitor/tourist and thieves and muggers prey on tourists. So use common-sense and keep your money well hidden.
- Leave your valuables in a safety deposit box wherever possible.
- Ask your Travellers Organisers about keeping your money safe – he/she will give you advice.
- **Watch out for scams.** Check your guidebook for warnings on scams and remain vigilant!
- **If in doubt, don't buy wildlife souvenirs.** Make sure any wildlife souvenirs or products can be legally taken out of the country and legally imported into your home country. Some wildlife souvenirs are banned from international trade, many more require special permits for the UK, the country of export and any countries visited in between. Customs throughout the world confiscate illegal souvenirs and in the UK you could face a criminal prosecution and unlimited fines. Think about how those 'souvenirs' came to be on the shelf – don't buy anything that would perpetuate the death or cruel treatment of animals just to give someone a profit.

THEFT AND MUGGINGS:

- If you're unfortunate enough to be mugged, **GIVE THEM YOUR VALUABLES.** Don't fight. Don't argue with them. Just throw your purse or watch or whatever it is they want at them – they'll be surprised at the gesture and you may have chance to escape. *Injuries (or worse) are not worth your material possessions.*
- **Theft:** If you have anything stolen, report it to the police immediately. You may be lucky enough to get it back. Also remember that your insurance will require you to have reported the theft and have an immediate police statement – or they may not pay you. Call your insurance company immediately to log the theft and follow their advice.
- **Loss:** The same applies if you lose anything. Report it to the police immediately or your insurance claim may be invalid.

HIV AND AIDS:

- HIV can be transmitted through unprotected sexual intercourse and blood to blood contact.
- Protect yourself against unnecessary risks when travelling and always use a condom if you intend to have sexual intercourse.
- Whilst working with children at school and at after school projects it is *extremely* unlikely you will be in a situation where you can contract HIV. If a child has an accident in the playground and is cut, you can protect yourself with rubber gloves if you are required to administer first aid. Only if you have been cut yourself and have direct blood-to-blood contact with someone with HIV are you at risk of being infected. Infected blood has to enter your blood stream for the virus to be passed on. You cannot become infected by kissing, touching or hugging someone with HIV. You will find the children are extremely affectionate and love to hug and kiss you. You should not be worried of contracting HIV in this way.
- Please speak to us if you are worried about the risk of infection.

DRIVING

- We strongly urge you **NOT** to drive in a foreign country. The driving standard will probably be totally different to what you're used to and you won't be familiar with driving laws - this could lead to serious accidents.
- We request that you only travel to your work placement in transport provided by Travellers.
- If you *must* drive, before hiring a car in a foreign country you'll (a) need an International driving licence, and (b) adequate driving insurance. Also, familiarise yourself with what to do in the event of an accident.

- Be doubly and trebly careful if you're contemplating driving in a country where they drive 'on the wrong side' of the road to what you're used to. If you're taking another Travellers volunteer with you (or anyone else), think about whether they're sufficiently covered under their insurance policy in the event of an accident.

COMMON-SENSE DO'S AND DON'T'S:

- Never hitch-hike or accept lifts from strangers
- Wherever possible, travel in pairs or groups - don't walk in the streets at night on your own
- If you 'sense' that an area of town 'doesn't feel right' – don't go there.
- Don't talk about money or your financial situation with strangers, or in public places like bars where you can be overheard.
- As with many places, avoid being in unfamiliar places after dark or on your own.
- Don't take photographs of military or police personnel, government buildings or army bases.
- Don't swim anywhere until you've checked with an accredited person that the swimming is totally safe. This includes rivers, lakes, innocent-looking ponds, the ocean ...
- Don't swim in strong currents or heavy seas – it's very dangerous and many people who've thought to themselves, 'Oh, but I'm a strong swimmer,' have found out that they're not strong enough!
- Don't climb mountains unless you're with an experienced guide or mountain climber.
- Don't go out in a boat unless you're with an experienced guide or sailor.
- If you're travelling around to do some exploring, take some toilet paper with you. You never know when you'll need it.

Your local Travellers Organiser will always help you with advice about local/national travel, places to avoid and other local issues. Do not be hesitant in asking questions if you are unsure - they will be able to give you the latest, most up to date information.

AT YOUR PROJECT:

- If, after your induction to your work and safety, you are not entirely sure with what to do and what is safe, then please do not just do what is asked of you. Speak to your supervisor and ask for more information. If you are still not sure, then contact your country organiser to ask for their help.
- Don't work with any specialised equipment or animals without appropriate qualified supervision and equipment.
- Always wear appropriate protection (where available) when using equipment. If protective equipment is not available contact your supervisor and then organiser. DO NOT use the equipment without the appropriate equipment. You are responsible for yourself.
- If you are asked to enter local areas that you are unaware of, please speak to your country Organiser for their recommendations and also ensure that you are supervised.
- Ensure you know the procedures to take if you are injured – know where the nearest first aid kit is and who to contact.
- Ensure you are aware of all fire exits at your place of work. Know where window and door keys are located.
- Please be wary of bad lighting on streets and surrounding areas of projects if working late.
- Please do not be the last one to leave your work late at night. If you are, ensure that you organiser is able to arrange suitable transport for you home.

FIRE SAFETY:

Electricity:

- It is the main cause of accidental fires.
- Use electricity wisely
- Make sure any electrical equipment you use is well maintained and report any faults, such as frayed leads or damaged insulation, immediately to your host or your immediate supervisor
- Switch off appliances and unplug at night
- Avoid overloading circuits or overheating equipment
- Take special care with portable equipment.

Smoking:

- To cut the risks of fire caused by smoking, please observe all No Smoking rules.
- All volunteer accommodation and work places are deemed to be No Smoking areas.

Rubbish and Waste:

- Keep it clean and tidy
- Bin all waste immediately; take it out every day.
- Keep escape and storage routes clear,

- Dispose of waste safely

Flammable liquids and gases:

- Do not bring flammable liquids or gases onto the property (i.e. accommodation or workplace)

General Rules:

- Ensure that all fire exits are kept clear at all times. If you find a blocked exit, please clear it away, if this is possible, and also report it to your supervisor or organiser immediately.
- Ensure that you know where keys to locked windows and doors are kept
- Ensure open fires are extinguished before going to sleep
- Make sure you know where the nearest fire exit is.

PROCEDURES IN THE EVENT OF A FIRE:

Emergency Procedure

If you discover a fire:

- Raise the alarm - shout FIRE!
- Make sure everyone is aware of the fire.
- Help those who need help to leave the premises.
- Close (but do not lock) doors if the fire is not under control.
- Call the fire brigade or ensure that someone else has done so.
- Leave by the nearest exit - do not put yourself or others at risk.

DO NOT:

- Risk your own life to save property
- Stop to collect personal belongings
- Run
- Re-enter premises until advised by the fire brigade or other authorised personnel that it is safe to do so.

