

Proactive Risk Management Abroad

Here are some steps directors can take to mitigate risk while abroad. While risk is always present, some steps can reduce the likelihood of some of the most common kinds of incidents will occur or minimize their impact if they do.

- 1) Implement a communication plan. Tell students who to call, insure that you can reach all students by phone/email/text, put all emergency numbers in your contacts and encourage students to do the same.
- 2) Have a designated emergency meeting point. Encourage students to use a “buddy system, letting their friends know where they are going and making sure everyone gets home safely when they are out.
- 3) Provide clear, detailed travel information to students for group trips, with enough lead time for them to plan and follow through on your instructions.
- 4) Keep abreast of developments in the countr(ies) you will be in by signing up for International SOS alerts and checking STEP alerts. Encourage your students to pay attention to local news and alerts they receive too.
- 5) Require students to notify you of their travel plans. Encourage them to register travel in “MyTrips” on the International SOS website.
- 6) Set expectations for behavior, and be prepared to impose consequences if a student chronically violates those expectations.
- 7) Talk openly with students about the responsible choices they can make for their own well-being, such as being street smart, consuming alcohol responsibly (if of legal age), etc. We will share with you the Off-Campus Study Pre-Departure power point slides on these topics. They provide basic, commonsense advice about good decision making while traveling. While some students may feel they know this all, it helps to hear it from you, and some students will not have had much travel or city experience.
- 8) Be attentive to changes in student behavior that may signal a problem. Inquire in a supportive way if you can be of assistance if you think a student may be suffering medical or emotional difficulties.
- 9) Don’t hesitate to call on Off-Campus Study and other Colgate offices, your local partners, HTH, or ISOS if you need advice or assistance.