SYTA
STUDENT & YOUTH TRAVEL ASSOCIATION

International Safety Resource Guide (ISRG)

CENTER for STUDENT TRAVEL SAFETY

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www.centerforstudenttravelsafety.org

STUDENT & YOUTH TRAVEL ASSOCIATION'S INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL SAFETY RESOURCE GUIDE

Introduction

When traveling with students internationally, it is vital for student travel organizations to have an effective safety resource and a plan of how to respond to a crisis, should it happen, when a group is traveling internationally.

This guide has been developed to provide tour operators with ways to address many of the challenges associated with traveling students and youth internationally. The purpose of this guide is to offer thought-provoking ideas and concepts that may be helpful in the development of a tour operator's own risk-management procedures, tailored specifically for their organization and client base.

This guide is organized in the same manner a travel organization might plan for a trip: pre-trip, during the trip, and post-trip. Comprehensive preparation pre-trip, combined with the meticulous execution of adopted protocols while traveling and the customer-focused follow-up upon a group's return, are all critical to the overall success of any trip.

Learning Objectives:

This International Travel Safety Guide is a reference to support student travel organizations in addressing safety while traveling internationally.

After reading this guide, learners will be able to:

- locate necessary information to ensure their travelers have proper travel documentation.
- recognize potential issues and identify how to address them.
- assess the trip at its conclusion and decide upon areas of improvement and follow-up.

Outline:

- Pre-Trip: Areas of Focus
    - Passport & Visa Requirement
        - Canadian Citizens
        - Unites States Citizens
    - ETIAS
    - Passport Management
    - Risk Mitigation
    - Risk Assessment
    - Health Form and Medical Clearing Process
- On-Tip
    - Risk Management
- Post-Trip

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Pre-Trip: Areas of Focus

Passport and Visa Requirements

Traveling internationally can be a life-changing experience. It also comes with rules that may not be applicable when traveling domestically. First and foremost, to travel internationally by air, all travelers must have a valid passport (or an Air NEXUS card when used at an Air NEXUS kiosk). In the unlikely event a parent or legal guardian must travel internationally to be with the student, it is recommended that person have a current passport. For example, the student becomes ill or injured and needs to return home early or the student is required to return home due to personal behavior or family emergency.

Student travel organizations reside in many different countries and travel to many more. Therefore, it is very difficult to list every country's passport requirements within this guide so we will focus on Canadian and U.S. passport guidance while providing resources for other countries for further information.

Although this guide should be up-to-date at time of distribution (and revised when needed), it is wise for student travel organizations, traveling internationally, to check with the appropriate agency in each country you are traveling to and from, to become educated on the current rules, procedures, and requirements.

Canadian Passports

All Canadian passports are issued by the Passport Program of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). Canada issues four types of passports to Canadians and issues two types of travel documents to refugees or stateless persons living in Canada. In this section, we will focus on the regular passport used for casual travel such as student tours. For more information, visit https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/canadian-passports.html.

Guarantor of Identity

The Canadian passport issuing system if modeled after the Unite Kingdom, where all first-time passport applications are required to be countersigned by a person who works in a recognized profession. Australia and New Zealand have similar policies but for applicants in Canada, only a Canadian passport holder can be a guarantor. For Canadian citizens living abroad, who do not have a Canadian guarantor, a non-Canadian guarantor in a licensed profession may be used for the application. Some examples are a dentist, medical doctor, judge, lawyer, notary public, pharmacist, police officer, veterinarian, or sitting officer for a financial institution.

Minors Entering Canada by Land or Sea

Although children under the age of 18 are not required to carry a passport to enter Canada, it is recommended. A passport provides the necessary identity and citizenship verification to allow any foreign child in the country. While other forms of citizenship identification are available, a passport is the only universally recognized form of identification and citizenship.

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All minors entering Canada by land or sea must present evidence of citizenship at the Canadian board, such as a government issued birth certificate, a passport or passport card. Children entering Canada as tourists are not required to hold a Visa, as long as the visit is less than 180 days.

U.S. and Canadian citizens under the age of 18, traveling with a school or sports team, may present a passport, original birth certificate, a Consular Report of Birth Abroad, a Naturalization Certificate, or a Canadian Citizenship Card if traveling by land or se.

Minors Returning to the United States by Air, Land or Sea
All children returning to the United States from Canada by air **must** hold a valid U.S. passport. Minors who are under the age of 16 and crossing the border by land or sea, may present a government issued birth certificate, Consular Report of Birth Abroad, or Naturalization Certificate to re-enter the country. Children 16 years of age or older must present a passport, passport card, and enhanced driver's license or a NEXUS card. All minors traveling with a school or other educational group may use a birth certificate for re-entry if by land or sea into the United States.

Letter of Consent to Travel Without Parent/Legal Guardian
We highly recommend the group leader be prepared to present a letter, or the organization's letterhead, with the following information:

- The name of the group and supervising adult
- Effective beginning and end dates of the tour
- A list of the child on the trip, primary addresses, phone number, date of birth, place of birth, and name of at least one parent or legal guardian for each child

The letter should include a written and signed statement by the supervising adult, certifying that he or she has obtained parental or legal guardian consent for each participating child. Although it is not required, you may want to bring along copies of individual parental consent forms for each traveler.

When planning your tour, it is recommended you make a call to the specific board crossing you will be using to give them a heads up on your trip date and confirm you have the proper documentation.

For more board crossing information, visit http://www.ezbordercrossing.com/list-of-border-crossings.

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Canadian Passport Details

- The regular passport is blue and has 36 pages, with 29 available for entry or exit stamps and visa. The validity of the passport depends upon the age of the traveler.
    - Travelers 16 years or older can choose between and five-year or ten-year passport
    - Travelers 15 years or younger are issued passports for a maximum of five years
- Signing of the passport: the passport holder must be the one to sign their own passport. If a parent or guardian signs the passport, the passport becomes invalid.
- Travelers under the age of 16 do not need to sign the passport, however, children ages 11-15 are encouraged to sign it. A signature by a child under the age of 11 does not invalidate the passport.
- In the Canadian passport, on the bottom of page four, there is a space to write the name, relationship, and contact information for a person whom the government would contact in case of an emergency. This person should be someone who would not normally travel with the traveler.
- The Government of Canada's Passport Program recommends travelers check the expiry date of their passport (located on page 2). Many countries require passports be valid for at least six months after the return date of the trip. They also remind travelers that each country sets its own rules so you should consult travel advisories. You can visit https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories to confirm the requirements of each destination country. On this site you will find up-to-date, country specific, advice on travel requirements, safety and security, health concerns, local laws and culture, and climate for more than 220 destinations worldwide.
- Prior to travel, Canadians should sign up for the Registration of Canadians Abroad Service at https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/registration. This allows Global Affairs Canada to contact you and assist in the case of an emergency either at home or abroad.
- Both parents are asked to participate in obtaining a passport for their child and to sign the application form. When a legal guardian is the applicant, the other legal guardian must also participate and provide proof of legal guardianship.
- In order to provide proof of legal guardianship, the parents must provide one the following "proof of parentage" documents when applying for a passport for a child 15 years of younger:
    - A birth certificate from Canada or foreign country in which the child was born, indicating the names of the parent(s), or an order of adoption indicating the name of the adoptive parent(s). **Exception,** an application will be accepted without proof of parentage only if a Canadian travel document was previously issued to the child in his or her name, and the parents or legal guardians are the same ones participating in the current application.
    - In the case of a custody, separation, or divorce, and a court order or agreement exists, referring to the custody of the child, only the person with custodial rights may apply for the passport on the child's behalf. All documents that refer to custody of, mobility of, or access to the child must be provided. If a divorce has been granted, a copy of the divorce judgment or order must also be provided. When joint custody provisions exist, either parent may be the applicant.