Evacuation

- Remember your number one priority is to get out and help others to do the same.
- Follow exit signs to the nearest exit.
- If one exit route is blocked by smoke, DON'T try to run through it. Instead use the nearest alternative route. Smoke will get into your eyes, forcing them shut, and you'll lose sight of where you were going and be trapped. Smoke inhalation is the biggest cause of death, not the flames themselves.

Fire Fighting

The fire fighting policy for our volunteers is – **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO FIGHT A FIRE**

Anyone attempting to fight a fire must be trained in basic fire fighting techniques, including the use of fire extinguishers. Therefore, to repeat, **do not attempt to fight a fire.**

FEMALE TRAVELLERS:

CLOTHING & BEHAVIOUR:

- **Think** about how your clothing will fit in with local customs and attitudes. **Look** at what the local women are wearing if you feel you need guidance. **Don't** wear expensive jewellery. Wearing dark glasses can boost your confidence and reduce harassment, but remember to remove them when talking to people.
- **Consider** wearing a wedding ring even if you don't usually. It can help you avoid harassment.
- **Be wary** of new-found 'friends'. Don't tell strangers where you are staying or give out too many details about your travel plans.
- Always pack your own baggage and never leave it unattended. The penalties for possession of / or trafficking in Drugs in some countries can include long prison sentences or even death.

TRAVELLING AROUND:

- If you are travelling alone you may attract unwelcome attention and you may receive unwelcome propositions or remarks. It is usually best to **ignore** them and to avoid eye contact.
- Act **confidently**. Plan your daily itinerary. Know where you are going and what you are doing. Leave details of your plans with your hotel or guesthouse. Make sure when you go out you know how to get back. Some guesthouses give you cards that show you how to get back.
- **Never accept car rides from strangers or hitchhike**. Ask the local guesthouse to recommend a taxi firm and try to double up with someone you know when travelling by taxi.

- Consider carrying a rape alarm.

HOTELS & GUESTHOUSES:

- Use only a first **initial** when checking in. Don't put 'Ms', 'Miss' or 'Mrs'.
- **Never** leave your key where someone can note your room number.
- Do not leave your window **open** if your room is on the ground floor
- **Never open** your room door to anyone – maintenance, flower delivery or whoever – without checking with reception to verify the service.
- If the guesthouse provides a **safety** box or safe – use it!

GOING OUT:

- **Avoid risky situations** such as travelling or walking alone at night or drinking by yourself in a bar.
- Alcohol can affect your judgement and your ability to react. **Be aware** of your environment and stay in control.

BACKPACKING AT THE END OF YOUR PLACEMENT

- **Plan ahead to avoid trouble.** Circumstances can change quickly and without warning in some countries. Find out about possible risks. Ask those who know. Check the news for reports of problems. **Before you leave and when travelling to a new country** consult the FCO Travel Advice - it is regularly updated.
- Check your insurance covers all the activities you are likely to do. Arrange extra cover by telephone or e-mail - if you want to extend your stay, you must have your policy number to do this. **Avoid activities for which you are not insured.** If you have any doubts about your cover, check with your insurer.
- **Take a valid Form E111** with you if travelling within the EU. The E111 can offer free or reduced-cost emergency medical treatment, and can be obtained from any post office. Make sure you fill out the E111 and have it stamped by the post office before you go.
- **Take a first-aid pack.** Consider buying a comprehensive first-aid pack that includes sterile needles and other equipment.
- **Consider taking a padlock and chain or a security harness** to secure your baggage at airports, railway stations, on buses, etc.
- **Take a list of your home country's Consular Offices** in the countries you plan to visit. Find out the office telephone numbers and working hours beforehand.
- **Your first night ... Plan ahead!** Book accommodation before you go if possible. If you're arriving late, be aware that accommodation may be difficult to find at night. If you don't like your accommodation, you can always move the next day. (Remember, this safety tip is for when you are travelling on your own, either before or after your Placement – we meet you at the airport for your Placement and you don't need to make any accommodation arrangements.)
- **When booking with a travel company or specific project please** research them carefully to ensure they provide a reputable service.
- Carry a copy of your passport and identification at all times as is required. Don't carry the real thing; passports are very valuable commodities, which preferably should be locked away with other valuables. If you lose your passport it can be a big pain so keep it safe.

WHAT YOUR EMBASSY CAN AND CAN'T DO IN AN EMERGENCY

(This applies to British Embassies and UK residents but similar rules apply to all Nationalities)

They can:

- Issue an emergency passport to get you back to your home country.
- Contact family and friends and ask them to help you with money or tickets.
- Tell you how to transfer money.
- Cash a cheque for you worth up to £100 if supported by a valid banker's card.
- Put you in touch with local doctors, interpreters, lawyers and British organisations.
- Visit you in hospital and pass messages to your family if you wish.
- If arrested, they will visit you, advise about local lawyers and legal and prison systems and pass messages to your family.
- As a last resort and under certain conditions, they can give you a loan to get back to the UK. This loan must be repaid. Each case is dealt with on its own merits and circumstances. You will be asked to sign an undertaking to repay the loan.

Even in an emergency they cannot...

- Intervene in court proceedings or get you out of prison. Nor can they give legal advice or get better treatment for you than is given to local people.

- Pay your hotel, medical, legal, travel, or any other bills.
- Get you somewhere to live, a job or a work permit.

MOBILE PHONE TIPS

Mobiles are becoming more and more convenient to take abroad as a way of staying in touch with your family and friends back home.

The network service that allows you to use your UK mobile telephone abroad to make and receive calls and messages is called **international roaming**. The following tips should allow you to become well prepared, and some information may also be useful for buying a mobile, by showing you how to get the best deal on price or coverage for international roaming. Also see the advice from OFTEL (the Office of Telecommunications) to find out how to get the best value when using your mobile phone abroad.

