



# Executive & Family Travel

## Global Travel Safety & Security

More and more business is being conducted on a global scale and international travel has become common for high level executives. Executives and their families are also drawn to foreign countries to spend their vacations on exotic beaches or to take in the sights and culture of different regions of the world. Unfortunately, traveling internationally can present a number of risks. It is necessary for international travelers to be diligent in safeguarding themselves and family members before, during, and after an international trip. The following list of basic safety concerns should be considered before entering a foreign country.

- Physical security – kidnapping, assault, robbery
- Information and electronic risks – laptops, phones
- Health issues – getting sick or injured, including family members or pets
- Emergency preparation – natural disasters, political instability
- Securing important documents – passport, important contact information, credit cards

Since many of Mindstar Security & Profiling clients travel overseas regularly, we have created an executive & family travel best practices document that can be used as a resource while planning your international travel.

## Dangerous Places

Just because a place has been labeled as “dangerous,” investments, businesses, and family members may be located in these places. Travel to a destination that is considered dangerous could be necessary and depending on career or personal expectations, the decision to travel to one of these places should be done carefully and with full knowledge and preparation. See some suggestions below and additional information on page 5.

- Find out how dangerous the location actually is and weigh the risk
- Consider taking a hostile environment security training course
- Plan routes carefully with alternate modes of transportation
- Have an escape or evacuation plan with several alternatives
- Attain additional travel insurance and arrange for Medevac services
- Consider having a personal locator beacon, satellite messenger or satellite phone
- Consider engaging a private extraction team
- Receive "real-time" travel alerts

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### Virtual Kidnapping

Scammers have been targeting US persons for ransom money, but the kidnappings are fake. The virtual abductors demand that money be wired, saying they were holding a relative hostage. "Virtual kidnappings" are a common scam in Latin America, especially in Mexico, Brazil and Guatemala. The scammers contact US persons via phone, email or text .



## Pre-Travel Planning

Traveling overseas for an executive and his or her family can involve a great deal of detail. While a broker, advisor or concierge travel agent may be making the arrangements for the actual trip, there are many aspects to pre-travel planning that may not be considered.

Maintaining a security posture from the planning stage through your return home is extremely important. Understand the real statistics and the environment, do not get a false sense of security and do not assume that since you have been there before and nothing happened...that nothing will.

Theft/ID theft, robbery, harassment, health issues/injury, lost passport/ID/credit cards or more nefarious crimes such as industrial espionage, kidnapping/hostage taking or assault can occur when traveling within and outside the U.S. However, dealing with a difficult situation may be more complicated when outside the U.S.

Planning should include:

- Location Intelligence
- Scheduling/Reservations (base this on prior trips – and avoid patterns)
- Travel Warnings
- Health Issues
- Travel Paperwork (i.e., visas, passports, Embassy notifications)
- Personal Paperwork, Copies of Documents
- Contacts and Itinerary
- Additional Insurance Packages and Medevac Services
- Packing and Understanding Risks

*If traveling with children, bring along an updated digital photograph of each child in the event that you become separated from them or if they become lost or missing.*

### Social Media & Devices

Avoid any mention of your planned trip on social media. Mentioning travel plans could potentially provide threat actors with a window of time that your home may be vacant.

Check your phone for geo-location and time/date stamp settings so if you do take pictures and post them post-trip, you will not disclose exactly where you were or when you were in that exact location.

Make sure you have a phone and phone service that will be available in your destination. Even if your current phone service offers packages for “foreign travel”, attain another “throw away” phone and number just for the purposes of travel in addition to proper adapters for electronics and a solar powered charger. Also consider attaining a personal locator beacon, satellite messenger or satellite phone for worldwide access.

## Recommendations: Before Your Trip

- Attain and read all current travel warnings for the country/city you are visiting prior to your trip. Change plans if necessary. Continue to receive any relevant travel updates from your executive protection or security team or from the US Department of State (DoS) and from other vendors who provide travel advice and/or services.

Travel warnings and alerts at - <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/country.html>

- Register all travelers with the US Department of State. When you sign up, you will automatically receive the most current information. The US DoS compiles about the country where you will be traveling. You will also receive updates, including Travel Warnings and Travel Alerts. By connecting with US DoS on the Travel Registration program, they will be able to assist you better in the case of an emergency, such as if you lose your passport or it is stolen while you are abroad. The US DoS also assists U.S. citizens in other emergencies, such as in natural disasters.