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Tips to Facilitate Crossing the Border for Groups Traveling Outside of Canada

Anything the group leader can do to facilitate the border crossing is always appreciated by border agents and usually makes the process much faster. If the group is organized and well-prepared, it could save hours at the border. Here are some helpful hints:

- **Student Lists:** An organized list of all people traveling with the group included full names, ages, citizenship, available documentation and parental letters of consent when applicable.
- **Music Groups/Inventory Lists:** Groups with musical instruments, both school-owned and personal, should prepare a detailed list including instrument, make, model, serial number, and approximate replacement value. Before traveling, we recommend you take advantage of a free, optional identification service available at all Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) offices. This service is available for items that have serial numbers or other unique markings. For items that do not have such markings, the CBSA can apply a sticker to them so they can be identified for customs purposes as goods that are legally in Canada.

  When you show valuables to a border agent and state you acquired them in Canada or lawfully imported them, the agent will list your valuables and their serial numbers on a wallet sized card called a "Form BSF407, *Identification of Articles for Temporary Exportation*". For large musical instrument inventories, the border agent will accept a detailed inventory list in most cases.

  If a traveler is questioned about their equipment when they return to Canada, show the card to the border agent. This will help identify the valuables that were in the traveler's possession before leaving the country. For more information, incuding a list of CBSA offices, please visit http://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/menu-eng.html.

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Pre-Board the Motorcoach

- Have a chaperone check passports/identification before everyone gets in line or on the motorcoach. If a signature is required on the passport, ensure it has been signed.
- If the students have been pre-assigned a chaperone, the chaperone and their students should be in line together and on the same motorcoach (if more than one).

Border Deportment

This is an important issue to discuss with students and chaperones prior to arriving at the border. If something (or someone) irritates the border agent, it could cause them to pull a student or motorcoach over and delay the trip. When crossing the border via motorcoach, the group leader should have the motorcoach driver and one group representative prepared to indicate the nature of the group, the purpose of the trip, and the documentation ready.

Before reaching customs and the border, prepare the group for arrival. Below are some topics that should be discussed:

- Do not speak unless you are spoken to. This allows the border agents to quickly do their job with less distractions.
- Answer all questions politely, clearly, briefly and honestly.
- Remove hats, sunglasses, and ear plugs/headphones.
- Have all documentation out and ready to show.
- Crossing the border with any fruit, vegetables, or sandwiches can hold up the student or motorcoach. Make sure you tell the agent immediately if there are items of that nature with the group. It is OK to have fruits and vegetables, as long as they have a sticker identifying that they are a product of the U.S. or Canada.
- Ensure the coach aisle is clear so agents can easily move around.
- If your group experiences a long delay at the border, suggest students use the motorcoach washroom if necessary. It will cause less confusion from the customs agent than having students leave and return to the motorcoach.

Returning to Canada

For groups traveling via Air

Canada has introduced a new entry requirement, known as an Electronic Travel Authorization (eTA), for visa-exempt foreign nationals traveling to or transitioning through Canada by air. Exceptions include U.S. citizens and travelers with a valid visa, permanent resident (PR) card, or Canadian citizenship card. This new requirement is a mandatory prerequisite prior to boarding flights to Canada. GO to http://www.cic.gc.ca/ftp/eta-ave-eng.asp to download Citizenship & Immigration Canada informational materials about the eTA.

For Groups Traveling Via Motorcoach

Some motorcoach drivers will ask travelers to fill out the blue U.S. Declaration Custom form in advance of arriving at the border. If the customs agent asks for the forms, this will save time at the border. The driver will generally have a supply on hand. Many students will have never had to fill in the card before, so it is recommended to go through the card line-by-line with the students over the PA system, during the ride to the border.

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Visa Waiver Program (ESTA)

International travelers who are seeking to travel to the United States under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) are now subject to enhanced security requirements. All eligible travelers who wish to travel under the VWP must apply for authorization through the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA). If traveling to the U.S. by land or sea under the VWP, you are not required to apply for the ESTA; however, it is recommended in order to expedite the processing of your I-94 Entry Document at the border crossing station. International travelers entering the United States under the VWP must have a special type of passport, called a machine-readable passport.

Be sure to do your research ahead of time to verify that your group has the correct documentation and forms needed to cross the border. Below are additional resources that may be helpful in your preparation.

RELATED WEB SITES

1. Canada Border Services Agency - www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/menu-eng.html
2. Electronic Travel Authorization - http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/visas.asp
3. Application for Permanent Resident Card - https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/application/application-forms-guides/application-renew-replace-permanent-resident-card.html
4. Indian & Northern Affairs - www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/eng/1100100032380
5. Visa Waiver Program - http://www.cbp.gov/travel/international-visitors/visa-waiver-program
6. Electronic System for Travel Authorization - http://www.cbp.gov/travel/international-visitors/esta
7. U.S. Citizens Crossing U.S. Borders - http://www.dhs.gov/files/crossingborders/travelers.shtm
8. Simplified Passport Renewal – https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/canadian-passports.html
9. Letter of Consent - http://travel.gc.ca/travelling/children/consent-letter