BEFORE YOU GO, REMEMBER TO:

- Contact your UK mobile network provider **to ensure** your mobile phone is enabled for **international roaming**. Do this well in advance of your departure date, as it can take up to 14 days, and you cannot do it from overseas.
- Check that your existing **handset** will work in the country you are travelling to; this may not be the case, particularly outside Europe.
- Check with your UK network provider **how much it costs** for international roaming services. Charges can be a lot higher than, and very different to, those for calls in the UK. For example, while roaming you will pay to receive calls and listen to voicemail. Sending **text messages** may be cheaper, but you can be charged twice per message (once by your operator and once by the overseas operator) to convey messages to and from home. Rates can vary according to your network and the country you are visiting. Information on charges may be available from your network's web site, customer services or literature.
- Confirm the **current charges** just before you leave as some charges can change at short notice (although other charges are more stable).
- If you intend to use your mobile frequently while abroad, consider the following options:
- Some mobile services offer **international traveller** services giving cheaper calls abroad in return for a monthly fee. Check with your network provider what the costs are and how long you would be committed to paying for the service.
- It is usually cheaper to use an **alternative SIM card** in your phone. A SIM card is a small card that lets the phone work on a particular mobile network. It can easily be swapped around in your phone. SIM cards for foreign networks can be bought abroad (e.g. at international airports and holiday destinations) or (for some European countries) from some UK retailers. Find out if the alternative SIM cards will expire after a fixed time. Also ask your network provider whether it has locked your phone against use with a different SIM card, and what, if anything, it will charge to unlock the phone.
- You should be able to **buy or rent** a mobile telephone handset for the **duration of your stay** from most mobile telephone companies in the country you are visiting.
- If you are particularly concerned about **coverage or call quality** you may be able to select a particular network for international roaming. Ask your network provider whether it offers a choice of networks and how you can change between them.
- If you are using your own network provider's pre-paid mobile international roaming service, make sure you know how to use your credit card to top up your **calling credit** before you leave, or take extra vouchers, as they may be hard to obtain abroad.
- Ask your network provider **what you have to dial** to use international roaming. This may not be as simple as just using the 0044 international prefix for the UK.
- **Pre-programme** into your mobile the telephone number of the nearest British Embassy, High Commission, or Consulate in the country you are visiting. Do the same with the telephone number of your hotel and tour representative. If you are using an alternative SIM card whilst abroad you may have to programme the information in after you have inserted the alternative SIM card (as some phones record the phone numbers in the SIM card rather than the phone).
- Familiarise yourself with your mobile's **voicemail retrieval system**. Voicemail can be difficult to access while abroad, and you should clarify this.
- Take an **electrical adaptor** for the charger plug, to keep your mobile telephone fully charged.
- Make a note of your mobile's **serial number** (also known as the IMEI number), your mobile telephone number and the telephone number of your operator's customer services (including dialling code). Keep them in a safe place, separate from your mobile. If your phone is stolen you will be able to ask the network operator to block your phone and/or SIM card. You may need to provide additional information, such as a password. Contact your operator for details of how they deal with stolen phones before you leave – in many cases, thefts must be reported to the insurance company within 24 hours.

SPECIFIC ISSUES RELEVANT TO SPECIFIC COUNTRIES

Below are some tips that are relevant to specific countries – EVERYTHING ELSE IN THIS SAFETY GUIDE APPLIES, so please read it all. If it's not listed in a country below, that doesn't mean that everything else is safe – it just means that these are a few possible problems that we are aware of. ALWAYS ASK THE LOCALS (STARTING WITH TRAVELLERS ORGANISER) FOR ADVICE ON SAFETY ISSUES IN THE COUNTRY YOU ARE IN. We cannot and nor would we 'lay down the law' regarding your social life, but there are some things regarding socialising that we would strongly recommend. Much of the advice below has been taken from the British Foreign Commonwealth Office. For more advice see: www.fco.gov.uk and select 'travel advice by country'.

The British Embassy or Consular services are also included in the list below. For volunteers that aren't British, we suggest you make a note of your own embassies details before leaving your home country.



ARGENTINA

- In Buenos Aires the most frequent problems involve bag snatching and armed robberies in the street, in taxis and restaurants.
- Avoid public gatherings, demonstrations and anything of a political nature.
- Hail moving taxis rather than those waiting at the kerb. Better still, ask a restaurant or hotel to call a Radio Taxi for you.
- ATM availability is generally good but you should not rely solely on using international debit cards bearing the cirrus logo to access funds. Ensure that you carry alternative forms of payment, including a Visa or MasterCard or travellers' cheques.
- **The British Embassy in Buenos Aires:** Dr Luis Agote 2412, (1425) Buenos Aires, Argentina. Telephone: 00 (54) (11) 4808 2200. Website: <http://www.britain.org.ar>



AUSTRALIA

- If you are travelling during the Australian Summer be very careful of the sun as it's very strong. It's not unknown for temperatures in the 40's. Take sensible precautions; always wear sunscreen, clothing and a hat. And drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration.
- Natural disasters such as Tropical Cyclones and Bush Fires are common – be careful and plan where you are going in advance.
- Be careful of Rip currents in the sea – they can sweep even the strongest swimmer out to sea.
- Everyone travelling to Australia needs an approved travel document, visa or authority to enter Australia. Anyone who arrives without a visa authority for re-entry or an Australian or New Zealand passport may be refused entry to Australia or delayed until their identities and claims to enter Australia have been checked.
- **Quarantine Procedures:** Australian authorities are rigorous in their efforts to keep out any pests and diseases that could affect plant, animal and human health. All luggage is x-rayed on arrival, whether arriving by plane with visitors or by mail. Any items of quarantine concern are further inspected, treated and, if necessary, confiscated and destroyed. Before landing you will be given an incoming passenger card on the plane, on which you must declare any food or goods of plant or animal origin. These goods includes nuts, dried fruit and vegetables, herbs and spices, biscuits, cakes and confectionery, teas, coffees and milk-based drinks and sporting equipment (including camping gear), amongst others. Breaches of quarantine regulations can result in large fines.
- **British Consular Agency, Perth:** Level 26, Allendale Square, 77 St George's Terrace, Perth, Western Australia. Telephone: 00 (61) (8) 9224 4700. Website: <http://www.britaus.net>



BOLIVIA

- There is continual risk of public protests and strikes throughout Bolivia and major roads can be blocked at very short notice. You should take care to avoid all public demonstrations which have the potential to turn violent.
- Bolivia is the world's third largest producer of cocaine. In their efforts to control the production, the government have harsh penalties for those caught trafficking or in possession. You should therefore be very careful with your luggage and belongings and avoid any contact with prohibited drugs.
- You should also be aware of the risk of so called "express kidnappings" - short-term, opportunistic abductions, aimed at extracting cash from the victim that are occurring in Bolivia. Victims are normally selected at random

and held while criminals empty their bank accounts with stolen cash cards. Once the ransom is paid the victim is usually quickly released. Foreign visitors are particularly vulnerable when entering Bolivia on overland border points with Peru and Chile, such as Desaguadero and Copacabana, and in transit to La Paz. Visitors travelling from Copacabana to La Paz should try to get direct buses. All travellers should exercise caution on arrival, especially in the Cementario General area in La Paz where a number of incidents have been reported.