Sign up for STEP at - <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/go/step.html>

- Attain all vaccinations needed for the region/country you will be visiting. Different seasons may increase the probability of some illnesses or risks. Young children, older adults, and those with underlying health conditions may be more susceptible.

CDC health information at - <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list>

- Create a complete itinerary of travel – where, when, what flights, which hotels/lodging locations, contact numbers and provide this itinerary to your attorney, a trusted colleague, friend, or family member. Let them know who to contact, and give them instructions on how you want things to be handled in an emergency.
- Consider additional worldwide travel insurance or an emergency medical evacuation services, or “medevac” service. There are some destinations which do not have adequate medical or hospital services and leaving that country may save your life.



## Before Your Trip, continued

- If you are traveling by private plane or yacht and are not opting for a medical evacuation service, find and retain an in-country doctor, nurse or physician's assistant who has a US passport that could be employed if a medical professional is needed during self-evacuation back to the US.
- Make and keep a list or photocopy of all your credit cards, debit cards, bank accounts, passports, and investments -- the account numbers, expiration dates and telephone numbers of the customer service and fraud departments -- in a secure place (i.e., home safe, safety deposit box or attorney's lockbox -- somewhere in your home city). If children/young adults are traveling, parents should maintain a copy of their children's documentation.
- Make and keep a travel photocopy of your passport, one credit card and one additional ID card (i.e., driver's license). Keep these copies on your person at all times when traveling -- and not in your wallet. Use a moneybelt, waist wallet, ankle band, or shoe flap to store these documents. Keep a secondary copy of your passport and credit card numbers at home, in case someone needs to assist you from within the US. Also contact your credit card companies to advise them of your upcoming travel, ensuring that the cards remain operable.
- Consider hiring a personal protective detail service and personal driver/body guard for certain travel or regions where the risk and danger are high. Kidnapping and Ransom (K&R) insurance is also available and could be considered depending on your destination. One step further would be to engage with a "tactical extraction team" in the US in case of a dire situation.
- Do not put your home address on the luggage tags. Replace your tags with your corporate office address(es). This includes the luggage for your family. Use a corporate phone number and never include email addresses or any additional personal information on the exterior of your luggage.
- Separate out necessities from clothing and only put those things in checked luggage that you could afford to lose or do without. Carry-on bags and secure travel accessories should contain the absolute necessities (i.e., passport, cash, cellphone, laptop, credit card, ID's).
- Attain all needed prescription medications needed for the duration of your planned travel -- plus an additional week. If any emergency occurs it is possible that an additional prescription will not be able to be filled. Simple over-the-counter medications may not be available either so consider packing a first aid kit with pain relievers, bandages, bug spray and sunscreen, and anti-diarrhea medications. Do check the country/city you are visiting, as some medicines (both prescription and OTC) may be illegal.

## Traveling with Pets

Requirements for pet travel are set by the destination country. If you are travelling to another country and bringing along your pet you will need to meet the animal health requirements of the country you are visiting. Your local veterinarian can help you work through the pet export process. This can involve getting a health certificate, updating vaccinations, completing disease testing, and having your paperwork reviewed and endorsed by APHIS.

If you are taking your pet out of the United States to another country, whether permanently or for a visit, you should do the following:

Contact the APHIS, Veterinary Services (VS) District Office of the State from which your pet will be transported. Your Area Veterinarian-in-Charge can provide you with the current regulations, tests, required forms, documents, and inspections.

Check with the embassies of the destination countries as to specific requirements that must be met before a pet may be brought into the country as some countries may require quarantines.

Find a veterinarian in country that you can pre-establish services with in case your pet needs medical attention while traveling.

### Who can I contact for Pet Travel assistance?

National Import Export Services (NIES) Call Center: 301-851-3300,



## Helpful Travel Apps

These apps will assist with GPS, maps, weather alerts, crime alerts, finding restrooms, restaurants, or changing flights. Some of the recommended apps include:

- TripIt (iOS, Android, BB) stores all the logistics of your travel information including flights, hotel/car information, weather reports and time zone data.

- Currency Converter (iOS and Android) provides real time exchange rates with more than 180 currencies and allows you to add interest rate or international fees to purchases.