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United States Passports

Information Regarding U.S. Passports

- A passport must be valid up to six months pas the expected return to the U.S. date in order to depart on a trip.
- Some countries require that a passport has two to four blank visa/stamp pages. Some airlines will not allow travelers to board their aircraft if this requirement is not met. As a rule of thumb, it is important to adopt a policy to verify how many blank pages a traveler has in their passport, months in advance of the date of travel. This will allow time to correct the problem prior to a trip.
- For U.S. travelers internationally, the U.S. Department of State no longer adds visa pages into an already-issued U.S. passport. The Department of State issues 52-page passports to all applicants outside the United States; applicants within the United States may choose either a 28-page or 52-page passport. If a passport holder has insufficient pages, they must obtain a new passport. For more information on how or where to apply for a U.S. passport, please visit https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/News/passports/apply-early.html or call the National Passport Information Center toll-free at 877-487-2778/888-874-7793 (TTY/TTD). This is not an online passport application site. The passport wizard found on this site will prepare the student traveler's parents or guardian on how to apply for a U.S. passport.
- For U.S. Travelers, the U.S. Department of State issues two types of passports: passport book and passport cards. Both types can be used in certain circumstances, but the difference is crucial when it comes to international travel.
    - **Passport Book:** The universally accepted form of identification for traveling abroad. An American passport book can be used to visit countries all of the world.
    - **Passport Card:** Can only be used when traveling by land or sea when traveling between the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Bermuda, and the Caribbean. The U.S. Passport Card cannot be used to travel internationally by air.
- Under the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative, crossing the border between the U.S. and Canada requires proof of identity and citizenship. The specific documentation required depends on your mode of transportation.
    - **Traveling by air:** A passport book is considered proof of both identity and citizenship and is the only acceptable form of identification that can be used to travel between the U.S. and Canada by air. Travelers must display their passport before boarding a plane from one country to the other.
    - **Traveling by land or sea:** For land or water crossings between the U.S. and Canada, including by train, bus, ferry, private boats, and automobiles, several forms of identification are acceptable. These include a passport book, a passport card, an Enhanced Driver's License (EDL), or a Trusted Traveler Card such as NEXUS, SENTRI or FAST.

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- The airplane ticket used must list the exact name of the traveler as it appears on the passport, including the middle name. If a student traveler has more than three names instead of the customary first, middle, and last, the operator should work directly with the family of the student and airline to ensure the ticket is issued properly. Travelers may be denied boarding or ticket change fees may apply should there be an error with the name on the booking.
- It is highly recommended to start the passport application process as early as possible. Provision of an original birth certificate is a requirement and it can take time to gather the needed documents to successfully apply for a passport.
- Another way to learn more about how to apply for a passport for the first time or to renew a passport is to visit http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/passports.html. On this website, you will find application timelines, fee charts, and important information about where and how a student can obtain a passport. A page addressing frequently asked questions, including how to get an expedited passport can be found here: http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/passports/FAQs.html.

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Visa Requirements

It is important for a student travel organization to understand visa requirements for the countries they plan to visit on their trip. Visas may also be required for students traveling who are not citizens of the country where the tour originated.

Traveling abroad can be confusing to parents/guardians. To help clear up confusion, the student travel organization must plan ahead and clearly understand visa requirements for the destination they plan to visit. The U.S. Department of State is an excellent resource for United States citizens. By following the link below, you will have access to requirements for Americans traveling abroad. Once you click on the link, you will find an alphabetical listing of countries and their specific entry requirements. This website provides information on passports, visas, immunizations, medical information, additional fees, and conditions abroad that may affect the safety and security of the location to which you plan to travel. The website can be found at https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country.html.

The U.S. Department of State's Office of American Citizens Services and Crisis Management (ACS) provides the information supplied on this site, which is intended to inform the public of conditions abroad that may or may not affect safety and security. Country specific information, travel alerts and travel warnings are also found within this site. There is information for every country in the world. You will also find the location of the U.S. Embassy and any Consulate offices, which is important for preplanning in case of an emergency during the trip. This is a good place to gain information on where you are going and prepare the student travel organization to address questions student travelers and parents might have prior to travel.

For travelers originating in other countries, KLM airlines has an online tool at https://klm.traveldoc.aero. On this site, travelers enter their origin country, destination, departure date, return date, and nationality of their passport and expiry date. Additional forms of identification can be entered as well. Once the terms of using the site are agreed to, a summary sheet will appear, suggesting additional documents that may be needed for travel and a reminder to check the passport expiry date.

Non-U.S. Citizen Student Travelers

More and more student travelers do not have citizenship in the country where the trip originates. It is important for student travel organizations to understand there may be different requirements for these students, compared to a student with citizenship in the country of origin. Requirements may differ depending on the country of citizenship of the traveler and it is difficult for a student travel organization to understand all requirements. In these cases, it is important to ensure the student's parent or legal guardian begins the process early ensuring they have all required visas in place well before the departure date.

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ETIAS – EU Travel Information an Authorization System

The European Commission is developing a new electronic pre-screening program for visitors traveling to the European Union. As the program is estimated to be in place by 2020, it is important to make you aware that it is coming.

Schengen and Non-Schengen Border Requirements

Once travelers are inside the Schengen Zone, they are free to cross borders between the member states.

You will need an ETIAS if you are from the following countries:

Albania	Andorra	Antigua and Barbuda
Argentina	Australia	Bahamas
Barbados	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Brazil
Brunei Darussalam	Canada	Chile
Colombia	Costa Rica	Dominica
El Salvador	Grenada	Guatemala
Honduras	Israel	Japan
Kiribati	Korea (Republic of)	Macedonia (Republic of)
Malaysia	Marshall Islands	Mauritius
Mexico	Micronesia (Federated States of)	Moldova (Republic of)
Montenegro	New Zealand	Nicaragua
Palau	Panama	Paraguay
Peru	Saint Kitts and Nevis	Saint Lucia
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Samoa	Serbia
Seychelles	Singapore	Solomon Islands
Timor-Leste	Tonga	Trinidad and Tobago
Tuvalu	United Arab Emirates	United States of America
Uruguay	Vanuatu	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

Special Administrative Regions of the People's Republic of China:	British citizens who are not nationals of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for the purposes of Union law:	Entities and territorial authorities not recognised as States by at least one Member State:
Hong Kong (S.A.R.)	UK - British DTC	Taiwan
Macao	UK - British National	
	UK - British Overseas	
	UK - British Subject	
	UK - Protected Person	

An ETIAS will be required at the first point of entry of the following countries:

Austria	Belgium	Bulgaria
Croatia	Cyprus	Czech Republic
Denmark	Estonia	Finland
France	Germany	Greece
Hungary	Iceland	Italy
Latvia	Liechtenstein	Lithuania
Luxembourg	Malta	Monaco
Netherlands	Norway	Poland
Portugal	Romania	San Marino
Slovakia	Slovenia	Spain
Sweden	Switzerland	Vatican City State

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Under the proposed ETIAS, traelers would be required to apply for an authorization to trael before departing from their home country. Anyone not holding ETIAS approval may be denied bording an aircraft or commercial vessal or refused entry on arrival at the border.

