

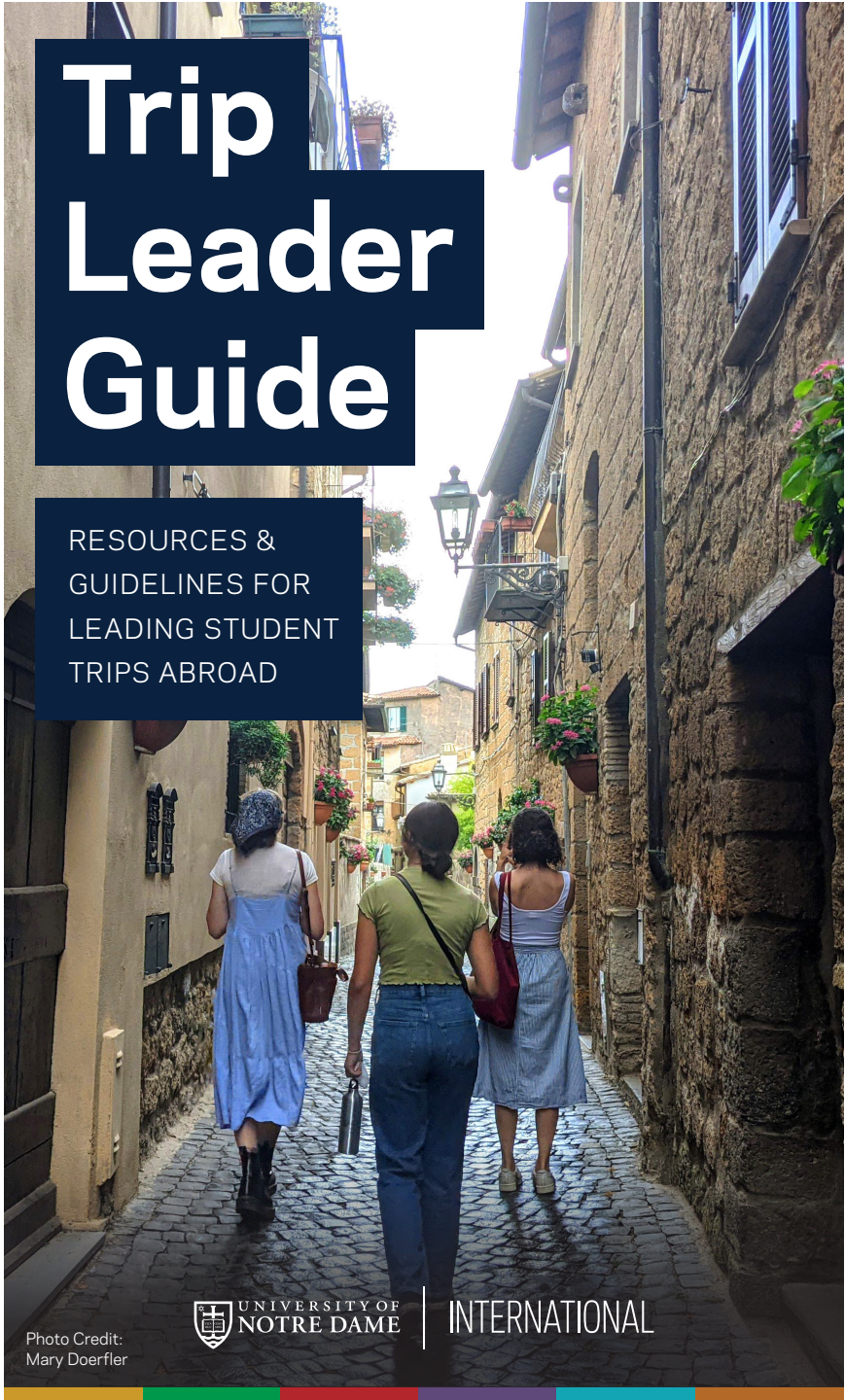
# Trip Leader Guide

RESOURCES &  
GUIDELINES FOR  
LEADING STUDENT  
TRIPS ABROAD

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Mary Doerfler



INTERNATIONAL





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Universities have a duty of care to anticipate foreseeable health & security risks and take reasonable precautions to protect students, faculty, & staff from foreseeable risk of injury, disease or death on university-sponsored programs, activities, or business. No one can eliminate all risks, but they can often be sufficiently mitigated. Preparing yourself and providing a thorough pre-departure orientation for students that includes destination health and safety information and advice, behavioral guidelines, and resources, are some of the most important risk mitigation steps you can take.

