Emory University
Pre-departure Training

Personal Safety and Security Awareness
Air Travel abroad - Departures

- Keep discreet in your dress, behavior, etc.

- Minimize the time you are in public areas. Get through to departure area (usually secured) as soon as practical.

- Watch your bags at all times:
  - Wait to see checked-in luggage passed to the belt/airline staff.
  - Keep your eyes on handheld bags going through and especially coming out of scanners.
  - Keep them in sight and reach while waiting in departure area.

- Keep alert. Take a good vantage point when waiting, and remain conscious of your surroundings, people, airport staff, announcements, etc.
Meet and Greet Plans

**Visitor and person meeting exchange ahead:**
- Cell phone numbers
- Full face photos
- Initial back-up plan for mishaps, unexpected events

**Person meeting specifies:**
- Meeting point
- Any identifying information such as a logo (avoid prominent displays identifying personnel/organizations where criminal risk is a concern)
- First destination/accommodation in-country
- Security situation and back-up phone contacts

**Visitor provides:**
- Estimated time of arrival
- Trip details
- Flight numbers
- Other stops
- Any excess baggage requirements

If you are not sure the person who meets you is the right person, ask their name (don’t say it for them) and where they are supposed to take you before you confirm your identity.

After meeting, leave airport as soon as practical.
Selecting your lodging

- Is the environment secure? Are police in control, as appropriate? Are law and order maintained?
- Is there control or oversight of who goes in and out?
- Is someone responsible for security?
- Are emergency escapes free and unimpeded to the ground level?
- Is there a back-up to the main lock on guest room doors, such as a chain or catch?
- Is there a place to keep your valuables safe?
- Can someone get into your room from the balcony or through an adjoining door?
- Do you have privacy? Could someone arrive at your room door without being checked; do all incoming phone calls come through an operator?
- Your in-country mentor/organization can provide guidance on neighborhoods, areas to avoid, etc. ISOS also has information on this.

These are basic security related questions. Flexibility might be acceptable in safe places with little or no crime risks.
Hotel Security Tips

- Choose hotel based on security rather than price in unstable environments.

- Take a room above the ground floor on floors 2-7; 4\textsuperscript{th}/5\textsuperscript{th} level ideal unless fire risk a concern. Be in rear of hotel if possible.

- Check door locks, other entrances, phones, fire escapes to the ground, (physically do this!).

- Keep your key with you; if a card system is used, get a second copy or improvise a card to keep power on when you are out of the room.
Hotel Security Tips (2)

- Use the Do Not Disturb sign; leave a light and the TV on when you are away from the room in the evening.
- Use the in-room safe only for non-critical items. Take valuables to the front desk (if Reception can accept them and is trustworthy), or make other arrangements for your important items.
- Make use of your rubber door stopper or improvise a door alarm with a personal attack alarm when you go to sleep.
- You might also consider a personal door jam.
- Make friends with the bellman/concierge – very useful people!
Hotels and Elsewhere

- Realize that safety regulations (e.g., smoke alarm rules) may be poor or nonexistent where you are.
- Don’t assume that if something is allowed, it’s safe.
- In much of the world, it is only your common sense and caution that can protect you.
- Since electricity may be limited and power outages can be common, it is good to carry a small LED light at all times.
  - A headlamp can be particularly useful.
  - Don’t use mobile phone as a flashlight... inviting a robbery.
The Early Days

- The first few days can be the most challenging in terms of overall awareness of your surroundings.

- Take time to register what’s around you.
  - Observe traffic patterns, details of your surroundings.
  - Note landmarks to orient yourself if lost.
  - Locate key emergency resources (e.g., consulate, hospital).
  - Identify potential “Safe Havens”...places nearby where you might quickly go for refuge.
  - Identify areas to avoid.
  - Understand where you’ll be staying and working and where these points are relative to others.
Beware of the effects of alcohol and drugs.

- They can distort your perceptions and make it difficult to remember and absorb your surroundings.
- This is particularly hazardous when you first arrive, are unfamiliar with where you are, might not speak or understand the local language, and have a limited personal network.

