

# KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

## Considerations for selecting travel destinations

This guidance document is intended to help BYU-Idaho employees understand the range of considerations and complexities associated with international travel, particularly to higher-risk destinations. This document is non-exhaustive, and travel to certain regions may pose risks not outlined below.

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### 1. Safety and Security Concerns

Travel to certain regions may expose you to elevated safety and security risks, including but not limited to:

- **Political instability:** Protests, coups, and civil unrest can lead to unsafe conditions and sudden changes in government policy.
- **Violent crime or terrorism:** Some countries or regions experience higher rates of violent crime, kidnapping, or terrorism targeting foreigners.
- **Natural disasters:** Earthquakes, hurricanes, and other natural events may be more common in certain areas, and local infrastructure may be poorly equipped to respond.

Before you submit a travel request, check the [Travel Restriction List](#) on the BYU Travel Smart webpage. While BYU-Idaho approval processes differ slightly from BYU's, we use the same "green-yellow-red" classification list for initial safety assessment. "Green" countries are those most likely to be approved for travel. "Yellow" countries require heightened scrutiny and may require approval outside of your direct line management. Travel to "red" countries is generally not approved.

Additionally, even though a country may be on the "green" or "yellow" list, specific regions or cities within that country may not be safe for travel. As you select the specific locations within a country that you plan to travel to, Travel Administration as well as upper online management will assess and review specific areas using all available resources.

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### 2. Additional Levels of Approval for Certain Countries

In addition to all university approvals, travel to some countries or areas within a country may require approval from the local Area Presidency or other Church offices. While the list of specific locations requiring such approval changes over time, areas where the Church is newly established, has not been formally recognized, or is working closely with the government on significant projects are examples of the types of areas likely to require this additional level of approval.

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### 3. Visa Requirements and Complexity

Visa processes vary widely by country and can be time-consuming and uncertain. Travelers should consider:

- **Lead time:** Some visas take weeks or months to process.
- **Type of visa:** Teaching, research, or attending conferences may each require different visa classifications.
- **Documentation:** Requirements may include invitation letters, background checks, or financial disclosures.
- **Risk of denial:** A visa can be denied without explanation, potentially jeopardizing the planned travel.

If you have questions about what type of visa would be required for your trip, please contact university legal counsel at (208) 496-1119.

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### 4. Import and Export Controls, Medicines, and other Personal Belongings

U.S. law imposes strict controls on the export of certain technologies, equipment, software, and data. Travelers must:

- Avoid bringing export-controlled items without appropriate licenses.
- Be cautious about discussions or presentations involving sensitive research.
- Understand that laptops and other devices may be subject to inspection or seizure at borders.

Violations of export control laws can result in severe penalties for individuals and the University. The [Bureau of Industry and Security](#) is a good starting point for familiarizing yourself with import/export restrictions. If you have questions about the import/export processor need to import or export goods as part of your travel, you should contact the Purchasing Department at ext. 2340 before submitting your travel application to determine whether such transactions are possible.

Additionally, even if you don't plan to import or export goods, many countries have specific laws about the types and quantities of items individual travelers may bring into or take out of the country. Common restrictions include limitations on money, medicines (such as insulin, heart medication, etc.) firearms, religious artifacts, and fruits and vegetables. Before traveling, you should check local government travel agency guidance.

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### 5. Medical Infrastructure and Access to Care

Access to quality medical care varies significantly around the world. Travelers should consider:

- **Availability of emergency services**
- **Language barriers in healthcare settings**
- **Pre-existing medical conditions** that may be difficult to manage abroad
- **Need for travel insurance** that covers medical evacuation or care in private hospitals
- **Geo Blue International Health Insurance is required for employees and students participating in university sponsored travel.** Geo Blue covers medical, political, and natural disaster evacuation. Questions about this insurance and enrollment should be directed to Travel Administration at 208-496-1974. Spouses and family members are eligible to be enrolled with Geo Blue at a higher but discounted rate. The premium will be charged to the employee's personal BYU-Idaho account. It is recommended that you check with DMBA on what kind of coverage is available to your spouse/family traveling with you.

It is advisable to identify hospitals or clinics near the travel destination in advance.

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## 6. Legal and Cultural Norms

Unfamiliar legal systems and cultural practices may increase risk. In some countries:

- Behavior considered normal in the U.S. may be illegal or culturally offensive.
- Travelers could face legal jeopardy for speech, attire, or personal associations.
- Due process protections may be limited or nonexistent.

A basic understanding of local laws and customs is critical to minimizing legal and reputational risks.

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## 7. Cybersecurity and Data Protection

Traveling with electronic devices poses cybersecurity risks:

- Devices may be subject to search or confiscation.
- Data could be compromised through unsecured networks or surveillance.
- Use of encryption or VPNs may be restricted in some countries.

Travelers are encouraged to consult with IT before travel and consider using loaner devices where appropriate.

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## 8. Institutional Liability and Insurance

Travel to high-risk destinations may expose the University or the Church to liability or reputational harm. Travelers should:

- Ensure the trip aligns with institutional priorities and values.
- Confirm that travel is covered by the University's insurance policies.
- Coordinate with Risk Management and Legal Counsel as needed. (Risk Management? Spencer or you? Or Travel Administration)

Additionally, extended stays in one country or multiple trips to the same country may trigger tax, registration, or other legal obligations for the university in that country. Employees should avoid regular travel to the same international location or multiple trips to one country in a short period of time.

If you are traveling to a country you have visited multiple times or for an extended period of time, check with Josh Figueira for clarification.

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