As an international trip leader, your role in student oversight is much more comprehensive than on campus. You are often the sole, or one of a few, Notre Dame representative on the ground. Notre Dame International (NDI) is here to assist you. We are your partners in this endeavor, and look forward to working with you to prepare our students for engaged global citizenship.

This guide will provide you with an overview of Notre Dame resources, important emergency contact information, pre-departure and post-arrival checklists, emergency response guidelines and incident-specific scenarios.

## PART 1: PREPARATION

Good trip preparation and pre-departure orientations will pay dividends and set the tone. Take this time before travel to become familiar with your host country, program details and local resources.

### Core Responsibilities of Trip Leaders:

- Research your destination
- Conduct thorough orientations and pre-departure meetings
- Adhere to University of Notre Dame policies
- Foster a safe environment
- Support the students
- Provide NDI with phone numbers & a detailed itinerary in your Travel Registration
- Resolve disciplinary issues during the trip
- Respond to emergencies

*One of your main responsibilities as a trip leader is to support the students and get in contact with resources as needed. On-the-ground resources are often best, and plentiful campus resources are discussed throughout this guide.*

### University Compliance & Travel Requirements:

- Review international travel requirements on the NDI website. Trip leaders — in coordination with ND — are responsible for ensuring that the students traveling abroad have fulfilled all requirements prior to departure.
- Every traveler is required to individually register their travel. Email the Travel Registrar ([travelregistry@nd.edu](mailto:travelregistry@nd.edu)) at least one month prior to departure to coordinate a seamless travel registration process for the student group. By doing so, the University will know who to contact in an emergency & be able to reach you to provide emergency support.
- Learn about international travel health insurance coverage for your destination. For faculty and staff, please visit the Office of Human Resources Benefits While Traveling Abroad and the NDI International Health Insurance page. Please note that undergraduate students are required to have GeoBlue health insurance for the duration of the trip.

- Register with STEP (Smart Traveler Enrollment program). Undergraduate students are required to register with STEP as part of their travel registration, and we highly recommend that all traveling graduate students, faculty, and staff register.

## Country Information & Trip Prep:

### **LOCAL KNOWLEDGE IS CRITICAL. GET TO KNOW:**

- The students - understanding group dynamics is very important.
- Culture & customs, including laws, of the destination country
- Safety & security information & advice (U.S. Department of State & International SOS)
- Travel health information & advice (C.D.C. & International SOS)
- Logistics like safe and secure accommodations and transportation, tour guides, partners on-the-ground, hospitals, etc.
- Practicalities like finances and communication

*Transportation and water-related activities are the leading causes of death for healthy Americans abroad. Vet transportation and logistics partners before booking.*

*Do not hire or work with a company or people you feel may be putting students and yourself at risk. If you sense something is not proceeding according to plan with a hired company, research the circumstances and do not move forward until you are comfortable.*

### **TRIP INFORMATION:**

- Prepare and distribute a comprehensive day-to-day trip itinerary, including the names, addresses and contact information of all accommodations, and important travel information (if the group is not traveling together).
- Consider any destination or program-specific rules and communicate these to students in advance
- Compile an emergency preparedness roster (EPR) to include important information like student contact details and emergency contact numbers, health disclosures and special accommodations, flight details and passport information.

## **STAY IN TOUCH:**

- Think about communication methods for how to stay connected as a group, especially during free time
- Connect with alumni in the area
- Prepare and distribute emergency contact information to students, including numbers they can call or text throughout the trip. The templates provided on NDI's website include space for you to fill in local resources such as 911 equivalents, site partners, your telephone number while in-country, and diplomatic mission contact information.
- Because phones often lose connection and batteries can run down while traveling, we recommend you print this document in addition to distributing it electronically.