Inform your peers if you have any allergies that could require emergency attention, what a reaction looks like, and how to respond.
**Going Out**

- **Choose wisely.** Ask around, seek advice, avoid exploring unknown or remote venues until checks have been made.

- **Keep them guessing.** Vary choices, routes to and from; don’t build too strong a routine in any one place.

- **Keep a plan.** Choose “Safe Havens”...places nearby or en route where you might quickly go for refuge.

- **Take a friend/s** to reduce your vulnerability.

- **Take a taxi.** Allowing more flexibility and greater security.
Keep in touch. Leave an itinerary with a trusted other. Call this person on a schedule if you feel the need (e.g., I’ll call you every 30 minutes. If you don’t hear from me in an hour, do xyz).

Take a look around first. Before committing to stay, feel comfortable with the atmosphere.

Keep alert. Get someone to check the immediate outside before you leave (or do so yourself).

Don’t loiter. Have your means of transportation ready. Leave as soon as you can.
Recreation

Choose vendors wisely.

• For excursions and activities involving third-party providers, locals or peer referrals can be helpful.
• Does their equipment and overall approach and manner suggest they are safe?

Choose activities wisely.

• Are water or sporting activities safe and within your existing skill level and comfort zone?
• Note that ISOS does not cover expenses related to injury from caving, skydiving, bungee-jumping, zip-lining, rock climbing, ballooning, hang gliding, etc.

Trust your instincts and put your safety first. Opt out an activity if it doesn’t feel right. Period.
Alcohol and Drugs

- Negative incidents in travel abroad often involve alcohol and drug use.

- Alcohol and drugs, even in moderation, can reduce your level of awareness and cause you to let your guard down.

- The associated risk is heightened when you are in an unfamiliar environment, not a native speaker, etc.
  - Increased vulnerability to crime, physical, and sexual assault
  - Increased likelihood of injury from falls and other accidents

- Know the law. Punishment associated with alcohol and drug use can be severe in other countries.

- Keep it safe. Favor known neighborhood establishments. Don’t go out alone, and agree with friends to keep an eye out for each other.
Road Safety

- Traffic injuries are a major but often neglected public health challenge.

- More than 1.2 million people are killed in road crashes annually; 50 times more are injured.

- Road crashes are the leading cause of death and injury for healthy Americans traveling abroad.

- Those ages 15-24 are at the greatest risk.
  - Largest number of pedestrians and public transit users
  - More prone to take risks than those of other ages
Road Safety Rules

- Wear a seat belt, **even if the road is rough!**

- Don’t ride on motorcycles or motor scooters. If you must, wear a helmet.

- Tell drivers to go slow and stay slow. If you are paying them, one strategy is to offer to pay more if they do so.

- Never get into any vehicle if you think the driver may have been drinking, using drugs, or is otherwise impaired.

- Pay extra for safe travel.
Going out on foot

- In some locations, travel by foot may not be recommended (theft, attacks, etc.).
- Plan what to take and arrange your pockets or purse accordingly – be discreet.
- Go accompanied where practical.
- Avoid isolated areas.
- Stay away from alleyways, door spaces, or cover from where attackers could appear.
- Identify Safe Havens as you pass them, or those possible further up the street.
Going out on foot

- Confirm that your phone is programmed to call for help.
- Avoid texting or intensive visual engagement with your phone screen.
- Keep alert and scan 360° as you progress.
- Face oncoming traffic and be aware of what is behind you.
- Look left, right, left before crossing the street (or right, left, right where people drive on the left!).
Don’t accept taxi offers from people in airports, other public places.

Know your taxis:
- Reputations for good service and security
- Only use official or hotel taxis
- Use those well recommended by locals you know and trust

Hail, rather than accept a taxi, or get a local friend to do it for you.

Have your destination address written down in the local language for the driver to read.

Establish destination and fare before loading bags and starting trip.

Take note of taxi number and driver name and their official ID.

Check all of your baggage into the vehicle first, before you get in.
Taxis

- Tell drivers to go slow and stay slow. A potential strategy is to offer to pay more for this.

