Health, Safety, and Emergency Planning Checklist and Reminders

Alcohol Safety

- Be aware of potential interactions between alcohol and drugs. Consider how alcohol is consumed in the local culture -- ask trusted local residents for advice. Understand that certain drinking behaviors may identify you as an outsider, making you a target for crime. If you choose to drink while abroad, do so with a trusted “buddy” – there’s safety in numbers.

International Insurance Requirement

- All NU students must have GeoBlue medical insurance or an approved substitute. Before enrolling:
  - Check that your sponsor/trip leader has not already purchased your plan.
  - Book your flights—your coverage dates should be your arrival and departure dates.
- The cost is less than $13 per week, payable by credit card -- enroll here. After enrolling, print the personal certificate document and keep it with you while abroad.

Current Health Conditions & Medications

- Not all medications are available or legal in some countries. Contact the Geo-Blue’s Global Health Team for more information (610-254-8771; globalhealth@geo-blue.com). Discuss managing current conditions abroad with GeoBlue Global Health Team and/or OGSS (847-467-3899; globalsafety@northwestern.edu).
- Students with disabilities and/or chronic conditions should also disclose travel plans to AccessibleNU.

Country-Specific Health Information

- Research health risks and recommendations for your destination on the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) Travelers’ Health Page. For pre-departure health needs, you may use the following resources to locate a medical professional:
  - CDC travel health facilities nationwide
  - Chicago-area county health facilities
  - Northwestern Medicine’s Travel Medicine Clinic

Immunizations

- Discuss your travel plans with a medical professional; bring along a copy of the CDC’s country-specific information (see prior link). Allow as much time as possible for immunizations. For more information on routine immunizations and travel medicine appointments, review immunizations and prophylactic medications.

Non-Emergency Health Needs Abroad; Mental Health Needs

- Call or email GeoBlue to schedule an appointment that will offer direct billing with a physician who speaks English. If you do not use GeoBlue to find a physician, you will pay out-of-pocket, but can submit receipts for reimbursement.
- It is not uncommon for students to experience emotional distress while abroad, perhaps even for the first time. Visit OGSS’s mental health page. Remember, our GeoBlue plan covers the cost of counseling abroad!

Medical Emergencies

1. Go to the nearest treating facility
2. Call GeoBlue at (610) 254-8771
3. Call your on-site contact, trip leader or the NUPD at (847) 491-3456
Sexual Health and Misconduct

- If you plan to be sexually active overseas, pick up a booklet about sexual health abroad from the OGSS. If your sexual boundaries abroad are violated in any way, know that it was NOT your fault. Comprehensive Information and Options for Survivors of Sexual Misconduct Abroad can be found on the OGSS website. Confidential survivor support resources are available at Northwestern CARE and RAINN, the nation’s largest (and independent anti-sexual violence organization).

Risk Management

- Think about what dangers and cultural differences you will face abroad, and consider steps you can take to reduce exposure, such as reviewing the U.S. Department of State (DOS) Travel Advisory and country information for your destination. Also enroll in the DOS’s Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP).
- Download the free apps, “Smart Traveler” and “GeoBlue” to use before you leave.

Road, Water and Fire Safety

- ASIRT provides information about road conditions to make safe transportation choices.
- Swim with care. Choose safe beaches, plan for emergencies and do not consume alcohol.
- Locate/test fire escapes, smoke detectors and fire extinguishers in your residence. Purchase a portable smoke detector from the Fire Safety Foundation.

Make an Emergency Action Plan

- Consider real and perceived emergencies that may happen in your location. Know how to seek safety and how to contact help.
- When you are safe after an emergency, report your status to Northwestern University (OGSS), your program provider, your supervisor, family, and friends.

Tips for International Students

- Make sure you have what you need to re-enter the States; otherwise, you may risk facing detention by Customs and Border Patrol. For advice, refer to the International Student & Scholar Services website.

Crime and Threat Deterrence

- Clean out your wallet, backpack, and/or handbag before you leave. Make photocopies of the credit, debit, and/or ATM cards you take, as well as your passport and visa.
  - Leave one copy at home.
  - Seal another copy in an envelope and place it in a secure location in your luggage.
- If you become the victim of a crime, seek safety, assess and report the crime, cancel and replace credit/debit cards, and follow these instructions to replace a lost U.S. passport.
- Consider whether or not terrorism is a concern for your location; learn how to minimize your exposure and increase safety when attending large public events or visiting popular tourist sites.

Make a Communication Plan

- Agree on communication protocols with your sponsor, trip leader and your friends/family (phone, text, email, Facebook, etc.). Be mindful of social media posts that could unnecessarily alarm friends and family. Keep an easily accessible, written record of contact information for local medical/emergency contacts, NU emergency contacts, local law enforcement, your host, other travelers, and any other relevant NU contacts.

For more information:

(847) 467-3899
globalsafety@northwestern.edu

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