What is ETIAS?

Firstly, it is **not a visa** and it is not a Schengen Area visa. It is an electronic authorization that allows visa-free nationals to travel to the Schengen Area. It is similar to the system used by the United States, Canada and Australia alongside a visa. Citizens of countries that require a Schengen Area visa will still need to apply for that visa.

Reasoning Behind the Implement of the Schengen Visa

The Schengen Visa was introduced to make traveling faster and easier between all European Union countries that signed up for the agreement. The benefits of pre-applying for a Schengen Visa mean that once any Schengen member country has issued a visa, the holder of that visa can move freely between member countries. This avoids the need to apply for multiple visas for the EU countries they intend to visit, reducing cost and paperwork. Those wishing to tour several European countries for pleasure can benefit from the freedom of movement provided by the Schengen Treaty and Visa.

Passport Management

If the student travel organization is providing the chaperones from the point of origin, it is important to determine who will carry the passports throughout the trip. On occasion, student travelers and their parents arrive at the airport and do not have the passport in hand. Their trip can end before it starts. Some student travel organizations may decide to collect the passports well in advance of the trip, to ensure all travelers have the proper documents prior to travel. If you chose this process, collecting the passports comes with a great deal of responsibility and safeguarding. For older student travelers, it may be less complicated to allow them to carry their own documents.

Whether a student travel organization collects the passport or the traveler keeps possession, it is critical to have a procedure in place to ensure all travelers have a valid passport well in advance of the start of the tour. That way, there will be enough time to correct it if a problem is discovered. The student travel organization should establish a process to require families to validate the information on the name page of the passport, to confirm spelling of the name, validation period of the passport, availability of blank pages, and the country in which the passport was issued.

While traveling internationally, it is important to keep a copy of each passport in the event a passport is lost or stolen. Having the copy will help expedite travelers' ability to obtain an emergency passport in the country traveled to. We strongly suggest travelers have a copy of their own passport and the tour leader have a copy of passports for all travelers on the tour. Some student travel organization scan copies of the passports into a file to be carried electronically, which can reduce the chance of the passport copies being misplaced, stolen or damaged.

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If the student travel organization collects the passports in advance at the airport, this can streamline check-in at the airline counter; however, they will need to hand the passports back to the travelers prior to entering the security checkpoint. In addition, most international air carriers require the passenger show the passport while having their boarding pass scanned at the gate when boarding the aircraft. Generally, the passport does not need to be opened to the personal information page but does need to be visible, to confirm to the airline representative that the traveler does have their passport with them. If an airline were to allow a traveler to board an international flight without proper documentation, the airline can and most likely will be fined a significant amount.

European Union General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

If you travel students to or from the European Union, this information applies to you. On May 25, 2018, the GDPR became effective. The regulations introduced new requirements for the use of data about any EU citizen, anywhere in the world. The regulations give EU citizens new rights and control over their personal information and imposed new obligations on organizations processing personal data for offering goods and services, such as a student travel organization.

For more information, visit https://www.eugdpr.org.

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Risk Mitigation and Management

International travel is not necessarily less safe than domestic travel, yet the distance between the student traveler and their family may be greater; thus, so may be the anxiety level of the family members. Here we will take a detailed look into possible processes and procedures a student travel organization could consider implementing to reduce unwanted events or negative student behavior taking place on their trip.

- **Supplier Inspections**.

  Student travel organizations should develop checklists of important aspects of each destination activity, hotel property and transportation mode to be used during a trip. If the student travel organization frequents a specific international destination, inspections should be easier to complete. If it is the first time visiting a country or destination, more work will be needed to enhance the safety and well-being of everyone during the trip. If a personal visit cannot be made to each site planned on the itinerary in advance of the tour, we recommend contacting each location's management and completing the checklist by phone. You may also call on fellow international SYTA members for recommendations and referrals of suppliers they have worked with. At minimum, a request should be made to confirm the following:

  - Request a copy of a valid business license.
  - Obtain a copy of your supplier's insurance policy and ensure coverage is in place during the trip travel period and that your business interests are covered by the policy.
  - Obtain copies of any release forms participants must sign prior to taking part in an activity provided by the supplier. Understand the date in which the documents need to be returned prior to the activity commencing and ensure all participants understand the deadline. We highly recommend you have a process in place to confirm completion of all waivers or release forms prior to the start of the tour.
  - Ask specific questions related to the supplier's emergency/incident management, crisis plans, and ask how the supplier employees are trained and kept up to date on these plans.
  - If a SYTA member receptive operator is used, they can help you with the inspection process.

- **Activities Inspection Form** (ropes courses, ziplines, rafting, challenge course, etc.)

  In addition to the guidance provided in this guide, it is important to read the release form in advance of your travelers receiving a form to sign. Many release forms have legal terminologies within them to protect the interest of the supplier. On occasion, a clause will be included that states that even if the supplier is negligent and an accident occurs, the supplier is not responsible for the outcome. If you should read this type of clause, do not hesitate to contact the supplier and ask them to consider editing this clause. If they refuse, you may want to seek another provider. If there are limited options and you feel this activity is necessary for your trip, you will at least be armed with the background and supplier feedback to address the parents' questions, should they arise.

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- **Emergency Contact List**
  Emergency contact lists are essential and must be maintained year-round. It is recommended the phone list be updated at least twice a year and checked again prior to a trip, if it is the first trip to a specific location that year. At minimum, you should maintain contact information for:
  - All venues you will visit during the trip.
  - Immediate family members for each traveler including two alternative contact names and numbers in the event the primary contact cannot be reached. Work, home, and cellphone numbers should be obtained, as well as email addresses.
  - All transportation companies to be used, including emergency working numbers that can be contacted after normal business hours.
  - The emergency number used in each country visited. For most countries and locations, you can find the emergency numbers here: https://travel.state.gov/content/dam/students-abroad/pdfs/911_ABROAD.pdf
  - Any school contact numbers for representatives you are working with on a local school level or district level.
  - Any medical facility in close proximity to the destination; specifically, hospitals and urgent care facilities. In some countries, children are treated in separate locations from adult patients. Contacting the medical facility in advance is a good idea. During that conversation, confirm the language the doctors and nurses speak and whether a translator would be needed in the event the facility was used during travel.
  - The chaperone(s) should have a list of all travelers' cellphone numbers and keep it with them throughout the trip.
- **Discipline Guidelines**
  Establish a list of behavioral expectations for all trip participants and the steps that will be taken when these expectations are not followed. If this is a teacher-led trip, ask the teacher tour organizer to consider including your guidelines, along with those they establish.
  It is important when traveling internationally to remind students and parents that international laws and the penalties associated with infractions may differ by country. Understanding the difference in customs prior to travel can make for a more enjoyable and successful trip. Most countries provide this type of information to travelers. Here are some examples:
  - A good resource to provide to travelers and for the student travel organization originating in the United States is the Smart Traveler App, provided by the U.S. Department of State. Within this app, local laws and special circumstances are explained and other important topics, such as:
    - Location of Embassies and Consulates by destination
    - Exit and visa requirements, including exit tax requirements
    - Safety and security information
    - Local laws and special circumstances
    - Health
    - Travel and transportation

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To download the app, simply go to the App Store on your smart phone and search for Smart Traveler.

