

## Your guide to safe international travel

### 1 Before you go

Travelling abroad can be exciting and interesting, but it can also be stressful and risky if you're not properly prepared. These checklists will help you to get ready for your trip and make sure you've covered as many issues as possible before you leave.

#### 1a Your destination

- Check with your government that there are no warnings about travelling to your destination (see [www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk) or [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov), for example)
- If someone you know has visited your destination before, ask them for advice
- Buy a good guidebook and familiarise yourself with the country's geography, transport, culture and so on

#### 1b Documents

- Carry a valid passport that has at least six months left before it expires, and has two spare pages for entry stamps
- Check whether you need a visa at least two months before you travel – you can do this at travel agents or on embassies' websites
- Make sure your employer has arranged travel insurance for you, and check that the cover is right for where you're going and what you're doing
- Remember to take the policy with you, and make a note of the emergency phone number
- Always take several forms of identification and keep them separate from your passport. Take photocopies of your passport (including the page that shows your visa) as well
- If you're staying for a short time, buy a return ticket before you leave your home country
- Check your journey and check-in times against a prepared itinerary and reconfirm flight times a couple of days before departure
- Use a flexible ticket if you're travelling to a higher-risk country
- Find out whether you need an international driving permit and if you do, apply for one in good time

#### 1c Medical and dental checks

- Make sure that any urgent medical or dental treatment is completed before you travel
- If you have any long term health problems, check with your doctor whether travelling will make them worse, and remember to take enough medicine with you
- Find out what vaccinations you need, and have them done in good time. Some vaccines can't be given together, and if you suffer side effects, you'll need time to have them treated
- Remember to get a vaccination certificate if you need one
- Take a look at [www.nhs.uk/Healthcareabroad/Pages/Healthcareabroad.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/Healthcareabroad/Pages/Healthcareabroad.aspx) or [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel) for the latest health advice
- Carry a record of your blood group and any other important medical information (eg allergies)

### 1d Clothing and luggage

- Get advice (eg from colleagues or an experienced outfitter) about what clothing and luggage is suitable for your destination. Remember your organisation should pay for any special gear
- Dress casually for travel and keep expensive watches and jewellery out of sight
- Use suitcase locks so that it's clear if your luggage has been tampered with – there are some available that show whether the security services at the airport have officially opened your bags
- Keep a list of what's in your bags
- Put your name and address inside your luggage in case the label falls off
- Avoid using soft-sided bags as they're easier to break into
- Pack some spare clothes in your hand luggage in case your main suitcase is delayed or lost in transit
- Avoid hurting your back – don't overfill suitcases, and use luggage with wheels and trolleys where they're available in airports

### 1e Money

- If you're unfamiliar with local coins and banknotes, get used to them and learn their equivalent value in your currency before you set out
- Avoid carrying a large amount of cash, but carry enough money to cover emergencies. Keep it in various places to make sure you don't risk losing it all at once
- Keep your funds in a variety of forms – cash, traveller's cheques (preferably in an international currency, such as US dollars) and payment cards
- Avoid forms of payment that aren't commonly used where you're going. For example, check whether credit or debit cards are widely used before you go
- Make a list of emergency phone numbers for all cards and traveller's cheques, and cancel them if they're stolen
- Keep spare money, valuables and your passport in the hotel safe, and make sure you remember the security code

### 1f Communication

- Note the phone number of your nearest consulate and carry enough coins in the local currency for several calls. It's often easier to buy a phone card for using in public call boxes
- Report regularly to your home base – even if you're just calling to say everything's fine
- If you're planning to take a mobile phone, check before you go that it'll work in the country you're visiting
- Make a note of your phone number, the handset serial number and the helpline you need to call if the phone is stolen