

UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

**International Travel
Security & Safety
Guidance**

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL SECURITY & SAFETY GUIDANCE

Introduction

The safety and security of our employees and students are of paramount importance. International travel is identified as an activity having a potential risk to personal safety due to global events, geographical risk factors and cultural peculiarities.

The purpose of this guidance therefore is to provide appropriate security information to University colleagues who are required to travel on University business, study or research to, from or in another country by air, sea, rail or road.

So that the University may help to ensure the personal safety of those who travel on University business, travellers should make themselves familiar with the contents of this guidance document before undertaking international business travel.

You must take personal responsibility for your own safety and security when travelling on University business and exercise vigilance and due care. The University will provide up to date information and advice on security matters to travellers where it is possible to do so but personal security will always be a matter of personal responsibility. If any security incidents are encountered while travelling you should report them to:

- Security personnel or local management at your destination
- Local police
- Line manager or nominated incident manager as soon as possible

The reporting of incidents will enable the University to learn from experience and may prevent further colleagues being exposed to similar risk.

Risk Assessment

The University of Birmingham will adopt a risk assessment protocol to ensure that political, social and economic conditions in the countries and cities in which we operate or travel to are constantly monitored for risk to travellers. This risk assessment will include for example:

- Security threats e.g. terrorism, crime, political unrest and civil disorder
- Natural disasters e.g. floods, earthquake, extreme weather
- Local hazards e.g. major transport strikes
- Serious medical risks e.g. Epidemics and contagions

You should consider the destination, circumstances and timing of your business trip and where there are concerns seek advice from the Head of Security, Insurance Manager or the Travel Manager. A preliminary check on the main security considerations for any destination can be made by visiting the Foreign Office website at <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>

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Risk factors are generally formulated by an assessment of:

- Frequency and seriousness of a country's violent crime problem
- Degree of political, economic and societal unrest
- Stability of the government in the face of such problems
- Potential for internal or regional conflicts or war breaking out in the country
- Capabilities and intentions of indigenous and transnational terrorists, guerrilla groups or other dangerous persons to engage in violence and their history for doing so

Any one or a combination of these factors might result in changes to a country's risk level. Conditions that would qualify for a low, moderate or high risk rating in any region or area of the country frequented by foreigners generally result in the whole country being rated at that level.

Pre-Travel

Any international travel on University business must be approved by your line manager. The University retains a Travel Management Company (TMC) to provide security and general risk information on global destinations and international travel on University business should normally be booked through the University's approved TMC. Private bookings through commercial travel agencies using either a University purchasing card or personal finances (later to be claimed on expenses) can represent a risk, as the journey will fall outside of tracking and control mechanisms operated by the TMC on behalf of the University. The TMC will also ensure that only safe and reliable travel and accommodation are booked for travellers. Scheduled airlines are usually the safest and most reliable form of travel to use, but won't be appropriate in all cases.

Travel to **High Risk** destinations (listed in Appendix 1), should be discussed with the Insurance Department, Head of Security and Travel Manager for accurate information on the known risks to safety and security. In the case of severe security risks, the University may advise that it is unsafe for colleagues to travel to that destination until the situation has stabilized or to not travel at all.

For countries where there is an **Elevated Risk** (listed at Appendix 2) travellers must notify the Insurance Manager of all intended travel details prior to travel and be in possession of a country specific security briefing available from the Security Department.

Countries with no specific travel restrictions but where there needs to be **Increased Vigilance** over personal security are listed in Appendix 3. You are advised to get a country specific security briefing from the Security Department prior to travel.

Important note: Risks change dynamically over time. You should also consult the FCO website whose country risk ratings are reviewed and assessed in real time. Risk ratings imposed by the FCO have primacy over this guidance in all cases.

Before travelling internationally on business you should:

- Ensure personal travel documents and country immigration and health requirements, e.g. visas and inoculations are current and valid for the country to be visited
- Complete a Traveller Profile. A Traveller Profile is a form generated by the TMC and completed by the traveller for their first trip. By submitting a completed Traveller Profile and by booking all travel and accommodation through the designated TMC, each colleague will have their travel electronically tracked, enabling them to be immediately contacted and offered security advice during a crisis or security incident. It contains personal details

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required by border authorities e.g. name, DOB, nationality, passport number, next of kin details etc. It can include medical conditions (optional) for medical assistance abroad. The form is then retained by the TMC and allows an automated service for future visits i.e. the traveller does not need to supply these details each time.

- Receive a Country Specific Security Briefing from the Security Department if travelling to countries which are **High Risk, Elevated Risk** or where **Increased Vigilance** is required (Appendices 1 – 3).
- Take extra supplies of any prescriptions and routine medications in their original containers and carry details of the prescription as well. Be aware that in some countries your medication may not be available
- Take your private and/or travel insurance documents with you.
- Have downloaded on to your smart phone the Amadeus Mobile Messenger App which enables security information and key messages to be sent to you. This App is available for iPhone and android phone on iTunes¹ and Google play²
- Have downloaded on to your smart phone the Key Travel Concierge App³
- Make copies of your passport, airplane ticket, driver's license and credit cards that you take with you. Keep one copy at home; carry a second copy with you but separate from the originals. This will help speed the replacement process if they are lost or stolen.

Security While Travelling

The primary risks to international business travellers are:

- Theft of personal belongings
- Personal attack
- Disease and illness
- Unwittingly offending foreign laws
- Theft of intellectual property (industrial espionage)
- Hostage and kidnap
- Victim of natural disaster
- Being caught up in military conflict, political or civil unrest and terrorist activity

The first 4 risks are medium to high risks in most countries. The last 4 are low risk in most countries but are a significant risk in a small number of countries.

¹ Download <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/amadeus-mobile-messenger/id640034175?mt=8>

² Download https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.chartersolutionsint.mta.amadeus&hl=en_GB

³ Download https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.keytravel.tripconcierge&hl=en_GB

General Security Precautions:

UMAL (University insurers) provide useful travel safety tips on their website www.umal.co.uk/travel/travel-tips.html. You are advised to acquaint yourself with this information.

In general:

- *Regularly check the FCO travel advice for the country you're visiting and subscribe to their email alerts*
- *Watch and read news items about the country and region*
- *Be vigilant in public areas and places that attract foreigners and westerners like embassies, hotels, restaurants, bars and businesses*
- *Pay attention to your surroundings. Look out for anything suspicious, and if you see anything report it to the local police immediately*
- *Be clear about any routes you use and have a plan of action to follow in the event of an incident*
- *Try to avoid routines that make you an easier target – vary the time and route of your regular journeys. Do not make lone journeys at night*
- *Keep your mobile phone charged and with you, with emergency numbers programmed in*
- *Consider the extent to which you might stand out from the crowd before deciding to visit out-of-town destinations. Keep a low profile and don't drink too much alcohol*
- *Avoid carrying cash and consider using traveller's checks or major credit cards instead (make sure they are accepted at your destination before departing). Don't pack valuables such as a lot of jewelry.*
- *Be discreet on social media about yourself and your plans*
- *Inform colleagues or hotel staff about where you're going and when you intend to return*
- *Identify places like police stations, hospitals, official buildings along your route where you could seek refuge in an emergency*
- *Obey all local laws. In many countries lawbreakers are treated harshly and penalties can be severe*
- *Respect local customs. Causing offence will attract unwelcome attention and may have unpleasant consequences*
- *You should not undertake hazardous activities whilst on University business unless these are specifically part of the reason for the visit*
- *Research basic information about the country or countries you plan to visit to help you become familiar with local laws and customs. Your library or travel agent are valuable resources*
- *Don't accept rides from or discuss travel plans with strangers. Don't discuss personal information with strangers who strike up a conversation*