- A good resource to provide to travelers and for the student travel organization originating in Canada is the Traveler Smart – Canada App provided by the Global Affairs Canada. Within this app, local laws, special circumstances and other important topics are addressed, much like the U.S. Smart Traveler App.

    - To download the app, simply go to the App store on your smart phone and search for Traveler Smart – Canada.

- **Tour Guide Orientation**

  In the Safety Resource Guide (SRG), we highly suggest student travel organizations develop an orientation program that can be presented to all staff annually or by trip. In this guide, we share specific topics that could be included in the training to help improve the effectiveness of the orientation.

    - If the student travel organization is providing the tour guide, it is important that the tour guide understands his/her role and responsibilities. Above all, they must stay present and engaged in the trip. The attitude of the tour guide can and will set the tone for the entire trip. In country tour guides may also be used and should receive some form of orientation.
    - As local tour guides may work with many different student travel organizations, it is critical they understand the expectations for your group. If this is a one-time tour, work with management providing the tour guide, to ensure they have clear direction and understanding of your expectations.
    - The tour guide must be approachable yet take care to maintain a professional distance from the trip participants. Different countries' cultures can be misunderstood by travelers. For example**:** Giving a kiss on both cheeks may be fine for some countries but considered inappropriate when experienced by student travelers from other countries.
    - The tour guide can help bring the chaperone team together to work as one team. It is imperative the group speaks with one voice and that any one chaperone doesn't hold students accountable for their behavior differently. The tour guide can help bring them together to meet nightly, if they are not already doing so. During these meetings, chaperones can discuss corrective action plans, share the days experiences, and preview the coming days' details, resulting in greater consistency and team chemistry.
    - The tour guide should listen actively to the group members and communicate effectively.
    - If there is more than one chaperone and differences surface between them, the tour guide could help resolve the conflict; if it cannot be handled locally, seek support from the student travel organization.

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- If using a receptive tour operator, **do not** bypass them or the allocated tour manager at any time, should a concern or issue arise. They are on the ground and available around the clock to support the group. Their help is invaluable.
- The tour guide should preview the next day's activities with the group, so they can be prepared and dress appropriately. This is an ideal time to share any behavioral expectations, such as when to be quiet during certain presentations, phone usage, etc.
- The tour guide must clearly understand the locations being visited and how to get to them. Many motorcoach drivers are a great asset as they have GPS equipment available; still, the guide should be knowledgeable or have resources available to find information quickly, if needed.

- **Tour Operator Staff Orientation**

  Whether your staff will act in the role of tour guide, chaperone, or will support the travel group from your home office, it is imperative they receive orientation prior to the start of your busy travel season. Depending on their role, they may be contacted by tour guides or chaperones to clarify expectations, help with trip delays, adjust itineraries, or handle other situations that arise during a trip. It is important that these representatives understand the expectations, policies and procedures for your organization.

- **Identify Health Professionals and Facilities in Travel Locations**

  Although experiencing a serious medical event during a trip is unlikely, it is important to plan ahead and know where the closest emergency medical facilities are in the area where you will travel. It is also important to understand what language the medical staff speaks or if a translator will be needed. As well, you need to understand the acceptable forms of payment. Many countries around the world expect to be paid in local currency at or before the time services are provided.

- **Health Professionals Payments**

  When traveling in your home country, most medical facilities will accept insurance policies from parents' work organizations or governments. Internationally, this is not generally the case. The medical facility will expect payment and based on the severity of the illness, there may not be adequate time to arrange for the parents to send payment from home.

  One way to prevent a problem related to medical expenses during a trip is to encourage your travelers' parents or guardians to purchase a travel insurance plan. These plans can protect a family from large out-of-pocket costs in the event of an emergency and can also offer protection for the cost of the trip. While plans differ, some may cover all or part of the following expenses:

  - Cancellation protection up to the cost of the trip
  - Interruption protection in the event the traveler's trip is shortened or discontinued due to a covered emergency
  - Medical, emergency and repatriation evacuation for covered reasons
  - Lost baggage and baggage delay cost for covered reasons
  - Some form of emergency assistance

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Many travel insurance plans allow for the insurance company to guarantee payment with the medical facility when the cost of the medical stay exceeds a set dollar amount outlined in the policy. In addition, some plans allow for travel costs to bring a family member to the sight to tend to the student in need of care, including air and some hotel costs. For more detailed information, contact your insurance specialist. Fortunately, SYTA has many insurance company members that would appreciate your business.

- **Medical Facility Escorts**

  In the event a traveler needs to see or stay overnight in a medical facility, a plan should be developed as to who would escort the traveler. If the tour is teacher-led, your organization may still be expected to support the tour in the event of an emergency. A conversation with the tour leader, if teacher-led, should clear up any expectations.

  The plan should answer the following questions:

  - Who will stay at the hospital and who will supervise the group?
  - Who will escort the student home if needed?
  - What limitations are within the travel insurance policies?
  - What assistance services will the travel insurance company provide?
  - How will the ill student and chaperone be reunited with the tour?

- **Background Checks**

  In some countries, conducting background checks is either culturally objected to or expensive to achieve. That said, many service providers around the world understand student travel and the reasoning behind the need to ensure that all staff in direct contact with a student traveler do not have a criminal history. The easiest way to approach this issue is to ask your service provider directly if they perform background checks; if not, learn what steps they take to ensure the safety of the student. If you are not comfortable with the response, seek another service provider.

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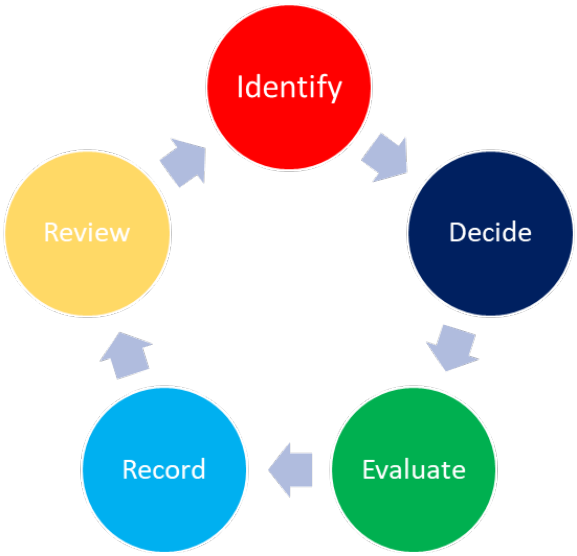
Risk Assessment

There are inherent risks in everything we do in our daily lives. There are risks within a person's home and risks once they step out of their front door. Traveling internationally does not necessarily create a higher risk level, yet with the news coverage of events around the world, sometimes we are led to believe just that. As a student travel organization, your responsibility is to understand the potential risk within your tour and take the steps necessary to reduce those risks to a level that is acceptable to you and your travelers.

What is a risk assessment? It is a simple, yet careful examination of what could cause harm to a teacher, tour guide, student traveler or any other participant of your tour. Once a potential hazard has been identified, decide whether you have taken enough precautions to prevent an unwanted situation or if you should do more to prevent harm.

This simple, yet effective risk assessment model has definitions to explain each step.

The Risk Assessment Process



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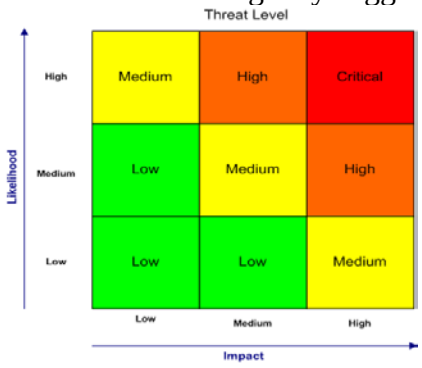
1. **Identify Potential Hazards**
   In this phase, conduct a detailed walkthrough of your travel plans. For each event along the way, consider what could go wrong. Involve your suppliers and tour directors in this process. The more accurate the input and feedback you put into this evaluation, the better the opportunity to expose all potential threats. It's important to consider the worst-case scenario along with all other potential hazards. If you plan for the worst-case scenario, you will be better prepared to handle the more frequent events that come up during travel.
2. **Decide Who and What May be in Harm's Way**
   The next step is to determine whom or what the hazard might impact. Is it a potential storm that could harm property, such as hotels you plan to use, or damage communication channels in the location you are traveling? Could the hazard bring harm to a member of your trip?
3. **Evaluate the Risk and Develop Precautions**
   Once the potential threat is identified, determine the possible outcomes. If the outcome is a broken fingernail for a traveler, you may want to put a process in place to minimize that risk, but you probably won't spend a lot of time on that threat. If the possible outcome is serious injury or even death, multiple processes should be put in place to reduce the risk to an acceptable level. **For example:** You have a swimming activity planned for the trip, but you know there is no lifeguard available. The threat is the potential that a member of your tour may drown. As a precaution, to reduce the chance of this occurring, you arrange for a certified lifeguard to be present during your activity. All other aspects of the pool area and safety equipment availability are fine in this example. Now, you have addressed the threat. If there is no remedy to reducing the risk of a serious event, alternative plans may be the best approach.
   A Risk-Impact Matrix is a tool to help measure the risk levels of specific concerns you have about a trip. To use it, take the potential threat you have discovered and determine the likelihood of it occurring. If your organization tracks all incidents handled on an annual basis, this could be relatively easy. If you do not track incidents, you may not have the historical data to predict the probability of an event occurring. You must then consider the impact of this event if it happened. Using the chart below, consider the threat you believe could arise during your trip. First, you need the likelihood of that event happening. Then, determine the impact. In the earlier example, the broken fingernail, the likelihood could be high and the impact low. In that case, you may decide not to take any preventable action. A medium-level rating may suggest you have a plan in place to address the concern.



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4. **Record the Process and Audit for Compliance**
   Once a mitigation process has been decided, it is important to write it down as a procedure. This makes it easier to share with your staff, so everyone is aware of the potential hazard and the steps to take to reduce the risk to an acceptable level. Then, audit or check for compliance. From our earlier example: Was the lifeguard present each time you held the swimming activity? Did the tour guide or teacher stop the activity when the lifeguard was late for the assignment or didn't show up at all, as your procedure stated they must? If you get in the habit of documenting all procedures, you will have the content necessary to develop a travel guide for your trips.
5. **Review Outcomes and Adjust the Plan as Necessary**
   Take what you have learned from the audit and feedback from the participants and adjust the plan moving forward. **For example:** Your audits and feedback suggest 10 percent of the time, the lifeguard service you hired failed to show up. You may choose to seek out a new provider or add a second lifeguard, to ensure compliance to the process you put in place to reduce the potential hazard.

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Incident Management and Crisis Response Plans

Having an incident management and a crisis response plan will clearly help your organization respond to an emergency.

Having a solid plan can help your organization demonstrate to potential clients that your company is prepared to handle the worst-case scenario and the students are in good hands during the trip.

In many ways, a crisis response plan is an extension of an incident management plan. Things can go wrong on tours, whether it is a traveler coming down with the flu or not following curfew rules that put their safety and health in danger, or a bus breakdown requiring alternative transportation to be found. A student travel organization deals daily with these situations. When a student travel organization has a plan in place to deal with the worst-case scenario, handling frequent minor issues becomes easier.

A crisis plan is really an extension of a tour operator's process for handling travel incidents. Incident management and crisis management are closely intertwined. Even a small incident that happens on a tour may escalate to what could be perceived as a crisis to a student travel organization, if not handled in a timely and proper manner.

Because international travel creates a greater distance between families and the student, parents can experience more anxiety and stress related to the trip than they would if the student was across town. The difference is the perception of accessibility. While traveling domestically, a parent knows they can drive or fly to their child's side if something goes wrong. Flying to another country can seem more challenging. That is why it is imperative that a tour operator has a solid Incident and Crisis Response plan in place, to be shared with the parents or school district so they gain a higher level of trust in the student travel organization and their ability to overcome adversity.

SYTA introduced the Crisis Response Planning Guide. This guide has detailed information on how to build an effective crisis response and incident management plan. It gives those who have a plan, a framework to check their current plans for effectiveness. For those that do not currently have a plan, it walks them through how to build a plan.

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HEALTH FORMS, MEDICAL CLEARING PROCESS

STYA member student travel organizations are proud of their ability to accommodate students with disabilities and ensure they are not discriminated against, including having access to the same travel opportunities as those of a traveler who does not have a disability. When traveling internationally, other countries have laws in place to protect the rights of people with disabilities. The only way to understand the needs of a student with disabilities, and to seek reasonable accommodations, is to know their limitations or restrictions, prior to travel. It is imperative that a student travel organization be notified, well in advance of a trip, of any medical conditions and special requests as this allows time to work with school districts hiring your services or the family, the student, their doctor, and your service providers to make a reasonable accommodation.

