Emergency Protocol

University of Houston
Global Strategies and Studies
Learning Abroad
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www.uh.edu/learningabroad
Introduction

The University of Houston (UH) is committed to providing a learning environment that not only promotes the safety and well-being of its students but also an environment conducive for students to develop to their fullest potential. Learning Abroad works to ensure that partner institutions and program providers are of reasonable quality with effective crisis response plans in place. It is imperative that faculty leaders of UH programs abroad thoroughly read this document and realize that they provide 24/7 emergency support for the duration of the program.

Learning Abroad will assist faculty to develop an emergency response and communication plans while abroad. While UH provides support, it is essential that both faculty and students take responsibility for their own safety and security. This is highlighted in the Learning Abroad pre-departure orientations, but must also be emphasized by faculty during pre-departure and on-site orientations.

UH cannot ensure the absolute safety of participants or eliminate all risks. However, with the partnership of UH faculty, who are critical to setting student expectations and creating a culture of safety, we do our best to run safe programs and mitigate risk.

Defining Emergencies

Before outlining a response plan, it is important to identify different types of potential emergencies as well as distinguish between real and perceived emergencies.

Types of Emergencies

- Petty theft or pick-pocketing
- Lost passport
- Minor injury or illnesses
- Missed flight, train, etc.
- Physical or sexual assault
- Significant illness or injury (physical or emotional)
- Disappearance or kidnapping of a student
- Natural disaster (earthquake, tsunami, hurricane, landside, etc.)
- Arrest
- Socio-political (riot, military coup, terrorist attack)

Perceived Emergency

Distinguishing between a real and perceived emergency is important. All emergencies, whether real or perceived, should be treated with sensitivity and good judgement, keeping UH students’ well-being at the forefront. Perceived emergencies may arise from actual events (i.e. earthquake, floods) but may not actually impact the health, safety or security of UH students or faculty. Due to media attention and distortion of information, these situations may be perceived in the U.S. as more dangerous than they actually are and can be disruptive to programs abroad.
Emergency Response Plan

The first step in emergency preparedness is having a plan in place before the emergency occurs. Prior to departure, faculty leaders are required to:

1. Ensure he or she has a cell phone on his or her person at all times while abroad
2. Create an emergency communication plan and evacuation plan and give a copy to the Director of Learning Abroad
3. Have emergency contact information for all student participants and carry it on his or her person while abroad (Appendix A)
4. Ensure students are enrolled with the International Student Identity Card (ISIC) for international insurance coverage or have comparable coverage: [http://www.myisic.com/orders/store](http://www.myisic.com/orders/store)
5. Require all students to enroll in the U.S. Department of State’s Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) [https://step.state.gov/step](https://step.state.gov/step). Registration enrolls students in the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate abroad. It also allows students to receive safety and security information for country and gives the embassy emergency contact information for students
7. Have contact information for the closest local consulate/embassy and keep it on your person

Equipping Students

Pre-departure as well as an on-site orientation discussion with students of emergency drills and communication plans will help prepare students to respond more confidently in an actual emergency. Students should be aware of the resources they have through their insurance coverage and ensure they keep the ISIC card on their person at all times. Learning Abroad requires faculty determine a “meeting place” in the event any emergency occurs while abroad and discussion of different scenarios with students, including evacuation, i.e. hotel lobby, designated classroom, etc.

In the Event of an Emergency

Faculty leaders should follow these steps in response:

1. **Assess the situation**
   - How serious is the emergency? Who needs to be involved? Local police? Consulate? What steps must be taken to secure students?
2. **Account for and secure safety of program participants.**
   Stay calm and do not panic. Your goal is preserve the safety and well-being of the students. Obtain prompt and appropriate medical attention, engage with necessary authorities, and remove students from immediate danger if possible. When applicable, locate and contact all program participants as quickly as possible. **In a medical emergency, never leave an injured or sick student on his or her own.**

3. **Advise Group to Notify Emergency Contacts**
   Advise participants to notify their parents, guardians or emergency contacts of their safety if applicable.

4. **Contact Onsite (local) Partner/ISIC for Emergency Help**
   Once you have done all possible to secure the well-being of students, contact your on-site partner/organization first and then ISIC to initiate their local emergency response plan.

5. **Contact UHPD 24/7 Hotline**
   Call the 24/7 UHPD Hotline (001-713-743-3333). UHPD will initiate a local communication plan and involve the appropriate offices on campus. Be prepared to provide UHPD:
   - Name of caller and victim (if any)—Identify you are abroad
   - Brief description of accident, injuries, emergency
   - Status of any victims and all students
   - Location of caller
   - Location of accident or emergency
   - Phone and fax number by which caller can be reached
   - Has local police, rescue or U.S. Consulate/Embassy been contacted?
   - If so, what is their response/advice?

6. **Continue to Monitor Situation**
   Take steps to gather more information utilizing all in-country resources possible. If appropriate and not done so yet, contact the U.S. Consulate/Embassy regarding non-medical crises and follow the procedures they require. Ask to be updated on the crisis on a regular basis.

7. **Maintain contact with UHPD**
   In an ongoing crisis, continue to keep the UHPD updated on the status of the situation via telephone or email. This is essential as UHPD and Learning Abroad will develop a situation-specific response plan in consultation with appropriate offices on campus.
8. **Submit Incident Report**
   Within 24 hours of the incident, an Incident Report Form (see link below) must be completed:
   https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UnivofHouston

**Emergency Contacts and Resources**

It is important in the case of an emergency that you document for reporting and sharing relevant information. Faculty and students should keep an emergency contact information card on their person at all times.

**International Student Identity Card (ISIC)**

Emergency travel assistance services are provided by April Travel Protection if the student(s) and/or faculty have purchased ISIC (as required). If you need assistance, you can call toll-free 24 hours a day, 365 days a year at one of these telephone numbers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Worldwide Travel and Emergency Assistance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In the United States &amp; Canada: 855.743.6739</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Global Toll-Free Numbers for Travel Assistance (including Stress Less Benefits) and Concierge Services</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina: 0800-666-2556</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China (Northern): 1-0-800-713-1836</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland: 1800-630-134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan: 0066-338-21566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands: 0800-022-3187</td>
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<tr>
<td>United Kingdom: 800-0517174</td>
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Additional Emergency Contacts and Resources

University of Houston Police Department-UHPD
UHPD Emergency Assistance (24-7) 001-713-743-3333

Learning Abroad
Front Desk: 001-713-743-9167
Director’s (Kelly Kleinkort) email address: kmkleinkort@uh.edu

UH Counseling and Psychological Services-CAPS
001-713-743-5454

Overseas U.S. Citizens Services/Report a Lost or Stolen Passport
From the U.S. and Canada: 1-888-407-4747
From Overseas: 1-202-501-4444

Locate U.S. Consulate and Embassy Resources
https://www.usembassy.gov/
Appendix A
Sample Emergency Contact Information Card

For Faculty:

For Students: