

Duty of Care

The responsibility of Duty of Care for people traveling away from home

WHO?

People working away from home can be from a variety of backgrounds. They may be:

- EXECUTIVES
- BUSINESS TRAVELERS
- SEAFARERS
- GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS
- CONSTRUCTION WORKERS
- MINERS
- TECHNICIANS
- ENGINEERS
- SERVICE AND SALES PEOPLE
- RESEARCHERS
- TEACHERS
- MISSIONARIES

They may be long or short-term employees, volunteers, aid workers, contractors, or family members.

The person may be traveling on a short or a long trip to one or multiple countries, or even within their own country. They may even have an expatriate assignment or posting.

In all cases the person is an employee sent elsewhere by their employer for work.

WHERE?

The person may go to locations ranging from relatively safe to high-risk. Note that a relatively safe destination can rapidly degenerate into a high-risk destination due to health, safety, security, political or social reasons, or natural disasters.

WHY?

Mobility is increasing due to globalization, new markets and the need for services. Employers therefore should ensure adequate health, safety, security and legal protection for their employees on international or remote travel assignments for the following reasons:

- Prevention, response to, and mitigation of incidents reduces costly interruptions to business activities, improves morale and strengthens productivity.
- The adequate management of risk during an incident may allow for the continuation of activities or the development of new opportunities, which could have otherwise been lost.
- Meeting these responsibilities can mean a positive return on investment.
- This protection is an important part of corporate social responsibility.
- It is important to ensure that protection typically required domestically under national occupational safety and health legislation is offered to those working abroad, in order to comply to legal legislation & avoid litigation costs.

HOW?

An initial step is for a company or organization to create and agree upon important competencies for protecting the health, safety, security and legal status of international or remote assignees and travelers. Ownership and implementation of these competencies is a core executive responsibility.

TURN OVER FOR A PRACTICAL CHECKLIST



COMPETENCY CHECKLIST

Companies and organizations that successfully manage their responsibilities to care for international travelers and assignees have put into place the following competencies:

Development of Policies & Procedures	Strategic planning: Risk Assessment	Communicating, Educating & Training their employees	Maintaining contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Be up-to-date on national occupational health and safety requirements (the legal framework) where the individual will be assigned. ■ Through a corporate travel security policy, take an integrated approach to manage incidents involving departments such as security, travel, legal, health, human resources, and social services. ■ Develop contingencies in case travelers and workers need to be protected, moved or evacuated from their assigned living/working environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Identify and assess the risks, the tools for mitigation, responsibilities for action and means for evaluating measures taken. ■ Determine the individual's medical, psychological and social fitness for travel or assignment. ■ Perform and maintain a dynamic risk assessment (that is continually reviewed) by a competent person or organization. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Raise the individual's awareness about the cultural, social and legal norms at the destination. ■ Provide training for the individual with a view towards preventing an incident as well as protection from, response to and mitigation of a potential incident. ■ The competency to assure the health, safety and security of the individual on assignment or while traveling for emergency issues as well as preventative, routine advice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Locate and communicate with the individual during an emergency, as well as to provide up-to-date information on local health, medical, security, social and legal issues. ■ Locally manage employees or others during incidents or crisis. ■ Maintain a system to document that international assignees and travelers know and understand daily health, safety, security and legal issues as well as emergency procedures.

In certain locations, which should be flagged by the risk assessment, travelers or assignees may also need:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A system for the traveler to have secured (safe) copies of essential travel documents, medical information, emergency contact information, and insurance contact information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A fit-to-travel medical evaluation. ■ Periodic health checks and up-to-date vaccinations. ■ A continuously updated written travel plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A list of transportation and hotel facilities based on safety, health and security criteria. ■ An emergency medical kit and first aid training to address general situations as well as situations the individual may face during travel and assignment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A 24 hour point-of-contact for relevant up-to-date information.
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