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- *Stay in well-lit and well-travelled places and don't "flash" your cash or other valuables. Draw cash from ATMs only in daylight and preferably from within banks*
- *If you are robbed, don't resist. Life is cheap in some countries*
- *Become familiar with some basic words and phrases in the language of the country or countries you plan to visit*
- *Use authorized taxis. You could be overcharged, robbed or kidnapped when using unlicensed taxis*
- *Be cautious when buying something from a street vendor. Keep in mind that the merchandise may be counterfeit, illegal or unsafe and you may have to surrender it to the Border Agency when you get home.*
- *Keep your bags and personal belongings within reach at all times*
- *Do not accept packages from strangers*
- *Do not joke about or discuss terrorism, weapons, explosives or other threats. Police and security personnel are trained to consider the slightest mention of these topics as a serious threat.*
- *Be aware of local scam artists; always assume you are being watched. Avoid looking lost or pondering over maps in public places*
- *If you are on your own, be very careful about accepting unsolicited offers of companionship. These almost never end well.*
- *Stay in reputable hotels. Do not hand your passport over unless you are required to by law. Familiarise yourself with fire escapes and pick a floor between the 2nd and the 7th. Do not let other people overhear your name and room number if possible. Choose a room that does not overlook the car park or reception area.*

Local or National Crises

A large-scale crisis within a country can put a strain on local and international services, potentially leading to delays in routine services or emergency assistance reaching you. You may therefore have to take increased responsibility for your own safety and security during this time, particularly if there is an uncertain security environment.

- During civil or political unrest or if you feel threatened, leave the country at the earliest opportunity in line with FCO travel advice. If you do not, the FCO cannot guarantee that they will be able to assist you to leave the country at a later stage. Live updates from the FCO are available from their Facebook page and Twitter feeds. You can also subscribe to their email alerts
- Avoid all demonstrations, public confrontations or large gatherings.
- Remain in touch with your University department, airline, TMC and insurer.
- If you are staying in a hotel, identify the emergency procedures in place, including the location of any emergency shelters or secure areas. Remain in your hotel and take sensible precautions until it is safe to attempt departure.

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- Follow the advice of the local authorities
- If you need consular assistance, call the FCO on **+44 207 008 1500**
- Depending on the crisis and location, the FCO will offer a number of channels for you to request help (e.g. in person to a member of the FCO crisis team on the ground, by phone, Internet or SMS). These channels will be advised widely at the time.

More detailed information is available from the FCO at www.gov.uk/how-to-deal-with-a-crisis-overseas

Multiple Travellers

Managers who approve or arrange collective travel should give due consideration to the potential risks posed by several senior managers or key personnel travelling together if a crisis were to occur. As a rule, more than three members of UEB or Council should not travel together at the same time on the same mode of transport unless the journey is a short domestic one. This should also apply to any group of individuals whose seniority, influence or work would mean that the University would be severely affected if there were multiple losses of such persons.

Social Media Assistance during Disasters

During a disaster, a victim's family members are often left in the dark until communication can be re-established. Not knowing if a family member or loved one is safe can be very stressful. Facebook and Google have tailored their services to aid family members in confirming their loved ones' safety.

Facebook's **Safety Check**⁴ is a new feature that Facebook has built into its social media application. Using location services such as the GPS technology on smartphones, Safety Check will identify if a user has been near or at a natural disaster location and pushes updates, upon user permission, that notify the user's Facebook friends that he or she is safe. Safety Check can also act as a disaster notification application that informs an unaffected user to retreat from the disaster zone.

Google's **Person Finder**⁵ is an open source web application that acts as a message board for victims to post status and whereabouts information. Loved ones can search through and post requests for information concerning the person they are looking for. With reassurance that loved ones are safe and being attended to, family members will have a reduced need for communication and thus will lessen the load on the vital communication infrastructure at the disaster location.