- Wear your seatbelt, **even if the road is rough**!

- Don’t allow sharing (driver stops for others). If you are asked to, buy all the seats or leave the cab.

- **Keep discreet** about your business and personal details and be mindful of what you say in conversations with friends.

- If you are not happy with the situation, be firm and get out of the taxi.

- Have the exact fare ready and pay inside the cab. Put your wallet or purse away before exiting.

- Don’t loiter. Go directly away or into a building.
Trains

- Book in advance the best you can afford
- Don’t loiter in the station ahead of departure; keep discreet
- Take note of alarms and exits. Find out the location of the attendant (if applicable).
- Keep your valuables with you at all times.
- Keep a plan for action if threatened.
- Avoid being alone in any compartment. If in a high risk setting, choose a seat when everyone has settled.
- Be prepared to move out of compartment or carriage/car in the event of an incident which might escalate.
- If in a single sleeper compartment, bind shut or alarm the doors (rope or personal attack alarm).

This advice applies to railway systems where risks include robbery and assault; in such countries it is advisable to seek alternative transport or travel as a small group.
Routine road travel

- Familiarize yourself with routes used and the areas around them.
- Select fixed routes and identify them using a color code; red route, blue route, etc.
- Note possible Safe Havens (e.g., gas station).
- Where practical, get an update on conditions of routes ahead of travel.
- Check ahead with the destination, and provide them with an ETA.
- Note points of carjack risk, such as junctions, road exits and entrances, lights, traffic jams, remote stretches, etc.
- Avoid sitting in front passenger seat of car.
- Vigilantly observe/monitor whether you are being followed.
Carjack scenarios

- **Simple Commandeering.** Attackers approach when you’re stopped.

- **The Bump.** You get bumped from behind, get out to assess damage, exchange insurance details, and vehicle is taken.

- **Good Samaritan.** You stop to offer help at an incident by the roadside (e.g., an injury) and your vehicle is taken.

- **The Ruse.** Attacker stops you (e.g., waving, flashing light) to make you believe there’s a safety problem; vehicle is taken.

- **The Trap.** You’re followed, perhaps home, and attacked at your gate or driveway.

- **The Roadblock.** Usually in remote locations; attackers block the road soon after a bend. They may dress as police or security forces.

- **The Moving Roadblock.** The attackers use their vehicles to hem you in, force you to stop, then take your vehicle.
Tips to Minimize Carjack Risk

When approaching/entering your car:

- Walk with purpose and stay alert for suspicious people
- If you are someplace with guards/security nearby, ask them to escort you to your car, especially during evening hours
- Look inside the car before entering, especially in the back seat
- Be wary of people approaching you as you near your car – handing out flyers, asking for directions/money, etc.
- Look at the car(s) parked on both sides of your vehicle. If a male is sitting alone in the seat nearest to your car, it is advisable to leave the scene and ask someone to escort you to your car
- Lock your doors and drive away as quickly as possible.
Countering carjack threat

- Make sure everyone in the vehicle is aware of the threat and how to respond.

- Report the situation to your departure or arrival point.

- Make way for your best option Safe Haven.

- Report/update the situation as applicable.
Responding to an armed carjacker

- Keep your hands on the dashboard (driver).
- Keep your hands in sight (others).
- Stay calm and non-threatening.
- Observe and focus; think of collecting evidence.
- Comply with aggressive demands.
- Adopt measured or slow movements.
Additional guidance - carjacking

If the attacker takes the car with you inside:

- If you are in the passenger or back seat and feel your life is in immediate danger, you can jump out of the car as “last resort.”
- Of course, this is most safely done if moving at a slower speed.
- When jumping, tuck your knees to your chest, keep your head up and roll upon landing.