The purpose in collecting medical information for each student and, preferably, for each chaperone, is not to disqualify a traveler from participating; rather to seek reasonable accommodations, so they can participate.

To obtain this important medical history, a student travel organization needs a system in place to collect pre-existing medical information in advance of a trip, from the trip organizers, travelers, or travelers' legal guardians if the traveler is under the age of 18. Collecting pre-existing health information should be consistent for all travelers; it is recommended a standardized health form be developed for this purpose, within your organization. You must initially ask the same questions of each traveler. Once a medical condition is disclosed, you may then ask the family involved for additional information on the condition.

Because of the importance of collecting this information, we will again provide the minimum questions that should be asked on the medical health form. Also, the medical history collection procedure should apply whether the student travel organization is providing the chaperone or just making the travel arrangements for a group.

Most travelers will have no conditions to report. By collecting this information, you will have raised the confidence level of the travelers' parents in knowing the students' safety and health are a top priority for your organization. If a traveler discloses a health condition, the tour operator is strongly encouraged to require an authorization form from the traveler's medical professional that states the physician's approval of the traveler participating fully in the international program. In the event the physician provides the approval with limitations, the operator will need to determine if the program can be altered to accommodate the special request. If the program cannot be altered, and no reasonable accommodation can be made, denying the travel may be the most appropriate course of action, with a full refund.

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Teacher-Led Groups

Many SYTA student travel organizations organize tours where the teacher leader handles all medical situations and pre-trip planning. In this case, the student travel organization may provide the tour guide, while all tour leadership is provided by the school. If this is the case on your planned trip, and the student travel organization has the responsibility to make arrangements for hotels, dining facilities and transportation, it is still important to have a clear understanding of any special accommodation that may be required. Here are a few examples:

a. Student with a life-threatening food allergy
b. Student who is visually impaired
c. Student with mobility restrictions

In this situation, the student travel organization does have a need to know, at least minimal information, about the students arriving on their trip as this ensures reasonable accommodations are made as required by the ADA laws. We strongly encourage student travel organizations to establish procedures to work with your clients in advance of the trip, to determine the most effective way to share this important information.

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On-Trip Suggestions

Risk Management

Our goal is to offer suggestions for areas in which a student travel organization should give thought to having policies and procedures in place, to reduce the risk of an unwanted event when traveling internationally. This list is not intended to be all-inclusive.

- **Hotel safety orientation**
  Providing a hotel safety briefing to travelers after check-in can serve multiple functions. First and foremost, it demonstrates that the travelers' safety is of high importance to your organization. Topics to include during the safety briefing may include:

  - Evacuation procedures in the event of a fire or other event
  - A reminder not to use elevators during an evacuation
  - Room numbers of the chaperones, in the event a student traveler needs to contact them
  - Confirm the chaperones contact information
  - Confirm a meeting area to gather during an evacuation, located a safe distance from the hotel. Some SYTA organizations even establish an alternate location in the event the primary location becomes inaccessible. During the briefing, the tour guide or chaperone should escort the students to the primary and secondary sites, to ensure there is no confusion on the meeting location.
  - Advise students to keep next to their bed, or hang on the door knob, any room key and lanyards used on the trip, so they are accessible in the event they need to leave the room in an emergency.

- **Free time policy**
  Student travel programs are typically busy by nature, leaving little free, unscheduled time. At the end of a day, or when at a hotel in the evening, there may be a short period of time when there could be an opportunity for students to explore the surroundings, with or without supervision. When developing a free-time policy, at minimum, a student travel organization should consider the following:

  - Establish a minimum number of students required in a group when traveling through a hotel or event property without supervision. The buddy system that calls for at least two students to travel together at all times can work well for hotels. At other venues, larger group sizes, such as four students, may be needed when venturing away from supervision, such as in a museum.
  - When students leave a hotel for any reason, consider establishing procedures to identify a minimum number of students who must stay together. Four students can be a manageable number; consideration can be given to requiring a mix of male and female travelers. You need to keep track of where they plan to go and have a process to check them out and check them back in. Ask students to keep the hotel

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location, name and phone contact with them at all times. The hotel manager or front desk will likely have business cards to serve this purpose. Make sure at least one member of the group has a charged cellphone and that contact information is shared with the chaperone.

- Considerations should be given to different age groups. It may not be appropriate for elementary and middle school students to have unsupervised time. Free time policies should be age appropriate. Generally, high school students may need more flexibility than middle school students; really there is no appropriate free time for elementary students, without direct supervision.
- When traveling internationally, it is important to remember that in many foreign countries, alcohol can be purchased by anyone 18 years of age. Ensuring students clearly understand your rules on alcohol possession and the ramifications of breaking such a rule is important. Developing behavioral expectations in advance of the tour and having the student and parents agree to those rules can be helpful. It is also important to establish rules for your own staff while traveling.

- **Hotel room checks**
  - After students return to their hotel rooms at the end of a day, it is highly recommended that a procedure be in place to account for each student. It is important to see each student in person during these checks, to ensure they are safe and ready for bed. If they are in the restroom or shower, wait for them to come out or check back in a few minutes, to confirm they are in the room.
  - Female chaperones should conduct checks on female students and male chaperones should conduct room checks on male students. If this criterion cannot be accomplished based on the gender of the leadership team, having two chaperones conduct the checks is the next best option.
  - Having two chaperones conduct the room checks is always preferred. This way, you have a second set of adult eyes to observe behaviors and situations as they arise.
  - Chaperones or tour guides should never enter a student traveler's room unless it is an emergency. Preferably, two chaperones would enter the room if needed.
  - Room checks are a perfect opportunity to share plans for the next day and to determine if any student needs anything.

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- **Restaurants and Food Services**

  Enjoying the foods of different countries can be a highlight on a student tour. It is important to understand conditions in restaurants can be different from your home country. This is particularly important when student travel organizations are attempting to make accommodations for people with food allergies. **For example:** In China, it would be extremely difficult to ensure a person with a life-threatening peanut allergy can be safely accommodated. Peanut oil is broadly used for cooking in China and it would be difficult, if not impossible, to ensure no cross-contamination of utensils or that surfaces used to prepare the food were allergen-free.

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If you are aware of any traveler's special needs, it is important to work with your service providers prior to the trip, to understand their ability to meet the dietary restrictions you request.

