National and International Travel Best Practise Guide

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MRC will a safe environment and employ best practice to ensure health, safety and welfare within the workplace. This document sets the expected best practice guidance for national and international travel.

General Introduction

Many of us barely consider the risks that may arise from the activity of travelling on business. Risks, however, do arise when travelling and can range widely from the loss of vital documents or money to personal safety concerns depending upon the destination, mode and time of travel, the time of arrival and length of stay.

The purpose of this guidance is to raise the awareness of travellers to possible risks that may be associated with travel and to minimise them by thinking ahead and introducing simple control measures.
BASIC RULES

When travelling on MRC business it is sensible to make sure that the following items have been considered.

Travel arrangements

- It is preferable to have tickets prior to departure. The majority of units have arrangements to purchase tickets through the corporate travel agency.
- Check to ensure that dates and destinations are correct.
- Ensure that travel arrangements are known by the unit and a relative or friend.
- Check to ensure passport and visas are up to date.
- For sleeper compartments on a train first class accommodation should be used. Never share with strangers.

Hotel accommodation

- Use accommodation containing en suite facilities and a room telephone.
- Avoid sharing of rooms wherever possible.
- If possible use hotels with restaurant facilities.

Good communication is essential so ensure that;

- the telephone number of the hotel is known to either a relative/friend or to the unit.
- someone is notified of your safe arrival.
- someone is notified of your safe departure.
- your mobile phone can work especially when abroad.
- the correct plug adapters are carried with you.

Personal identification

- Do not travel without a means of identification, preferably photographic. In a city or town this may simply be your name and place of stay. It is important that some means of identification is on your person. This is clearly more important when you are a lone traveller.

Emergency provisions including insurance

- Always have an emergency contact number on your person or known to a colleague.
- Always carry the corporate insurance card on your person.
- MRC insurance covers you for a period beyond your business trip. It will not cover you for an extended stay if it exceeds the length of time you stayed on your business.
- Always carry your mobile phone charged and pack your charger with the appropriate travel plug for the country you are visiting.
TRAVEL DETAILS

The purpose of this section is to record information that could enable the MRC unit or a relative or friend in the UK to communicate with the traveller if required. In the event of an emergency the information can be used to contact the MRC’s insurance agent, a family member or friend directly or the Unit. The section also outlines documents and insurance requirements required for travel.

The traveller is encouraged to use this section and to make sure that contact persons are aware of its content.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTACT DETAILS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of Traveller(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Name / Address / telephone number / mobile phone number of contact member of staff in the UK.
(The contact member of staff may be the traveller’s supervisor or another member of staff with the required authority)

Name / Address / telephone number of next of kin / contact person in the UK that you would like to be notified in the event of an accident or emergency
(This information will ONLY be used for emergency purposes. Also see section on Insurance)
**ITINERARY**

The information given in this section will be used in the event that the unit needs to contact you while you are away. Where journeys take in more than one destination, host or country, give as much detail as possible.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place of departure</th>
<th>Journey to:</th>
<th>Mode of transport:</th>
<th>If by air, give name of airline, flight number etc. If transferring to other flights, give details also.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Name, address and telephone number of the accommodation

Dates of stay at the accommodation

**Return Journey**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place of departure</th>
<th>Journey to:</th>
<th>Mode of transport:</th>
<th>Give details of flight, train etc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Photocopy this page if necessary and complete if travelling to more than one country or destination.*
If any part of the time away on business is to be spent as a holiday, note the dates and inform your unit travel person. MRC insurance will cover you and your family for a period beyond your business trip. The extended trip cannot exceed the time spent on the actual business trip.

### Where attending a conference or meeting, give the following details

- Name of organisation .................................................................
- If a University, state department..................................................
- Name of the conference / meeting...............................................
- Telephone number of organisation ...........................................

Give any other details that would enable people to communicate with you (if necessary) while you are away e.g. mobile phone number.
**RISK ASSESSMENT**

The purpose of this section is to raise the awareness of the traveller to potential risks.

*From the list below consider which hazards may be a risk to you either when travelling or during your visit. Show the likelihood of such an event occurring (as far as you can surmise) by ticking the right hand columns. You may find useful information about the country you are visiting on the Foreign Office web site. The list is to help you to think of hazards which may occur, and may not be complete.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not Applicable</th>
<th>Likelihood of occurrence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Theft of laptop computer / mobile phone
- Theft of passport
- Theft of travellers cheques
- Theft of luggage
- Travelling alone in buses / trains
- Arriving after dark / late at night
- Risky / dangerous locations
- Risk of accident / breakdown (i.e. if hiring a car)
- Possibility of assault
- Possibility of mugging
- Risk of sickness from food / drink
- Risk of altitude sickness
- Risk of illness

Seat belts should be worn whenever possible. Mobile phones should not be used whilst driving. Exceptions are hands free but additional care should always be taken even in this case.

If there are any other specific hazards that have not been included, please list them below

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Likelihood of occurrence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If the occurrence of any of the above hazards would have a significant effect on your circumstances, then take additional precautions.
DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

GENERAL

Please tick box

1. Do you require a visa for the country (countries) you are visiting? YES NO
2. If yes, have you obtained a visa(s)? YES NO
3. Do you have an identity card issued by the unit? YES NO
4. Do you have a photocopy of your passport? YES NO
5. Do you have a photocopy of your Driving licence? YES NO

Remember that some countries require your passport to have at least six months before its expiry date and it has 4 clean pages (particularly important for African destinations)

If you have answered NO to questions 4 & 5 you may consider making copies as they are useful if your passport / driving licence are stolen or lost. It is also wise to keep them separate from the original documents.

6. Do you have a separate list of your traveller cheques? YES NO

Traveller cheques can only be replaced if you have a list of their numbers. Again, it is wise to keep them separate from the original documents.
INSURANCE

The Medical Research Council insures all members of staff and their family, visitors and students on MRC business within the UK or abroad to cover :-

a) Pre-travel advice (occupational health)
b) Medical referral
c) Legal referral
d) Emergency medical supplies
e) Emergency messages
f) Emergency travel
g) Lost tickets, passports or baggage
h) Port/airport delays/assistance
i) Repatriation in an emergency, e.g. air ambulance

Always carry the corporate travel card and the MRC insurance policy number with you when outside the UK.

Further information regarding travel insurance, including the travel card, can be found on Knowledgebase using the following file path;
HR > Travel, Claims and Expenses.

Travel card
https://moss.ssc.rcuk.ac.uk/HR/Documents/Travel%20card%20-%20with%20policy%20number%2000015901923.pdf

Policy wording
https://moss.ssc.rcuk.ac.uk/HR/Documents/Personal%20Accident%20and%20Travel%20Insurance%20Policy%20Wording.pdf

Policy schedule
INOCULATIONS

It is advised that you be immunised against some diseases when visiting certain countries.
The following is general advice from the Department of Health

- **For all areas**, If you have not previously been immunised against diphtheria, polio or tetanus, this is an ideal opportunity to have the immunisations carried out and to ensure your present immunisations are still effective.

- **For all areas, except North and Western Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand**: Poliomyelitis

- **For areas where standards of hygiene and sanitation may be less than ideal** Hepatitis A, Typhoid.

- **For infected areas** (Please check with your doctor, Occupational Health adviser or a travel clinic). Anti-malarial tablets and precautions against insect bites, Yellow fever (compulsory for some countries).

- **In certain circumstances** (Please check with your doctor, Occupational Health adviser or a travel clinic). Meningococcal Meningitis, Rabies, Tick-Borne Encephalitis, Hepatitis B, Tuberculosis, Diphtheria booster, Japanese Encephalitis.

Find the specific inoculations required for the country you are visiting on

http://www.doh.gov.uk/traveladvice/tables.htm

or telephone your GP, Occupational Health Provider, or Travel Clinic for advice. They will also carry out any immunisation required. If you have been previously inoculated it may be worthwhile checking if a booster is required.