- Viber (iOS, Android, BB, Windows Phone 7) is an alternative to Skype which will allow you to make free calls and texts if you both have accounts in the app. In some countries, this is a good alternative to Skype.

- Find-ER (iOS) provides assistance in attaining medical help abroad. It will locate the nearest hospital wherever you are in the world and identify the fastest route to getting there by car, foot, or bike. Emergency contacts as well as medical information, allergies and your doctor's information can be stored.

Other apps and sources are found at - <http://triphackr.com/best-travel-apps-2014/>



## Upon Arrival

When arriving at your destination remember that you may be tired, excited, and jet-lagged. If you are unfamiliar with the location, language barriers and uncertainty could also be factors in adding to the fatigue. Sometimes the first thing travelers do is unpack and find the local cuisine! However, the arrival period is just as important as pre-travel planning and rushing out to eat or to experience the local environment should be delayed for a bit to ensure safety and security.

Before you leave your vacation home, hotel, yacht or other residence consider the following tips specifically if you are traveling anywhere outside the U.S. or Europe:

- Avoid eating food and drink bought from street vendors.
- Do not drink beverages with ice cubes which may contain contaminants.
- Bottled Water: Always check the actual plastic seal and squeeze the bottle for leakage.

- If you or your children are going to drink soda, drink from cans only not glass bottles which may have not been through an FDA equivalent sterilization process.

No matter where you travel:

- Never leave your passport (or other valuables) lying around in a hotel room, in a private airport or "Club Lounge" - keep it in a safe, or on your person.
- Always secure your luggage with a lock - even if it is cheap and plastic. The idea is to know if the luggage has been tampered with or touched.



## Recommendations: During Your Stay

- Take a post-it note and write your name, contact information, etc...including the phone number for the US Embassy in the region you are visiting, phone numbers for insurance medevac, etc... and place in your shoe under the insert. Do the same thing for your spouse/children - write your child's name and your hotel number on each post-it note; include a close friend's, relative's or business associate's contact information on the post-it (preferably someone who is in country), along with the address and phone number of the US Embassy/Consulate. If you ever have to literally "run for your life," you may have to leave bags behind, but you will most likely still be wearing your shoes.
- Stay with your luggage until the luggage is checked and/or through the security checkpoints. If you must put your bag down, keep one foot on the handle or secure between your feet. Even if you are flying into a private/executive airport, you will still have to go through customs.
- Try to travel with the emptiest wallet possible. Limit credit cards to one or two and do not carry anything you do not need. Bring/wear limited or no jewelry.
- Never show your money in public. Exchange funds with reputable and recognized exchangers. Do not give money to panhandlers or beggars. Attain host country cash prior to arrival in country, if possible. Watch for scams on the street. In many countries children working with adults are notorious as pickpockets. Children traveling need to be very wary of other children.
- When traveling for business, do not wear or display company badges or name tags in public. Do not even show the lanyard.
- When traveling to and from the hotel or your temporary residence, vary your schedule (if possible) and your routes every day. Do not create a pattern within or outside the hotel/residence or place of work. Vacationers should do the same.
- Do not expose your US passport in public. Show the ID only to officials in customs, at the airport, or to authorities. If you need to show ID at the hotel, do so discretely.



## During Your Stay, continued

- In some countries, assume that your hotel room and/or conference rooms will be electronically monitored by audio and video. Conduct business communications as if everything you say/do from that location is compromised.
- When driving to destinations, only drive in well lit, well-traveled areas. Do not drive alone in remote locations. Only rent cars from reputable, known, brand-name companies. If taking taxi cabs, do not get in unmarked vehicles. If you have a cellphone with a camera, take a quick photo of the tags and/or driver and any driver identification that is visible. If there is an accident or incident, this information may be valuable. Set up a personal driver and car service if available.
- If you are ever stopped by local authorities, ask for their identification cards or badges. If in doubt, ask for his/her supervisor. While waiting for a supervisor, call the US Embassy – they may also assist in verifying the authority as well as indicating to them that you were stopped and may need additional assistance.
- If using your own means of travel (i.e., private aircraft, yacht), do note that in certain locations people will take note of your entrance, the tail number of your aircraft or the name of your vessel. Additional information about these vehicles can be found online, sometimes including the name(s) of the owners and the travel patterns of the vessels. Make sure the Captain, Chief Pilot and crew are not disclosing additional information inadvertently. Marinas and hangars can be quiet or empty at night, take extra care and precautions when traveling or moving about in the evening hours.