- Floods and landslides, especially in mountainous areas, are a regular feature of the Bolivian rainy season, which runs from November to March. Roads are frequently impassable for days at a time.
- **British Embassy, La Paz, Bolivia:** Avenida Arce No.2732, Casilla (PO Box) 694, La Paz. Telephone: 00 (591) (2) 2433424. Website: <http://www.britishembassy.gov.uk/bolivia>



BRAZIL

- You should retain your immigration landing card (green) and enough cash to pay the US\$38 or R\$ 115 airport tax, if this has not been paid with the airline ticket; both the landing card and payment of the airport tax are required to leave Brazil.
- Much of Brazil remains in some ways a traditional society and visitors should be prepared to observe more discretion in public than they might think necessary in the UK.
- Strong currents and sharks can be a problem off some beaches. You should take local advice before swimming.
- Slums exist in all major Brazilian cities. They are characterised by poverty and extremely high violent crime levels. There are frequent violent clashes between the Police and drug gangs in the slum areas of Rio de Janeiro. You should avoid these areas, remain alert and aware of local conditions at all times. There are some respected guided tours of certain slums in Rio de Janeiro, and these are considered safe. Your hotel should be able to give you further advice. However, under no other circumstances should you attempt to venture into a slum at any other time. After dark, you should avoid entering very quiet streets except under reliable local advice.
- You should be particularly vigilant in Rio de Janeiro before and during the festive and Carnival periods, as there is often a seasonal upsurge in robberies against foreigners around this time.
- Thefts from cars are common. There is an increasing problem of cars being temporarily hijacked, and the driver or passengers being forced to use their cards to extract money from ATMs, often around midnight (when a card's daily limit can be withdrawn twice - just before and after midnight). Many cash machines often limit withdrawal facilities from 10 p.m. to reduce the risk of this occurring. When in a car you should keep the doors locked and the windows closed, and take particular care at traffic lights.
- Credit card fraud can be a problem in Brazil. You should always ensure you retain your copy of the transaction slip, along with the carbon paper.
- UK cash cards are not always accepted by Brazilian cash machines. It is wise to take sufficient funds in cash/travellers' cheques (preferably US dollars) to exchange. Travellers' cheques are not widely accepted so some cash should also be taken.
- Please note that traffic accidents that result in injuries or the death of third parties are considered to be a crime and must undergo police investigation. Investigations may take several months, during which time the driver may not be allowed to leave the country.
- In major cities there have been reports of incidents involving taxis with blacked-out windows and there are also reports that they are being used for criminal activities. We therefore recommend against travelling in taxis with blacked-out windows.
- If using a 'roving' taxi, check that it displays an obligatory photographic licence. Beware of unlicensed taxis quoting low prices, but who later overcharge, threatening those who protest.
- **The British Embassy in Brazil:** Setor de Embaixadas Sul, Quadra 801, Conjunto K, CEP 70200-010, Brasilia – DF, Brazil. Telephone: 00 (55) (61) 3329 2300. Website: www.uk.org.br
- **British Consulate-General:** Praia do Flamengo 284/2 andar, 22210-030, Rio de Janeiro RJ. Telephone: 00 (55) (21) 2555 9600 or 00 (55) (21) 2555 9640.



BRUNEI

- Brunei is a Muslim country. Tourists must observe the local dress code and should understand that revealing clothes are considered to be immodest and therefore socially unacceptable. Topless or nude bathing is both illegal and unacceptable.
- Alcohol cannot be legally bought or sold in Brunei. Any non-Muslim traveler from abroad can bring up to 12 cans of beer and two bottles of wine/spirits, but only for personal use. Declare to Customs any alcohol you import. Failure to declare to Customs is an offence. Keep the Customs slip in case of inspection.
- Be aware that drunkenness can lead to arrest.

- If you are planning only a short stay, be prepared to show immigration officials evidence of your booking for your onward journey.
- If you need to import special medication, please note that Customs may retain it while they seek Ministry of Health approval. Pharmacies are generally well-stocked with Western and Asian medicines. But, anti-histamine treatments are not always available in Brunei.
- **The British High Commission in Brunei:** 2.01, 2nd Floor, Block D, Kompleks Yayasan Sultan Haji Hassanah Bolkiah, Bandar Seri Begawan BS 8711, Brunei Darussalam. Postal address: PO Box 2197, Bandar Seri Begawan BS8674, Brunei Darussalam. Telephone: 00 (673) (2) 222231/223121 Switchboard or 00 (673) (2) 226001 Consular/Visa. Website: <http://www.britishhighcommission.gov.uk/brunei>



CHINA

- Beware of the dangers of altitude sickness in Tibet and the southernmost provinces of China.
- Avoid public gatherings, demonstrations and anything of a political nature.
- Always avoid tap water and stick to the bottled variety. Water dispensers are readily available in China too, and the boiled water found in public water fountains on trains and buses is safe.
- **British Consulate-General, Shanghai:** Suite 301, Shanghai Centre, 1376 Nan Jing Xi Lu, Shanghai 200040. Visa Section: Suite 751, Shanghai Centre, 1376 Nan Jing Xi Lu, Shanghai 200040. Telephone: 00 (86) (21) 6279 7650 General or 00 (86) (21) 6279 8130 Visa. Website: www.uk.cn



GHANA

- There has been an increase in car jackings and armed robberies, particularly in Accra, often involving cars being followed by stolen taxis or other vehicles. Do not travel outside the main towns by road after dark. Roads are mainly in poor condition and extremely hazardous due to poor/non-existent street lighting.
- If possible, avoid travelling alone in taxis after dark and be very wary when drawing cash from any of the few cash points in central Accra.
- Thefts of both luggage and travel documents occur at Kotoka International Airport, Accra. Travellers should ensure documents are kept secure at all times (particularly when leaving the airport) and that baggage is never left unattended.
- Visitors should be wary of all offers of unsolicited assistance at the airport unless from uniformed porters or officials who, like all other permanent staff at the airport wear a current ID card bearing their name and photograph. ID cards without a photograph are not valid.
- Safety standards on small private buses and taxis are questionable.
- Medical facilities and communications are poor outside urban areas and emergency facilities are extremely limited in the event of an accident.
- There have been outbreaks of cholera in the Eastern region due to water shortages. If you visit this area, please take appropriate precautions.
- There have previously been outbreaks of violence between Muslim sects in northern Ghana. Although not aimed at British nationals, you should be vigilant and take local advice.
- **The Ghana High Commission in the UK,** 13 Belgrave Square, London, SW1X 8PN; (tel: 020 7235 4142; fax: 020 7245 9552).
- **British High Commission in Ghana:** Osu Link, off Gamel Abdul Nasser Avenue, PO Box 296, Accra. Telephone: 00 (233) (21) 221665, 00 (233) (21) 7010650, 00 (233) (21) 7010721 Visa section. Website: <http://www.britishhighcommission.gov.uk/ghana>



GUATEMALA

- Large demonstrations can occur throughout Guatemala, often with little or no notice. They can cause serious traffic disruptions. Most demonstrations are peaceful. It goes without saying 'avoid any demonstrations or gatherings!'
- Be particularly careful when taking photographs or video. Guatemalan's are suspicious and may take offence.
- Guatemala remains in some ways a traditional society and visitors should be prepared to observe more discretion in public than they might think necessary in the UK.
- Certain sexual acts remain illegal under Guatemalan law, but most Guatemalans in the capital are tolerant of individual personal lifestyles. A more conservative attitude prevails outside Guatemala City and public displays of affection by same-sex couples are not recommended.