MRC will reimburse any costs.
MEDICAL CONDITIONS AND MEDICATIONS

Keep a written record on your person of any medical condition affecting you, such as angina pectoris, diabetes and haemophilia, and the proper names – not just the trade names – of any medication you are taking.

If you want to take any sort of medicine with you – either prescribed or bought from a pharmacist – find out if there are any restrictions on taking it in and out of the UK or the country you are visiting. Ask the relevant Embassy or High Commission or the Home Office Drugs Branch (Tel: 020 7273 3806). Always carry medicines in a correctly labelled container, as issued by the pharmacist. Otherwise take a letter from your doctor or a personal health record card giving details of the drug prescribed in case you need it to get you through Customs.

Further information can be obtained from:-
http://www.doh.gov.uk/traveladvice/plan.htm#emergency

MEDICATION

Please tick box

YES  NO  N/A

Does your GP, Occupational Health Provider or Travel Clinic advise you to take an EMERGENCY MEDICAL TRAVEL KIT?

And if so, do you have one?

If you regularly take medication, do you have sufficient for your journey?
**EMERGENCY MEDICAL KIT**

These contain a variety of sterilised and sealed items of equipment, such as syringes, needles and suture materials. They should normally be handed to a doctor or nurse for use in a medical emergency in a country where the safety of such items cannot be assured. A typical kit should contain:-

- 2 x 5ml syringes
- 5 x needles (preferably two sizes)
- 1 dental needle
- 1 intravenous cannula
- 1 skin suture with needle
- 1 packet skin closure strips
- 5 alcohol swabs for skin cleansing
- 5cm x 5cm and 10cm x 10cm non-stick dressings
- 1 roll surgical tape

Travel to Africa or other countries where insect borne infection may occur then consider the need for the following;

Diarrhoea Treatment  
Rehydration  
Short course of antibiotics  
Antihistamines  
Antimalarial treatment

Additional items such as an intravenous giving set and a blood substitute solution may be advised for journeys to remote areas. Your GP, Occupational Health Provider, or Travel Clinic will be able to provide more information.

The kit should be supplied by occupational health if required – they can also be obtained from MASTA^3 registered pharmacists.

**In the event that you need to use any of the above items, please remember to dispose of them safely.**

Emergency medical travel kits should carry sufficient identification to ensure their acceptance by Customs officials but the contents should not be opened until needed. It is also unwise to carry loose syringes or needles unless you have a doctor’s letter explaining their purpose – if, for example, you are a diabetic.
Annex 1

The following is supplied by the Department of Health.

**Wherever you are in the world, be careful what you eat and drink. Food and water may be contaminated in a variety of ways – and that includes the water in swimming pools, lakes, rivers and the sea, so try not to swallow water when you are bathing.**

**Travellers’ diarrhoea is very common, especially in hot countries. Travellers’ diarrhoea, as well as diseases such as cholera, typhoid and hepatitis A can all be caught from contaminated food and water.**

**BUT THEY CAN ALSO LARGELY BE AVOIDED BY SIMPLE PRECAUTIONS:**

- Always wash your hands after going to the lavatory, before handling food and before eating. If you have any doubts about the water available for drinking, washing food or cleaning teeth, boil it, sterilise it with disinfectant tablets or use bottled water – preferably carbonated with gas – in sealed containers.

- Avoid ice unless you are sure it is made from treated and chlorinated water. This includes ice used to keep food cool as well as ice in drinks.

- It is usually safe to drink hot tea or coffee, wine, beer, carbonated water and soft drinks, and packaged or bottled fruit juices.

- Eat freshly cooked food that is thoroughly cooked and still piping hot.

- Avoid food that has been kept warm.

- Avoid uncooked food, unless you can peel or shell it yourself.

- Avoid food likely to have been exposed to flies.