*“According to the FBI, almost 200 Americans have been kidnapped in Mexico alone this past year.”*

## World's Most Dangerous Places

Each year the Institute for Economics and Peace determines the levels of unrest of 162 of the world's largest countries. Measuring the countries' relative peacefulness or dangerousness is a complex process based on evaluating a wide range of indicators. The Institute uses 22 indicators in total, including number of external and internal conflicts, political instability, terrorist activity, number of homicides, number of kidnappings and heavy weapons capabilities.

The top rated most dangerous countries are located in the Middle East and include: Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Libya, Yemen, Pakistan, Lebanon, Israel, and Egypt. While those countries are not surprising to due war and terrorist activities other countries are ranked dangerous due to criminal activity or cyber threat.

The U.S. Department of State warns U.S. citizens about the risk of traveling to certain places in Mexico due to threats to safety and security posed by organized criminal groups in the country. U.S. citizens have been the victims of violent crimes, such as kidnapping, carjacking, and robbery by organized criminal groups in various Mexican states and cities.

More than 130 kidnappings of U.S. citizens were reported to the U.S. Embassy and consulates in Mexico between January and

November of 2014. Kidnappings in Mexico have included traditional, "express," and "virtual" kidnappings. Victims of traditional kidnappings are physically abducted and held captive until a ransom is paid for release. "Express" kidnappings are those in which a victim is abducted for a short time and forced to withdraw money, usually from an ATM, then released.

In China, danger can stem from cyber threat or intellectual property theft. Protect all electronics from theft as device theft is rampant. Some tips include:

- Google maps and Garmin maps do not match GPS orientation in China - they appear to be 50-200 meters off. The satellite images are accurate, as are Open Streetmaps.
- Electronics – The Chinese government (customs, hotel staff, phone company, Internet) will access your data. Assume that everything you type, text, and say will be surveilled and compromised.
- While either walking either on streets or travelling by taxi, take care of your personal belongings. Pick Pockets are everywhere especially in Beijing and Shanghai.

### Take Extra Precautions

In addition to the Middle East, If business or personal travel takes you or your family to the following countries, additional security planning and professional protection may be required: Ukraine, Mexico, India, Colombia, and Russia.

Several designated “most dangerous” countries in Africa include:

Zimbabwe, Sudan, Nigeria, Somalia, Ethiopia, Ivory Coast, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, and The Central African Republic.



### Re-Secure Your Home

- Make sure the home and property alarm systems are working properly.
- Check the security logs or video footage to see who entered your home during your absence.
- Talk to home staff (i.e., pet-sitters, estate managers, housekeepers) to see if anything unusual occurred while you were away.
- Check valuables contained in home safes or other locations. Verify that everything is accounted for and untampered.
- If anything unusual happened, change passcodes and/or locks.

## Returning Home

There are a few things to do once you have returned home. Now is also a good time to post any vacation or travel photographs to social media—just remember, make sure what is posted does not contain GPS data or time and date stamps. If you travel to the same place each month or year, a pattern could be established.

- Monitor your bank and credit card accounts for suspicious activity. Your bank or credit card accounts could show signs of being compromised days or even weeks after your trip. Contact your bank and credit card companies upon returning home in order to let them know you are back in the United States and that any further charges incurred overseas may indicate fraud.
- Monitor your health. Unfortunately, travelers sometimes return home with more than just souvenirs. A mildly upset stomach or head cold probably isn't anything to be concerned with but more severe symptoms of illness may require a trip to the doctor.
- If you have been in a country where malaria is a concern and develop a fever within a month after you return, it is important to see a doctor immediately. Most likely your fever is caused by a less serious illness but because malaria is a serious medical issue, your doctor must first rule it out. A fever could still be malaria even if you took antimalarial medicine because the medicine is not 100% effective. Most malaria develops within 30 days, but rare cases can lie dormant for a year or longer. So make sure to inform your doctor about any travel you have done, even if it was several months ago.

### Mindstar Security & Profiling

Mindstar Security & Profiling specializes in security solutions for family offices, high profile/high net worth executives, and their families. Our customized focus includes the security trifecta of Internet/Social Media Safety, Physical Security Risk and IT security.

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