- **Walking as a group**
  When traveling internationally, walking on streets with students can be challenging. In many countries, traffic on the roads travel in different directions than what the traveler may be used to. Making sure students are aware of this is important. Developing a procedure for chaperones to follow can be helpful in reducing the chance of a problem. A typical policy might include such things as:
  - Chaperones should always station themselves at the front, at the back and throughout the group, whenever possible. This allows the chaperones to lead, while also keeping an eye out for any stragglers in the rear.
  - When gathering as a group or walking on sidewalks, attempt to keep your students to one side, so as a group, they do not block the sidewalk or path for others.
  - Try to keep students at least five feet from any active roadway or curb, whenever possible. In the event a student bumps another student, the extra distance from the road may help to avoid an accident.
  - When traveling in a crowded area, stop often and account for every traveler, to ensure no one has become separated from the group. If you lack technology to account for the students, consider a simple count-off system whereby at the beginning of the tour, every student, chaperone, and tour guide receives a number: 1, 2, 3 and so on. When the group stops, conduct a count-off to ensure everyone is present. For larger groups with more than one chaperone, split the students into smaller groups. Each group of students would have their separate numbers and each chaperone can confirm when all students in their group have been accounted for.

- **Cellphones for Chaperones and Tour Guides**
  Every tour guide will likely have a cellphone local to the country you are visiting. It is equally important that every chaperone have a cellphone with international calling activated. For more remote location, a satellite phone may be appropriate. The cellphone number of the chaperone should be provided to each tour participant.

- **Cellphones and Other Electronic Devices**
  Most student travelers today have a high level of experience with electronic devices, such as cellphones, tablets and computers. Traditionally, using a phone while someone was talking would be perceived as rude. Today, a traveler may be sharing the experience and information they are receiving from their tour guide real-time, with friends and family on a variety of social media sites. There are venues where making and receiving a phone call would be inappropriate. Having clear guidelines in place and communicating to students when it is OK and when they should set their phone to silent is important. It is equally

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important to understand when it is safe and appropriate for student travelers to wear headphones or earbuds.

It is important to understand that student travelers need time to address their social media communication needs. If you do not plan time into the schedule for this important function, the students will find a way to fill that need. Chaperones should follow the same guideline as the students and should be encouraged to plan social media breaks for everyone.

- **Charging Your Electronic Devices**
  Countries may have different forms of electrical power available, requiring the traveler to have an appropriate converter to charge cellphones and iPads or use hair dryers, curling irons, and any other electrical device. The tour operator should understand the requirements in the countries you plan to travel and inform the travelers in advance, so they can ensure they have the proper equipment to utilize their devices.

- **Motorcoach Safety and First-Aid Kits**
  Motorcoach regulations can differ by country. Contents of first-aid kits, if provided, can differ as well. Some countries highly regulate motorcoach companies; others have different standards from what you might be accustomed to. The list below has been enhanced to cover traveling international.

  - Check with the motorcoach company in advance to determine the contents of the first-aid kit supplied. Based on that review, stock other necessary items that may be needed. Items to consider in the first-aid kits:

First Aid Kit Contents

1.	Thermometer	**9.**	Breathing barrier
2.	Large Band-Aids	**10.**	Small Band-Aids
3.	Roller bandage	**11.**	3X3 sterile pads
4.	Adhesive tape	**12.**	Absorbent 3X3 compress
5.	Triple antibiotic (tube)	**13.**	Antiseptic wipes
6.	Cold pack	**14.**	Eye wash
7.	Two sets of non-latex gloves	**15.**	Triangular bandage
8.	BIO bags for blood items		

  - Use of seatbelts while riding on a motorcoach is critical to the safety of the travelers. Ensure that every traveler is required to utilize the seatbelts while the motorcoach is moving.
  - When establishing the transportation agreement, a tour operator should understand if seat belts are required on motorcoaches in the country they plan to travel. If not required, it is highly recommended a request is made for a motorcoach with seat belts.

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- When boarding or exiting a motorcoach, there should always be a chaperone at the bottom of the stairs to assist travelers. On some occasions, there may be limited access for the motorcoach, and the group may board on the side of traffic. Although this is not recommended, if it becomes necessary you are encouraged to have chaperones assist with the loading and unloading process.
- The tour leader needs to clearly understand the bus driver hours on duty and driving time laws for the country you are visiting. Ideally, this information will be obtained at the point the transportation arrangements are made. If arrangements are made by the tour operator, that information needs to be shared with the tour leader prior to the start of the tour.

- **Public Transportation & Safety**
  When traveling internationally, experiencing the use of public transportation can be a great experience. In many countries, that is how most people travel, including student tours. The use of trains, subways and double decker buses can be a great experience, but certain safety practices should be followed.

  - If a seat belt is available, it should always be used.
  - The chaperone and tour guide should develop a plan, prior to boarding the mode of transportation, in the event someone in the group becomes separated. The student travelers need to understand what to do in this type of event. The plan should provide clear direction on where to meet. They also need to know if the student is to stay at the stop they got off on and wait for a chaperone to return. Having students travel in pairs may help reduce the risk of any individual student becoming separated.
  - Brief the students on the stop at which you plan to disembark. If possible, letting them know the name and how many stops you will make prior to arriving at your destination can be helpful.
  - All belongings need to stay with the student. A backpack can work well and be worn backward, placing their contents in front of the student. This can reduce brushing other passengers with your backpack, while also preventing anyone from taking something out of the pack without the student's knowledge.

- **Incident Management**
  Each student travel organization should have in place a method to record any incident that happens on their international tour. Most often, the teacher leaders will handle this situation as they arise; occasionally the tour guide will also become involved.

  Tracking every incident, no matter how small, provides information that can be evaluated annually. Based on the trends represented in this data, adjustments can be made to future trips, to reduce the chance of another similar incident.

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Post-Trip Topics

General

- **Post-Trip Customer Satisfaction Survey**
  - Consider a survey for your clients, to ask how they enjoyed the trip. This is a great opportunity to seek safety feedback pertaining to the trip or service provider, or site-specific feedback.

- **Follow Up on Any Illness or Injury**
  - You should not wait until the end of your travel season; in a timely fashion, follow up with the families of any sick or injured student traveler. It's important for you to know they are doing well. The parent will surely appreciate your continued concern for the well-being of their child.

- **Conflict Resolution**
  - SYTA members strive to resolve all disputes and concerns between its companies and its clients, in a timely manner. It is important to seek resolution, to reduce the possibility of the situation escalating and because it is the right thing to do.

For More Information

We hope you find these suggestions helpful when reviewing your own travel plans. For more information on student travel safety and archived training videos on many safety related subjects, please visit www.SYTA.org..

Thank you and have a safe and wonderful international trip!

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