- Avoid ice cream from unreliable sources, such as kiosks or itinerant traders.

- Avoid – or boil – non-pasteurised milk.

- Fish and shellfish can be suspect in some countries. Uncooked shellfish, such as oysters, are a particular hazard.
Annex 2

BE SAFE OUT OF DOORS

The sun should be enjoyed, but overexposure can cause sunburn, leading to premature skin ageing and an increased risk of skin cancer. It is the ultra violet rays that cause this; even in the UK they can damage your skin, and UV is much more powerful nearer the equator or at higher altitude.

Occupational health will supply sun screen.

Never underestimate how ill careless exposure to the sun can make you.

If you want to avoid trouble – take care not to burn.

Stay out of the sun for at least 2 hours around midday and use what shade there is at other times, and cover yourself with a wide brimmed hat, and tightly woven but loose clothing. Protective creams suitable for your skin type can be used on unavoidably exposed parts of the body. Wear filter UV sunglasses to protect your eyes.

A separate risk of overexposure to the sun is heat stroke, caused simply by overheating. Avoid activity during the hottest hours, and make sure of drinking non-alcoholic liquids to balance the loss of perspiration. Whatever you drink must be safe – either from sealed cans or bottles, or water that has been boiled. Never underestimate how ill careless exposure to the sun can make you.

Avoid insect and animal bites, tick borne diseases such as tick borne encephalitis and borreliosis (Lyme disease) are prevalent in temperate climates. It is therefore not only in tropical wooded areas one needs to cover legs and arms. Use insect-repellent preparations.

Animal bites can set up infections that can be serious and sometimes fatal.

BE WARY OF EVEN APPARENTLY TAME ANIMALS.

Rabies is endemic in many countries even in towns and cities

TAKE CARE IN WATER

Do not go swimming alone. Bathing will cool you but remember that fatal accidents can happen very easily and in the most unexpected conditions. Adults should watch each other for signs of trouble when in the water. If you are going to dive into water, make sure that it is deep enough for you to do so safely. Each year, many people are permanently paralysed as a result of injuries sustained from diving into shallow water.
Do not swim or enter water until you are assured that parasitic diseases such as shistomiasis or other water borne diseases are not prevalent.

TAKE CARE ON THE ROADS

Traffic accidents are the major cause of death among travellers.
Whether driver or pedestrian, always check on local traffic regulations. If you are
in a car, always wear a seat belt. If on a motor or pedal bike, always wear a
helmet and put children in a child restraint. If you hire a car or a bike, check its
condition and the insurance cover. And never drink and drive.

TAKE CARE WHEN TRAVELLING
When travelling on long haul flights it is advisable to get out of your seat and
‘stretch your legs’ regularly. Long-haul aircraft flights may increase the risk of
blood clots in blood vessels, particularly those in the lower parts of the body. One
such medical condition is termed “deep vein thrombosis” (DVT). The risks from
DVT can be reduced by wearing support tights or stockings, ensuring that fluid
intake (non alcoholic) is maintained and that wherever possible making sure that
some form of exercise is undertaken whilst flying to increase the blood flow to the
legs.

Tiredness and stress are also factors that cannot be ignored by the traveller.
Tiredness can come from the actual travel time and also any time differences that
may occur. The latter may lead to jet lag. Stress may come from the travel
process and also from living in a different environment. Ensuring, for example,
that adequate time is allowed for travel and that on arrival a suitable time
interval is allowed to recover from the process of travelling can help to reduce
stress levels.

