



## *Study Abroad Safety Guidelines*

---

### **Study Abroad Office • Rockhurst University**

---

#### ***Be alert***

- Be alert to your surroundings and the people with whom you have contact.
- Be wary of people who seem overly friendly or interested in you.
- Be cautious about giving your street address, telephone number, or e-mail address to new acquaintances.
- Learn which areas of town should be avoided. If you find yourself in uncomfortable surroundings, act confident. Always carry enough local currency to take a taxi home, or to make a telephone call. Pay phones in some countries do not accept coins, and you may need to use a telephone card.

#### ***Be prepared for an emergency***

- Have copies of your passport (the photo page and inside cover), your ISIC card, insurance information and birth certificate with you and at home. Also provide the Study Abroad Office with copies of your passport and ISIC card.
- Have telephone numbers of program contacts and at least two emergency contacts with you at all times.
- Know how to reach a doctor, a hospital, or clinic and the police in the country in which you are traveling.
- Know what immunizations you may need, if any, for your country of study. See the Center for Disease Control ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)) for information.
- Carry necessary medical history if needed.
- Have sufficient funds and a credit card on hand for emergencies such as purchasing a train or airline ticket or obtaining medical care.
- When traveling, even within the host city, write down the address and phone number of the place you are staying.
- Contact your insurance provider before you leave about when and where you will be studying abroad.
- Contact your credit card company and bank before you leave to let them know your account will be accessed from abroad.

#### ***Blend in***

- Do not dress or behave in a manner that will easily identify you as a tourist or as an American.
- Integrate yourself as fully as possible into the university community.
- Be sensitive about who or what you photograph.
- During times of political unrest, avoid establishments and facilities strongly associated with the United States or other countries at the center of political issues.
- Avoid political demonstrations of any type.

#### ***Stay informed***

- Review U.S. State Department Travel Advisories concerning the countries or region to which you will be traveling. Travel warnings and announcements are available online at [www.travel.state.gov/travel\\_warnings](http://www.travel.state.gov/travel_warnings).
- Keep informed about radio and television broadcasts by reading the newspaper and using on-line news services: [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk) and [www.npr.org](http://www.npr.org).
- Develop a political awareness.

#### ***Stay in touch***

- Maintain regular contact with home so that your family and others in the U.S. are assured of your safety.
- Maintain regular contact with your program director or host institution coordinator.
- When traveling, notify someone other than those traveling with you - preferably your host contact or director - as well as someone at home in the U.S. of your itinerary.

### ***Avoid theft***

- Keep valuable items in a safe place. Lock valuables in a hostel/hotel safe when touring a city.
- Do not take non-essential items such as expensive jewelry abroad with you. If you can't replace it, don't take it!
- Do not keep all your documents and money in one suitcase or location. Spread them out and keep copies in various places.
- Do not flash large amounts of money. Carry and use small bills whenever possible. Be well prepared for purchases while traveling.
- Do not carry anything valuable in the back pocket of your backpack or pants.
- If carrying a purse, clasp it between your body and arm at all times and set it on your lap or between your feet while seated.
- Avoid situations and locations popularly identified with tourists/Americans.
- Get in and out of airports, train, bus, and subway stations as promptly as possible.
- Use extra caution when traveling or going out alone.
- **NEVER** leave your bags unattended (even briefly) in an airport, bus, or train station.

### ***Be smart***

- Consume alcohol in a responsible and culturally appropriate fashion.
- Don't accept rides with friends or acquaintances who have had too much to drink.
- Don't use illegal drugs. Some prescription medications may be illegal outside the U.S. Check into this!
- Avoid overt acts or displays of patriotism.
- Get enough sleep/rest.
- Be sexually responsible. Use appropriate contraceptives. Consider abstinence.
- When traveling, do NOT rent cars, or drive at night, or drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Avoid empty rail or subway cars.
- This is real life! Consider the consequences of your behavior!

## **U.S. Department of State Recommendations for Safety Abroad**

As the time approaches for spring or summer breaks, many college students are getting ready for that much anticipated study abroad. Most will have a safe and enjoyable adventure, but for some, the trip will become a nightmare. A number of ruined vacations are caused by one or more of the following: drugs, alcohol, and disorderly behavior. Each year more than 2,500 American citizens are arrested abroad - about half on narcotics charges, including possessions of very small amounts of illegal substances. A drug that may be legal in one country may not be legal in a neighboring nation. Some young people are victimized because they may be unaware of the laws, customs, or standards of the country they are visiting.

Besides drugs, alcohol can also get U.S. citizens in trouble abroad. Students have been arrested for being intoxicated in public areas, underage drinking, and drunk driving. Some young Americans go abroad assuming that local authorities will overlook such conduct. Many believe that they are immune from prosecution in foreign lands because they are American citizens. The truth is that Americans are expected to obey all the laws of the countries they visit and those that break these laws sometimes face severe penalties.

Disorderly or reckless behavior is also to be avoided. In many countries, conduct that would not result in an arrest here in the U.S. constitutes a violation of local law. It is crucial that young Americans be aware of this risk as they are enjoying their time abroad.

Being arrested is not the only thin that can happen on a foreign vacation. Young Americans have been killed in automobile accidents, drowning, and falls because of heavy drinking and drug use. Sadly, others have been raped or robbed because they have found themselves in an unfamiliar locale and incapable of exercising prudent judgment. Remember: reckless behavior while in another country can . . . land you in a foreign jail or worse! To have a safe trip, avoid risky behavior and become familiar with the basic laws and customs of the country you plan to visit before you travel.