- You should take particular care in Zone 1 of Guatemala City where many cheap hotels are situated and where many bus routes terminate. Other parts of Guatemala City, including Zones 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 18 are also dangerous.
- Guatemalan hospitals are reluctant to give medical treatment unless they can be satisfied that the patient has medical insurance. It is therefore essential that you carry evidence of insurance cover at all times. State-funded hospitals are often under-staffed, under-funded, ill equipped, and are often unhygienic. We advise the use of private clinics where possible.
- Malaria is prevalent in the low-lying areas outside Guatemala City. Anti-malarial medication is recommended.
- Dengue fever is endemic in Guatemala. Affected areas include Escuintla, the Pacific Coast towns, Zacapa, and Peten. Although there is no preventive medication, mosquito repellent and clothing which covers as much skin as possible should help.
- Be wary of persons claiming to be police officers. Ask to see ID and even then remain wary.
- Beware of those offering an unsolicited and unofficial guide service. They may be part of a team of thieves preying on tourists.
- The most common robberies against foreigners occur when they are travelling on buses on the bus routes with cheaper fares from Guatemala City to Antigua; and Antigua to Panajachel.
- Car and bus-jacking have occurred on some roads leading to the main tourist centres. Criminals often take advantage of badly maintained roads to hold up travellers. A section to avoid is Panajachel via Patzun (the turning is located at 63km on the Pan American Highway). Also, the road from the El Salvador border to Cuilapa and from the Belize border to El Cruce. Both of which are major danger spots for bus-jacking. There have also been similar occurrences on the main Pan-American Highway near Solola.
- There have been cases of attacks on tourists at Tikal (Dec 2004 & Jan 2005), on the approach road from Flores to Tikal. The presence of Tourist Police in the area appears to have done little to improve security. You should therefore continue to exercise care in the Tikal area, and at lesser-known sites such as Yaxha.
- There have been armed robberies in daylight on minor roads around Lake Atitlan involving British and other foreign nationals. You should avoid using these roads. There are adequate boat services between the towns and the lakeshore.
- Roads between the main tourist locations in Guatemala are of an acceptable standard. In more isolated locations, roads are unpaved and four-wheel drive vehicles are advisable.
- The Guatemala City Council no longer permits inter-urban buses to enter the city centre. Passengers are dropped at various points on the outskirts. You should take this into account when planning your journeys.
- **British Embassy in Guatemala:** Edificio Torre Internacional, Nivel 11, 16 Calle 0-55, Zona 10, Guatemala City. Tel: 00 502 (0) 2367 5425,6,7,8,9. Website: <http://www.britishembassy.gov.uk/guatemala>



INDIA

- See www.fco.gov.uk as there are several travel advisory warnings in place for India.
- There is a high threat of terrorism throughout India. Attacks have targeted public places, including places of worship. They could also target places frequented by expatriates and foreign travellers. Since July 2006, there have been a number of terrorist attacks in major Indian cities.
- The FCO advise travellers to increase their vigilance when in the vicinity of key government installations, visiting tourist sites or attending major public events around India.
- Several recent drownings have highlighted the lack of warning signs/flags and life-saving equipment on most of India's **beaches**. Strong undercurrents are a particular hazard. Tourist boats and other small crafts very rarely carry life saving equipment.
- Confidence tricksters (particularly in Agra and Jaipur) promise a substantial cash reward for delivery of jewellery abroad but only in return for an initial deposit. The jewellery is invariably worthless and the deposit (often amounting to thousands of pounds) is lost.
- Incidents of British nationals being held hostage by "friends" they've made have increased. Victims with travellers' cheques and credit cards are forced to withdraw funds at a cash-point/bank to obtain their release.
- **Trekking:** In 2000, there were several attacks (including murder) on trekkers in Himachal Pradesh and Ladakh. Trekkers should **travel in groups and engage local guides**.
- In recent months there have been small bomb explosions on trains and in and around Delhi including shopping areas used by tourists, train stations and in a hotel in Paharganj, home to most of the budget accommodation. Be vigilant in public places and around tourist attractions.
- Avoid people at rail stations offering tickets and tours (mainly to Kashmir and Rajasthan).
- Permits are required for travel to Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- South India: There have been bomb/land mine explosions in Andhra Pradesh mainly directed at local government officials. Travellers should remain vigilant.
- There are many beggars everywhere in India and you have to be very firm to get rid of them.

- **DO NOT DRIVE IN INDIA** – The roads are chaotic and you will not cope with the conditions, standard of driving or number of vehicle.
- Many foreigners fall victim to the heat, which may be extreme and to dysentery and diarrhoea caused by eating and drinking contaminated food and drink. Eat only recently prepared food that has been thoroughly cooked, and take sufficient liquids like water that has been boiled, or bottled drinks, to prevent dehydration.
- Nude bathing is illegal, even in holiday resorts such as Goa.
- **British High Commission in India:** Shanti Path, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi 110021, India. 00 (91) (11) 2687 2161 or 00 (91) (11) 2419 2100. Website: www.ukinindia.org.
- **Indian High Commission in the UK:** India House, Aldwych, London, WC2B 4NA (Tel: 020 7836 8484).



KENYA

IMPORTANT – PLEASE READ THE FULL KENYA SAFETY INFORMATION, WHICH IS LISTED IN THE ‘YOUR PLACEMENT’ BOOK AND ALSO ON THE KENYA EXTRANET SITE. Please also take particular note of www.fco.gov.uk.

- There is a risk of vehicle hi-jacking and armed robbery in some areas. Drivers should park in well lit areas and not pick up strangers. Avoid driving in rural areas at night.
- It is strongly recommended not to travel by road to Lamu from Malindi, or heading overland to the Tana River Primate National Reserve either from Garissa or Malindi. If you intend to go there please travel by airplane.
- The North-Eastern Mandera district is particularly dangerous
- Do not travel into Nairobi at night it is very dangerous. If you intend to go out at night please go with a local representative or in large numbers
- Always carry money in different pockets, as you may well be pick-pocketed in Kenya.
- Ignore people who pester you; they will eventually go away.
- Watch out for con-artists. In the past there have been reports of: locals dressing up as policemen to steal your passport or your money. If a policeman approaches ask for ID, and say you can both go to the British Embassy to deal with the matter. If they are con-artists they will run off!
- Check the serial number of large Ksh notes before purchasing items. Some people will pretend that you gave them a smaller amount than you actually did.
- If you go to one of the open markets, please be accompanied by a local representative. You may be pick pocketed or be conned.
- When drinking bottled water, always check the seal. A lot of places try to sell resealed tap water. Keringet water is one of the better brands for safety.
- Never go to the shanty towns in the West of Nairobi, e.g. Kibera – they are very dangerous.
- **British embassy in Nairobi, Kenya:** Upper Hill Road, Nairobi, PO BOX 30465, 00100 Nairobi. Tel: 00 (254) 20 2844000. For the emergency out of hours Duty Officer telephone 00 (254) 722 206 616. Website: <http://www.britishhighcommission.gov.uk/kenya>
- **British Honorary Consul, Mombasa:** PO Box 85785, Mombasa, Kenya. Tel: 00 (254) (41) 2313609 / 2220023. In an emergency occurring out of hours, please telephone the following mobile numbers: 00 254 722 410901 or 00 254 722 411139.