If you are thrown into the trunk of a car, kick out the back taillights, stick your arm out of the opening and wave to attract the attention of people nearby.
Civil Disorder: Demonstrations & Riots

- Keep abreast of local news. Listen to local radio/TV, talk with your contacts, etc.
- Avoid large crowds at all times.
- Do not participate in or engage with protests.
- Plan your movements to avoid incidents.
- If conscious of an incident in the making, return by the way you came (assuming it was problem-free at the time) to a safe place, preferably your home.
- Report the incident ASAP to colleagues who might be at risk. **Keep in touch.**
- If stuck in a car, pull over, turn off engine and don’t stare; seize any safe opportunity to leave the area.
Civil Disorder: Gunfire while in stationary vehicle

- Sit tight if your vehicle is armored or not in range of where gunfire is hitting.

- Otherwise, watch the locals and see if they are going to a place of safety.

- If fire is hitting the area, take cover and stay low to the ground:
  - Wheels provide protection; adjust your prone body to minimize exposure.
  - The engine block provides protection, as a second but ungainly option.
Civil Disorder: Gunfire while outside

- Lie down flat if people are being hit by the gunfire.
- Locate the direction from which shots are coming; listen for the crack & thump, and watch for flashes.
- Look for cover: curbs on the streets, ditches, holes, walls or buildings...
- Crawl to cover when you are able to.
- Get as low as possible to the ground.
- Be observant and see where others are going.
- Let someone know about the situation if you are able to do so safely.
- Be ready to move away quickly to an alternative position, or away from the area in safety.
Civil Disorder: Gunfire while inside

- Extinguish all lights immediately.
- Determine general area of the firing.
- Stay away from the windows and keep to the back of rooms, below the window levels.
- Move to the other side (away from the firing position) or to the center of the building; look for a stairwell, furniture, steel bath or other heavy items to put protection between you and the firing.
- Where protective cover is minimal, move to a point parallel to the line of fire rather than facing it.
- Generally – stay low and lie down behind furniture.
Active Shooter

- Maintain good situational awareness at all times – e.g., note room and building exits.
- In an active shooter situation, you should quickly determine the most reasonable way to protect your own life. You should:

1. **Run**: If there is an accessible escape path, attempt to evacuate the premises.
2. **Hide**: If evacuation is not possible, find a place to hide where the active shooter is less likely to find you.
3. **Fight**: As a last resort, and only when your life is in imminent danger, attempt to disrupt and/or incapacitate the active shooter.
Armed Robbery

- Give the robber what they want.
- Nothing – not money, material items, computer data, or anything else – is more important than your life.
- The potential for being robbed is a good reason to keep an alternative credit card and some cash somewhere other than with you.
Smarts

- Be very observant of your surroundings.
- Use your best judgment about your health and safety. Never compromise either to complete your work.
- Use common sense. Just be smart. If it feels wrong, it probably is, whether it is a person, place, or thing.
- Pay attention and do not act like a target, whether it is in the field, at work, or after-hours.
- Consider getting an inexpensive cell phone instead of using your smart phone.
- Realize that it is often difficult to extract yourself from a situation once you are in it. Avoid instances where you do not feel in control of what’s happening.
Safety Tips from Other Students

Going out
- Always be with someone else that you trust.
- Beware of the risks involved and of the hazards of certain behavior.
- If you drink alcohol, do so in moderation and at places within your community that you trust.

Contacts
- Carry a cell phone and keep important numbers saved on it but know critical numbers by heart in case your phone is lost or stolen.
- Seek out students and others with a lot of international experience.
- Identify local individuals who could help in the event of a health problem or other adverse event.
Good Behavior

- Don’t be an “ugly American” traveler. Treat others with more respect than you might normally back home.
- Dress appropriately to prevent negative or unwanted attention.
- Be flexible, honest, and open.

Host Communications

- Early on, discuss with your mentor/host organization who you should contact about any health, safety, or other concerns. It may be less comfortable to discuss this when and if an issue does arise!
- Regardless of when they arise, don’t be afraid to talk to your host country mentors about any issues or questions.
- Talk to the owners/managers of the place where you are staying.
The Emory Global Services website includes webinars on travel safety and security.

You can access them at (you’ll need your Emory netid/pw):
http://global.emory.edu/support/news/general/trainings.html