Both Safety Check and Person Finder are free of charge. The applications also supplement the relief effort by consolidating search requests and victim status notifications. However, if you have no access to Wi-Fi or 3G/4G then communication might not be possible. This is not a substitute for advising the University and/or emergency assistance services. Care must be taken over the transmission of possibly personal data.

⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/about/safetycheck/>

⁵ <https://google.org/personfinder/global/home.html>

Appendix 1: High Risk Destination Countries

Travel to the following destinations will require additional approval from one level above the employee's line manager, who will then consult the Insurance Department and University Head of Security for accurate information on the known risks to safety and security. In the case of severe security risks, the University may advise that it is unsafe for colleagues to travel to that destination until the situation has stabilized or to not travel at all.

- Afghanistan
- Burundi
- Central African Republic
- Chad
- Iraq
- Libya
- Mali
- Niger
- Palestinian Territories
- Somalia
- Sudan
- Sudan South
- Syria
- Yemen

Appendix 2: Destination Countries with Elevated Risk

For the following countries where there is an elevated risk travellers must notify the Insurance Manager and Head of Security of all intended travel details prior to approval for travel. Travellers must be in possession of a country specific security briefing:

- Algeria
- Bahrain
- Bangladesh
- Burkina Faso
- Cote d'Ivoire
- Egypt
- Eritrea
- Ethiopia
- Guinea
- Haiti
- India
- Indonesia
- Kenya
- Lebanon
- Liberia
- Madagascar
- Mauritania
- Mexico
- Nepal
- Nigeria
- Pakistan
- Sierra Leone
- Tunisia
- Ukraine
- Venezuela

Appendix 3: Destinations Countries Requiring Increased Vigilance

The following list shows countries with no specific travel restrictions but where there needs to be increased vigilance over personal security. Travellers must be in possession of a country specific security briefing:

- Angola
- Argentina
- Belize
- Bolivia
- Brazil
- Burma
- Cameroon
- Chile
- China
- Columbia
- Democratic Republic of Congo
- Djibouti
- Dominican Republic
- East Timor
- Ecuador
- El Salvador
- Equatorial Guinea
- Gabon
- Georgia
- Guatemala
- Guinea (Bissau)
- Guyana
- Honduras
- Iran
- Israel

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- Jamaica
- Jordan
- Korea (North)
- Kosovo
- Kuwait
- Kyrgystan
- Macedonia
- Morocco
- Mozambique
- Nicaragua
- Oman
- Panama
- Papua New Guinea
- Paraguay
- Peru
- Philippines
- Russia
- Rwanda
- Saudi Arabia
- Senegal
- South Africa
- Sri Lanka
- Tajikistan
- Tanzania
- Thailand
- Togo
- Trinidad and Tobago
- Turkey

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- Uganda
- United Arab Emirates
- Uzbekistan
- Western Sahara
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe

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Appendix 4: Important Information

University Contacts

Head of Security – Chris Hoad c.d.hoad@bham.ac.uk +44 121 414 5626

Security Operations Manager – Neil Anderton n.d.anderton@bham.ac.uk +44 121 414 5626

Security general (non-emergency) – security@contacts.bham.ac.uk

Insurance Manager – Gill Kelsall g.l.kelsall@bham.ac.uk +44 121 414 6111

Travel Manager – Monica Guise m.l.guise@bham.ac.uk +44 121 414 3855

Security Control (24/7) +44 121 414 3000 or 4444 (Emergency line)

University Travel Management Company

Key Travel www.keytravel.com

Account Manager – Jo Strange jstrange@keytravel.com

Insurers

UMAL www.umal.co.uk/travel +44 207 847 8670

Dominic Thomas (UMAL) +44 7738 948 004

Susan Wilkinson (UMAL) +44 7802 457 936

Useful Websites

Foreign Office Travel Advice www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice

Government advice on dealing with a crisis overseas www.gov.uk/how-to-deal-with-a-crisis-overseas

Travel security tips from UMAL www.umal.co.uk/travel/travel-tips.html