MALAYSIA

- When travelling on local buses and trains, remain alert at all times and beware of bag snatchers - there have been many reports of bags being snatched by motorcyclists in cities.
- The FCO warns of suspicions that terrorists and criminal elements are continuing with plans to kidnap foreign tourists from the islands and coastal areas of Eastern Sabah. Boats travelling to and from offshore islands and dive sites are possible targets. If you wish to visit resorts on, and islands off, Eastern Sabah, it is recommended that you exercise extreme caution.
- Use your credit card sparingly - credit card fraud is rife in Malaysia.
- Respect local laws and customs - Malaysia is a multicultural but predominantly Muslim country, and as such, you should respect local customs and sensitivities at all times, especially during the holy month of Ramadan or if you intend to visit religious areas. You should dress modestly so as not to cause offence. Topless or nude bathing is both illegal and unacceptable. Drunkenness can lead to arrest.
- If you plan to travel over the border to Thailand you should be aware that since January 2004 there has been a resurgence of terrorism in southern Thailand, particularly in the far southern provinces of Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat and Songkhla. The FCO recommends against all but essential travel to these four Thai provinces.
- **British High Commission Kuala Lumpur:** 185 Jalan Ampang, 50450 Kuala Lumpur. Or: PO Box 11030, 50732 Kuala Lumpur. Telephone: 00 (60) (3) 2170 2200. Website: <http://www.britishhighcommission.gov.uk/malaysia>

- **Office of the Honorary British Consul, Kota Kinabalu (Sabah):** Telephone, 00 (60) (88) 253 333 (Peter Mole)



MALAWI

- Exercise caution with over-friendly people who approach you offering to act as guides or selling goods. Do not accept food or drink from strangers as people have been robbed after eating drugged food.
- You should lock car doors and keep windows closed, especially when stopping your vehicle. Armed car jacking is also a risk, especially for drivers of four-by-four vehicles. Do not offer lifts to strangers and be alert to obstructions in the road. If your car is targeted do not resist or act impulsively. Drivers have been wounded by assailants.
- Lost or stolen passports are often handed to the police within a few days. You should report the loss to the nearest police station as soon as possible, and remain in touch with that station in case of recovery. The High Commission is not always informed when a passport is found.
- Buying uncut precious stones is illegal.
- Outside the main tourist areas, women should cover legs and shoulders so as not to offend local sensitivities.
- **British High Commission, Lilongwe, Malawi:** PO Box 30042, Lilongwe 3. Telephone: 00 (265) (1) 772 400, or 00 (265) (1) 772 683, or 00 (265) (1) 772 701, or 00 (265) (1) 772 182, or 00 (265) (1) 772 027, or 00 (265) (1) 772 123. Website: <http://www.britishhighcommission.gov.uk/malawi>



NEW ZEALAND

- Motor insurance is not a legal requirement in New Zealand. Therefore, even though the UK has a reciprocal Healthcare Agreement with New Zealand, private accident insurance is strongly recommended. This is because New Zealand law has removed the right of accident victims to sue a third party in the event of an accident.
- Weather conditions can quickly become treacherous in some areas and you should keep yourself informed of regional weather forecasts.
- **Quarantine Procedures:** New Zealand has very strict bio-security regulations. It is illegal to import most foodstuffs (meat and meat products, honey, fruit, dairy produce etc) and strict penalties are handed out to those breaking these rules. You may also need to take care when importing wood products, golf clubs and shoes (may have soil and dirt attached), wellington boots (for the same reason) and items made from animal skin (eg crocodile handbags). The immigration arrivals card has full details.
- New Zealand is located in a seismic zone and is subject to earthquakes. You should follow the advice of local authorities in the event of a natural disaster.
- **British Consulate-General, Auckland:** Level 17, IAG House, 151 Queen Street, Auckland 1. Mailing Address: Private Bag 92014, Auckland 1. Telephone: 00 (64) (9) 303 2973. Website: <http://www.uktradeinvest.co.nz>



PERU

- Street crime, including muggings and thefts, is a significant problem in Lima, Cusco and other major cities. You should take care when using web-cafes and similar services as thieves operate in places where people are easily distracted.
- You should remain vigilant at all times and avoid walking alone in quiet areas or at night. It is not recommended that you travel alone to areas outside Cusco at night. Provincial and Inter-city buses are occasionally held up and the passengers robbed.
- Street demonstrations and protests are commonplace in Peru, frequently occurring suddenly and sometimes turning violent. You should take care to avoid any area in which large crowds are gathering.
- You should be aware that, unlike in the UK and elsewhere, ATM machines in Peru do not automatically release your credit or debit card at the time you receive your money. You have to request its return by pushing a button. Please remember to do so. Many ATMs in main towns have instructions in English.
- Bus crashes are commonplace, especially at night. Inter-city bus crashes have resulted in the loss of life and serious injury. You are encouraged to use only reputable transport companies, which travel between the major tourist centres. You should avoid overnight travel, especially in mountainous and remote regions, whenever possible. Cruz delSur, Ormeno and Linea all operate with two crews, but accidents still occur. You should always wear a seat belt when travelling by inter-city bus.
- Peru is in an active earthquake zone and tremors are frequent.
- **British Embassy, Lima, Peru:** Torre Parque Mar (Piso 22), Avenida Jose Larco, 1301, Miraflores, Lima. Telephone: 00 (51) (1) 617 3000 Main, 00 (51) (1) 617 3030 Commercial, 00 (51) (1) 9751 7123 Duty Officer (for emergencies outside office hours). Website: <http://www.britishembassy.gov.uk/peru>



SOUTH AFRICA

- There is a risk of vehicle hi-jacking and armed robbery in some areas. Drivers should park in well lit areas and not pick up strangers. Avoid driving in rural areas at night.
- Visits to townships, including overnight stays, are an increasing feature of the tourist scene. **We strongly advise against visiting the townships.**
- Care should also be taken when using public transport. The crime rate in and around railway stations and on trains is high and tourists are easy targets.
- Avoid travelling on trains between Johannesburg and Pretoria.
- Theft is rife in the checking in and baggage areas at the international airports.
- South Africa has a high incidence of rape. As with other crimes, **most incidents occur in the townships and isolated areas**, and the risk to tourists travelling to the main destinations and taking sensible precautions is not so high.
- HIV/AIDS IS RIFE in the country, so please take all relevant precautions.