‘NO GO’ AREAS
In many countries, there are areas that are unsafe for travellers to visit because
of the risk of violence. For guidance and information, please use the Foreign and
Commonwealth Office Advice to Travellers telephone line: 020 7008 0232 / 0233 or access their web page http://www.fco.gov.uk/travel or http://www.brookes.ac.uk/worldwise/
Here are a few simple rules to follow to keep you safe when abroad:

- Don’t look wealthy: don’t flaunt your valuables or wallet.
- Keep both hands free.
- Keep your money, passport and credit cards next to your skin if they can’t be locked in a safe deposit box. Keep them in front of you. Take them to the shower with you. Sleep on top of them.
- Stay in contact with your luggage unless they are locked in your room or stowed safely on transport.
- Every time you stand up, look back to see what you have left behind.
- Carry your luggage onto the train, bus or taxi with you.
- Don’t hire a room that is not secure. Lock it every time you leave and when you’re inside.
- Be aware of everyone around you. Not ‘beware’, just be aware.
- Don’t do anything that is possibly dangerous, just to avoid being rude.
- Read the fire drill notice in your hotel bedroom / conference venue and familiarise yourself with the fire exits.
- If you are robbed, go straight to the Police and report the theft.

Most of this is extracted from "Footloose and Fancy-Free in the Third World, A Back-Packer’s World Travel Handbook" by Randy R. Johnson. The complete version can be found at [http://www.ease.com/~randyj/secure2.htm](http://www.ease.com/~randyj/secure2.htm)

### Safety tips from the Suzy Lamplugh Trust

Keep to the following general advice to help ensure you don’t become a victim of violence or aggression.

Trust your instincts and never assume it won't happen to you.

Always plan your journey home in advance.

Give up your bag if attacked.

If the worst happens your first priority is to get away from a difficult situation as quickly as possible.
GENERAL INFORMATION

Information is available for many countries which the Foreign Office considers risky on: http://www.fco.gov.uk/travel. This web site gives information on safety and security, terrorism, local laws and customs and the nearest British Embassy or Consulate.

There is also a list of Dos and Don’ts for each country on: http://www.fco.gov.uk/travel/dos.asp. This web site gives more detailed information on local laws and customs.

An English speaking lawyer may be useful to you if you need a translator for any reason and a list is available at: http://www.fco.gov.uk/Files/kfile/lawyers,0.pdf

IT MAY BE WISE FOR YOU TO TAKE A COPY OF THIS INFORMATION WITH YOU
## Annex 4

### Overseas Pre-Departure Check List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To be completed by the travelling and discussed, as necessary with line manager or colleague(s)</th>
<th>tick to confirm</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>General</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My passport is valid for minimum of an extra 6 months and has 2 clean pages</td>
<td></td>
<td>For South Africa 4 clean pages best, ideally 2 double</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have the necessary travel and health insurance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I &amp; the office have a copy of key documentation; passport, Visas, driving licence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have the necessary travel and health insurance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money. I have the necessary debit/credit card &amp; enough cash £, $ local currency</td>
<td></td>
<td>If high threat of possible mugging carry more cash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have organised taxi/ local transport to meet me at airport &amp; hotel booked</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will wear a seat belt whenever possible</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have checked the weather &amp; know whether I’m going to an earthquake zone</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have business contact details; telephones numbers, addresses &amp; loaded into mobile with dialling code</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have agreed with line manager/colleagues to occasionally check in, particularly if travelling alone</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have necessary travel equipment: head touch, med pack, door lock, medical pack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have checked what vaccinations I need for country <a href="http://www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs">www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs</a> + know of other health risks such as Dengue, Cholera..</td>
<td></td>
<td>If Yellow Fever, will proof: certificate vaccination book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have checked if I’m going to a malaria area and have appropriate Prophylactics <a href="http://www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk">www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk</a> <a href="http://www.malariahotspots.co.uk">www.malariahotspots.co.uk</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have alert colleagues of any allergies that might cause me a problem and what to do and visa versa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Security</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have researched the current situation in the country <a href="http://www.fco.gov.uk">www.fco.gov.uk</a> . Loaded Consulate tel into mobile</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have researched the country and know relevant issues such as religion, ethnic make up, past history, sensitive subjects, how they view UK etc</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have considered the key security issues to be concerned about: crime, disease, road accidents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Name: …………………………………………………………………………..
Signature: ……………………………………………………………………
Date: …………………………………………………………………………..