

International Travel Tips

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Traveling and working abroad is the experience of a lifetime. As an employer you have a duty to provide a safe work environment for your staff. This can be more challenging when you send employees to work outside of the US. Considerations should include:

RESEARCH YOUR DESTINATION

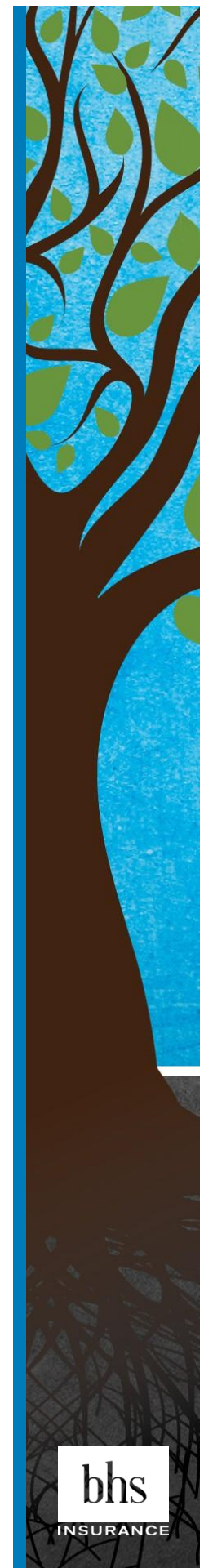
- Utilize the [State Department Website](#) and guidelines to understand the current risk; evaluation of various destinations, gather travel advice, and warnings. The website has been revamped and launched in January 2018 with a more robust and informative platform providing succinct travel guidance with drill down on locations.
- Consider safety of the hotel accommodations, in-country accommodations and travel, communication challenges (logistical and language), and the availability of emergency services.
- Confirm access to employee health plan coverage for injury or illness that could arise while employees are traveling.
- Review your international insurance policy for coverage based on travel destinations. This policy provides employees emergency assistance services 24/7/365 - including access to medical care, legal services or response to a personal emergency. Additionally, the policy provides for liability arising out of work performed outside the US, medical expenses arising out of work related injuries, as well as kidnap, ransom response, and rescue. *NOTE: US policies do not extend coverage outside of the US and Canada.*

EMPLOYEE NEEDS

- Does the employee have any physical limitations or pre-existing medical conditions that cannot be appropriately managed or treated in the country where they will travel? Visit the [World Health Organization](#) website for up to date information on health warnings and recommended vaccinations.
- Do the employees speak the language? Provide appropriate briefing to travelers so they are prepared to face and respond to the various travel risks and challenges as they travel.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

- Confirm international cell and internet service will be readily available, confirm security settings on laptops and all devices are in place, and that international service is provided.
- Provide access to health plan and international insurance, employee assistance, and kidnap and ransom response for emergencies. Require all travelers download the



apps to their phone to have ready access to assistance services in an emergency, as well as insurance cards (when applicable).

- Require a copy of the itinerary and contact information at each destination. Obtain and provide emergency contact information and what to expect in terms of assistance.
- Travelers need to register their itinerary: [STEP](#) – Smart Traveler Enrollment Program for notification and assistance from US embassies and consulates abroad.

TRAVEL BASICS

To ensure the travel experience is a positive one, there are some important planning steps for staff:

Obtaining your passport

- Apply well in advance of your trip; passport processing can take weeks or longer. Confirm that there are no additional requirements based upon activities and length of stay. Renewing your passport can take equally as long. Passport applications are accepted at over 9,000 locations nationwide. To find a convenient location visit the [US Department of State](#)'s website.
- Sign your passport and complete emergency information.
- Provide a copy of your passport and itinerary to your employer, family, or friend in case of emergency.

Before you leave...

- Learn about necessary vaccinations and health precautions in areas you will travel at the by visiting the [World Health Organization](#) website and prepare accordingly.
- Prescription medications can be challenging; carry all medications in their original, clearly marked containers. Make sure that the name on the prescription, the medical container, and your passport all match.
- [Research](#) your destination(s) and plan for your safety.
- Download your company's international travel insurance app for ready access to assistance while you travel.
- Register your travel with [STEP](#) – Smart Traveler Enrollment Program for notification and assistance from US embassies and consulates abroad. *Note: In emergency family can contact the State Dept to relay message to the Consulate or Consular Agencies overseas by calling 888.407.4747*
- Check customs restrictions for the countries you are going to, as well as returning to the US.
- Let your bank and credit card company know your travel plans to avoid having accounts frozen for unusual transactions.

While on your trip, keep in mind...

- The best currency exchange rates will be at local banks and the ATM.
- Avoid flashy clothing and jewelry to discourage theft.
- Appear confident; be selective and thoughtful in asking for assistance.

INVESTMENT & DEBRIEFING

International travel is a significant investment of time and resources. Clearly establish measurable goals to be accomplished by staff while working abroad and develop the strategy for reporting, debriefing, sharing, and measuring results of the work.

CONCLUSION

Preparation and planning by all involved are key to successful and productive international travel. While not every outcome can be anticipated, response planning, and the right partners in place are significant to effectively completing work assignments and traveling with confidence.

Consult [BHS Insurance](#) to make sure your coverage is adequate and protects your risk sufficiently. For more information, please call Kim Slager or another member of the BHS Insurance Public Garden team at 800-350-7676.

Sources: "Keeping your employees safe on business travel." *How Safe is My Trip, How Safe is My Trip.*; Dobinson, Paul. "9 Ways to Minimize Business Travel Risk." *AIG*, edited by Dobinson, AIG. ; ThinkHR; MyWave