- **LOCAL TRAVEL:** Visitors to **Johannesburg** should avoid the Berea and Hillbrow areas. Care should be taken in the Central Business District especially at the Rotunda bus terminus where a number of tourists have been mugged. Care should be taken in the Central Business District and surrounding areas after dark.
- Take care at all times in **Durban's** city centre and beachfront area.
- Keep to main roads and avoid driving at night when visiting **Northern KwaZulu Natal and Zululand**, as there have been incidents of hi-jacking and robbery, particularly when leaving game reserves on lonely secondary roads.
- The incidence of petty theft and muggings in the town centre of Cape Town has been much reduced but visitors should still exercise vigilance.
- In the past there have been cases of car hijackings on the approach roads to the **Kruger Park**. Although the local authorities have increased police patrols in this area, please be extra vigilant when travelling to and from the Kruger Park.
- Take particular care on isolated beaches throughout South Africa.
- Kruger Park and other National Parks and some rural areas may only have basic medical facilities. Air evacuation can be the only option for medical emergencies.
- Malaria is prevalent in parts of Mpumalanga, the Northern province, Zululand and the Wetlands area around St Lucia. If you intend travelling around once your Placement is completed, seek medical advice before travelling.
- The outbreak of cholera in the poor communities of rural Northern KwaZulu Natal and Northern Province continues but is reducing. It is a highly contagious disease and you should maintain a high level of personal hygiene. It is also advisable to drink only bottled water.
- **British High Commission, Pretoria, South Africa:** 255 Hill Street, Arcadia 0002, Pretoria, South Africa. Consular Section: 256 Glyn Street, Hatfield 0083, Pretoria, South Africa. Telephone: 00 (27) (12) 421 7500 Switchboard, 00 (27) (12) 421 7733 General Enquiries 00 (27) (12) 421 7800 Consular Enquiries, 00 (27) (12) 421 7801 Passport Enquiries, 00 (27) (12) 421 7802 Visa Enquiries. Website: <http://www.britain.org.za/>
- **British Consulate General, Cape Town, South Africa:** 15th floor, Southern Life Centre, 8 Riebeeck Street, Cape Town 8001. Postal Address: British Consulate General, PO Box 500, Cape Town 8000. Telephone: 00 (27) (21) 405 2400.



SRI LANKA

IMPORTANT – PLEASE READ THE FULL SRI LANKA SAFETY INFORMATION, WHICH IS LISTED IN THE ‘YOUR PLACEMENT’ BOOK AND ALSO ON THE SRI LANKA EXTRANET SITE. Please also take particular note of www.fco.gov.uk.

- **DO NOT TRAVEL TO THE NORTH AND EAST OF THE COUNTRY** For the purpose of this travel advice we consider the north to be all areas north of the A12 road (which runs from Puttalam in the west to Trincomalee in the east) including the Jaffna peninsula; and we consider the east to be the districts of Trincomalee and Batticaloa, as well as coastal areas of Ampara district north of Pottuvil and east of the A25 and A27 roads.
- **Mahouts** (young men who are in charge of the elephants at the Orphanage in Pinawala and all other elephant reserves): with all respect, they are generally not educated and may not behave like gentlemen when with women – so we strongly urge women not to socialise with the mahouts. If you must, stay within the confines of social areas, like the bar in your hotel.
- **Men in Sri Lanka** are fascinated by European women and will stare at you continually. Given the opportunity, they will also push up against you or touch you or stare down your blouse. Don't get angry - they will just laugh. It is best to avoid eye contact and keep your distance, particularly on crowded buses and trains. If a man stands next to you on the train or anywhere else, move to another position. Travelling alone should be avoided as much as possible. To avoid attracting unwanted attention, you should also always make sure your shoulders and knees are covered. If volunteers date local men, they run the risk of losing the respect of the local community. Unfair, yes, but true nonetheless – and it is their culture.
- **If you need any medication**, take someone with you who speaks the local language. They seem to be over-generous with the drugs they dispense and don't write down what they are. As a precaution, ask them to write down the drug name and dosage in English.
- **Elephants** are not friendly, affectionate creatures and should always be treated with respect. Despite their size, they can move *very fast and are exceptionally strong*. Always check with an accredited person in charge of an elephant about the safety of approaching the animal.
- **Visiting local homes:** Sri Lankans are very friendly and may invite you to their homes – it is probably best to go with a friend.
- **Scams and Touts:** Although Sri Lankans are naturally friendly, do be cautious of people who approach you when you are travelling. They frequently claim they can get you cheap accommodation or transport. Don't go with them!

- Most public transport vehicles would not pass Western safety laws. They also get VERY crowded. DO NOT hang onto the outside of buses and trains the way the locals do!!
- In recent years there have been incidents involving tourists in the **Yala National Park** in the southeast and a serious incident occurred at a remote tourist site in Polonnaruwa. **Check on safety issues with accredited authorities before planning your sightseeing trips.**
- There are strong hidden undercurrents on many of Sri Lanka beaches – particularly Hikaduwa.
- For accident safety reasons, try to avoid using buses and trains when travelling to and from Colombo. Taxis and hire cars are inexpensive and readily available in Colombo.
- Don't enter a **Buddhist temple** wearing headgear or bare-legged. Remove footwear. Cover shoulders and knees. Photographing people next to statues of the Buddha can cause offence.
- Nude or topless bathing is generally not allowed.
- **HEALTH:** Whilst many medical personnel have received their training in the UK and other Western countries, emergency medical treatment is not available countrywide and injured persons are brought to Colombo for treatment.
- It is not possible to change Scottish or Northern Irish bank notes.
- Avoid Embassies and government buildings in Colombo.
- It is **mandatory** for all volunteers to bring a mobile phone with them to Sri Lanka. This is so that you can always be contacted by Roshan in case of an emergency.
- It is also of **extreme importance** that you check with Roshan, our Sri Lanka Manager, before you embark on **any travel** within Sri Lanka. The local situation changes regularly and an area may become unsafe at short notice. This includes the Capital, Colombo. Roshan is extremely well informed and knowledgeable regarding the current safety situation in Sri Lanka, and will be able to advise you on where you can safely travel to and where you should avoid. If you are unsure if an area is safe and you can not clear it with Roshan, you should **NOT** travel there. This information is correct at the time of writing, but you **MUST** also check with Roshan before you embark on any travel around Sri Lanka, as the local situation changes regularly, and an area may become unsafe at short notice. You may also have to make special precautions for safety reasons in certain areas, even for something as simple as where to swim! Please also ensure to check the FCO website page for Sri Lanka frequently before you are on your project and while you are out there to obtain the most up to date information. The website is at <http://www.fco.gov.uk>
- **British High Commission, Colombo, Sri Lanka:** 190 Galle Road, Kollupitiya, (PO Box 1433), Colombo 3, Sri Lanka. Telephone: 00 (94) (11) 2437336-43.



