



# Travel Checklists

## Staying safe overseas

British nationals take millions of trips overseas every year, most of which pass without any kind of incident. And, many British people enjoy living overseas. However, it is important to remember that outside the UK:

- you are less likely to be familiar with local conditions and risks;
- you may be more exposed to a variety of threats such as crime; and
- support which you could freely get in the UK may not be available or may be very expensive.

So, to stay safe and secure abroad, and to be prepared in case things go wrong, it is important to **take a few simple precautions before you go and while you are there**. These should include the following.

### Before you go

- **We provide information** to help British nationals make informed decisions about their safety abroad (see [www.fco.gov.uk/travel](http://www.fco.gov.uk/travel) or call **0845 850 2829**). This includes information on threats to personal safety arising from political unrest, conflicts, terrorist activities, anti-British demonstrations, lawlessness, violence, natural disasters, epidemics, and aircraft and shipping safety. We review the information on our travel website for every country every month and following any significant incident. We will revise it and reissue it once every three months at least. In a developing crisis we update the information much more regularly and, if necessary, several times a day (see note 1 below). Our travel website also contains important general information on safety abroad, under the heading '[Know Before You Go](#)'. You should also keep an eye on the news for reports of any problems in places that you plan to visit.
- Always make sure that you have **full travel insurance**. Anyone travelling within the European Economic Area (see note 2) or Switzerland should also get a **free European Health Insurance Card** (EHIC) which entitles you to some reduced or free emergency care – but you will still need travel

insurance. You can apply for an EHIC on-line at [www.ehic.org.uk](http://www.ehic.org.uk) or [www.dh.gov.uk/travellers](http://www.dh.gov.uk/travellers), by phone on 0845 606 2030 or at post offices. If you are going to live abroad, find out whether the UK has a social security agreement with the country where you plan to live and what services are covered. For more information, check the Department for Work and Pensions' website ([www.dwp.gov.uk](http://www.dwp.gov.uk)). Unless your employer provides a health-care plan, you should consider private health-care plans to cover treatment in the country where you live. You cannot expect public funds to be used to pay for people who have not taken out insurance, whether going on holiday or going to live overseas, and you should remember that the costs of, for example, a medical emergency abroad can be very expensive.

- Make sure your **insurance is up to date, valid for the entire trip and covers everyone** who is travelling. Check exactly what is covered, for example, cover for all the activities you want to do, including any dangerous sports, all your luggage and equipment, personal injury as a result of terrorist activity, and legal costs. You should also look carefully at **exemptions** to the insurance policy, including any relating to pre-existing medical conditions, or alcohol and drugs. Be sure to tell your insurer about any **pre-existing medical** conditions you may have, including any psychiatric illness. The policy may not be valid if you fail to do this, resulting in you or your family and friends having to pay for any treatment yourself. Remember to take the policy number and the 24-hour emergency number with you.
- Make sure that all your **vaccinations are up to date** and find out about any other suggested **medical advice** by visiting your health-care provider. Follow this advice and be aware of possible health risks during your trip. Websites such as [www.dh.gov.uk/travellers](http://www.dh.gov.uk/travellers) are also a useful source of information. Pack enough **supplies of any medication** that you are taking in your hand luggage. You should keep your medication in its original packaging and take any prescription documents with you. Check with the nearest embassy of the country you are going to (which may be based in London or another European city) that your medication will be legal in that country and find out whether you will need to take a doctor's letter with you. For longer trips, visit your dentist and optician before travelling.
- Fill in the contact details at the **back of your passport** for your next-of-kin or someone who can be contacted in an emergency. Apart from your passport, take another form of identification with you (preferably one with a photograph, such as a driving licence).

- Make sure you are aware of the **immigration and customs controls** of the country you are travelling to, including any necessary visas. You should note that for many countries your passport needs to be valid for at least six months after the date you travel. In the UK, you can get on-line information on how to get a passport from the [Identity and Passport Service](http://www.passport.gov.uk) (www.passport.gov.uk) or by calling 0870 521 0410. It is your responsibility to make sure you have the correct visa for your stay in another country. If you are experiencing difficulties entering a country, for example if you do not have a visa or your passport is not valid, it is unlikely that consular staff will be able to help you enter the country. They cannot get involved in another country's immigration policy or procedures.
- **Tell someone** where you are going and when you expect to be back. Leave an itinerary and details of where you might be able to be contacted during your time abroad. You should also make two copies of your passport (including pages with relevant visas), insurance details and any other important travel documents. Leave one copy at home with a family member or a reliable friend and take one copy with you, packed separately from your passport.
- **Take enough money** for your trip and some back-up funds, such as traveller's cheques, some cash (sterling or US dollars) or credit cards. Before you leave, check that your cards are valid, and find out how you can replace them and your traveller's cheques if they are lost or stolen. Keep a separate note of their numbers and of the number you would need to ring to stop any credit cards if they are lost or stolen.
- Buy a good **travel guide** that includes basic information on local laws and customs. Talk to your travel agent or tour operator about possible risks.
- If you are planning to drive, make sure your **UK driving licence is current and valid**. Make sure you know the driving laws, licence requirements and driving conditions in the country you are visiting. In some countries you will need to have an international driving permit as well as your UK licence. Never drink and drive. Be aware that in many countries there are on-the-spot fines for traffic offences.
- If you are travelling in uncertain local conditions or remote areas, you should consider contacting the local British Embassy, High Commission or Consulate to see if you need to **register** with them. In some countries, our travel website may recommend that all British nationals register in this way. For some countries, you can register on-line at www.fco.gov.uk. Contact details of our missions are also

available on this website.

### **Special considerations**

- Travel can be tiring and difficult for everyone. But some travellers may want to plan trips with particular care. As well as the above general information, some travellers may have to take into account other considerations depending on their circumstances. These travellers might include:
  - women travelling alone;
  - hajj pilgrims;
  - young travellers;
  - backpackers and independent travellers;
  - gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender travellers; and
  - travellers with disabilities.

Consult these pages for checklists with some suggested points they might want to take into account when planning trips overseas.

Note 1: While we take particular care in preparing our travel information, that information is general and may change. Neither the UK Government nor any government official can accept liability for injury, loss or damage arising from any statement contained in it.

Note 2: The European Economic Area is made up of all 25 members of the European Union plus Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.