TANZANIA

- When using public transport, DO NOT accept drinks or food from someone you don't know.
- In tourist areas, touts and flycatchers can be extremely aggressive, especially around bus stations.
- Do everything you can to minimize the impression that you have just arrived, duck into a shop if you need to get your bearings and look at a map.
- Mugging and robberies, sometimes accompanied by violence or the threat of violence, occur throughout Tanzania. You should avoid walking alone, especially in isolated areas and on beaches, particularly (but not only) after dark. Remain vigilant at all times.
- It is **strongly recommended** for all volunteers to bring a mobile phone with them to Tanzania. This is so that you can always be contacted by our organiser in case of an emergency.
- It is also of **extreme importance** that you check with our Tanzania Manager, before you embark on **any travel** within Tanzania.. If you are unsure if an area is safe and you cannot clear it with Titus, you should **NOT** travel there.
- **British High Commission, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania:** Umoja House, Garden Avenue, PO Box 9200, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Telephone: 00 (255) (22) 211 0101 or Duty Officer out of hours number (for emergencies only) 00 (255) (0)754 242 242. Website: www.britishhighcommission.gov.uk/tanzania



THAILAND

- There is a high threat from terrorism throughout Thailand. Attacks could be indiscriminate, including in places frequented by expatriates and foreign travellers. You should exercise caution at all times.
- On 31 December 2006, a series of bomb explosions in Bangkok killed three people and injured at least 36 others, including six foreigners. Since then there have been a number of attacks in Bangkok, with motives which remain unclear. Most have been small and caused no casualties.
- The FCO advises against all but essential travel to, or through, the far southern provinces of Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat and Songkhla, where there is continuing violence due to insurgency and civil unrest.

- You should be careful about taking drinks from strangers and be wary at clubs and parties, particularly in the Koh Samui area and at the Full Moon party on Koh Phangan Island where incidences of date rape have been reported. A number of British nationals have suffered severe psychiatric problems as a result of drug use, in a small number of cases resulting in suicide.
- It is a criminal offence to make critical or defamatory comments about the King or other members of the Royal family in Thailand. This offence is punishable by a sentence of three to fifteen years or longer.
- **British Embassy, Bangkok, Thailand:** 14 Wireless Road, Lumpini, Pathumwan, Bangkok 10330. Telephone: 00 66 (0) 2 305 8333 Main Embassy line, 00 (66) (2) 305 8229 Consular information, 00 (66) (2) 305 8333 press 2 Visa information. Website: <http://www.britishembassy.gov.uk/thailand>



ZAMBIA

- There is a risk of vehicle hi-jacking and armed robbery in some areas. Drivers should park in well lit areas and not pick up strangers. Avoid driving in rural areas at night.
- Ignore people who pester you; they will eventually go away.
- Never go to the shanty towns.
- Avoid engaging in overtly partisan political activity or those that could be construed as such.
- Try not to travel at night as this can be very dangerous. If you intend to go out at night please go with a local representative or in large numbers
- When drinking bottled water, always check the seal. Some places try to sell resealed tap water.
- The FCO advise against all but essential travel to areas of Zambia bordering the Democratic Republic of Congo. There are continuing reports of armed cross-border raids from the Democratic Republic of Congo. These are often cattle or food raids, targeting border villages. But some have been attributed to the Congolese Mai Mai faction.
- Travel in the bush for hunting or prospecting along this border is not advised. The use of legitimate border crossings is safe though Congolese officials may request payments.
- The border area between Zambia and Angola also remains sensitive. In the last six to nine months there have been no reports of cross border stock theft, which resulted in fighting.
- Landmines are a danger in Zambia's border areas, particularly those neighbouring Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Mozambique. British residents who consider their presence essential in these border areas should remain vigilant.
- **British High Commission, Lusaka, Zambia:** 5210 Independence Avenue, PO Box 50050, 15101 Ridgeway, Lusaka, Zambia. Telephone: 00 (260) (1) 251133. Website: www.britishhighcommission.gov.uk/zambia



ZIMBABWE

- There has been an increase in violent crime and in violence at political demonstrations, but main tourist areas have been largely unaffected by political and social unrest.
- Avoid engaging in overtly partisan political activity or those that could be construed as such.
- The FCO advise against visiting the high-density suburbs, which have been the principal scene of political clashes.
- There is a risk of vehicle hi-jacking and armed robbery in some areas. Drivers should park in well lit areas and not pick up strangers. Avoid driving in rural areas at night.
- Although fuel is now more readily available than in the past, shortages still occur, especially outside major cities. Public transport and services are still affected. If you are driving, you should think carefully before setting out on long distance journeys and keep your tank topped up as much as possible.
- There has been both political and social unrest in Zimbabwe for several years. This has affected urban and rural areas, but the principal tourist areas have been largely unaffected
- The carrying of the main independent newspapers (the Financial Gazette, the Independent and the Standard) can provoke a hostile reaction from ZANU (PF) supporters.
- Please **do not travel independently**, but instead take the option of travelling with the other volunteers in an organised tour with our organisers. Or please consult our organisers for them to recommend a reputable company to travel with.
- Try not to travel at night as this can be very dangerous. If you intend to go out at night please go with a local representative or in large numbers
- Although not present in Harare and through much of the Highveld (central districts), malaria is prevalent in most other parts of the country, particularly in low lying border areas including the Zambezi Valley, Victoria Falls, Hwange National Park and parts of the Eastern Highlands.

- Watch out for con-artists. In the past there have been reports of: locals dressing up as policemen to steal your passport or your money. If a policeman approaches ask for ID, and say you can both go to the British Embassy to deal with the matter. If they are con-artists they will run off!
- If you go to one of the open markets, please be accompanied by a local representative. You may be pick pocketed or be conned.
- Never go to the shanty towns – they are very dangerous.
- **British Embassy, Harare, Zimbabwe:** Corner House (7th Floor), Samora Machel Avenue/Leopold Takawira Street, PO Box 4490, Harare, Zimbabwe. Telephone: 00 (263) (4) 772990 or 00 (263) (4) 774700. Website: www.britishembassy.gov.uk/zimbabwe

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND THANKS

Much of the information in this Booklet was taken from the Foreign & Commonwealth Office Travel information website (www.fco.gov.uk), which is an excellent source of information for those who are going to foreign shores.

WE NEED YOUR HELP

We would appreciate any suggestions from volunteers on additional information which should be included in this book. Travellers strives to constantly improve and update our placements – and the safety of our volunteers, so any suggestions would be very gratefully received and included in this book.



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