## **LEARN ABOUT DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION ABROAD:**

Why is it important to train onsite staff and faculty leaders about diversity issues? Because our students are increasingly diverse and those identities travel with students abroad! Intentional diversity preparation is critical to group dynamics, community-building, student success, and even student safety.

### **Step 1: Understanding your own positionality**

- Learn about, understand, unpack, and make meaning of your social identities. Review this [Social Identity Wheel Exercise](#) and the corresponding [Social Identity Wheel Handout](#) for reference if you would like help getting started!
- Leverage campus and community resources
- Own your intentions and design your program to include reflection on social identities

### **Step 2: Cultivate “Brave Spaces” with your student group where they can share and engage deeply and authentically. Keep in mind the following:**

*What is a Brave Space? A community space where different points of view on a journey of learning and growing are supported and engaged. Community members engage in critical dialogue through conscious questioning and active listening. While all are expected to make their best effort to be respectful, there is an understanding that someone may say something that results in unintentional offense and hurt feelings for those around them. A brave space is one in which we take risks, doing so with care and compassion.*

- Challenge yourself and your students to lean into the discomfort
- Respect your students boundaries
- Create an environment that allows students to ask critical questions and actively listen
- Respect each individual's level of engagement with the topic
- Recognize that everyone has bias; conscious or unconscious
- Ensure all discussion or education related to diversity doesn't become the responsibility of only those who have been identified by the group as "diverse"
- Be aware of themes that could come up including social identities, privilege, conscious and unconscious bias, etc.
- Create an environment of trust with you and amongst group through:
  - Respectful and open communication
  - Proactively discussing issues of race, gender, and class in study abroad. Be sure to discuss any micro or macro aggressions that occur.
    - Addressing issues as they arise
    - Encouraging vulnerability
    - Being inclusive and patient
    - Having individual conversations with each student throughout the program
    - Paying attention to dynamics and reporting all things big or small

**Step 3: Consider the following questions ahead of the program:**

- What funding sources are students relying on? Are there aspects of the program that may not be financially accessible to all students?
- Will there be students of color in your group? How will you address racism and discrimination with the group of students?
- How will you respond if a student is called a racial or ethnic slur by another student? By a host country national?
- How are women/men perceived in the host country? Do people in the host country have certain stereotypes of women/men in general and American women/men in particular?
- Are there specific concerns for members of the LGBTQ+ community in the host country (i.e. laws in place, cultural norms, etc.)?
- How will you ensure you are using appropriate language and pronouns with your students?
- How many students have traveled internationally prior to this program? What challenges could arise for those who are traveling for the first time?

- Are there any aspects of the program that may not be accessible to a student with a mobility concern?
- Are there certain accommodations (learning, physical, etc.) that need to be made for any students?
- Will there be time and a place for students to attend religious services?
- Will it be possible for a student with allergies, food aversions or dietary restrictions to be easily accommodated during meals?
- What are some of the things you might do if someone comes to you with mental health struggles (i.e. suicidality, sexual assault, depression, anxiety, etc.)?

## Host A Pre-Departure Orientation For Students

Provide a destination-specific pre-departure health and safety orientation for your student group traveling abroad. NDI can provide this orientation to individuals and groups upon request. Contact [travelregistry@nd.edu](mailto:travelregistry@nd.edu).

Topics to be covered in the student orientation include:

### TRIP LOGISTICS

- Official program dates - Reminder that neither you nor the University are responsible for their well-being if they arrive early or stay after the conclusion of the program.
- Arrival/departure information - Include information on flights and airport pickup/dropoff. Ensure they are aware if they need to depart their home country a day early to arrive on time!
- Program fee and anticipated costs - Include what is covered and what is not
- Program housing - What is the layout? Do they have roommates? Is there a curfew? Are meals included? Etc.
- Passports and visas - Remind students to keep a copy of their passport with them (hard copy or digital) and include instructions on how students can obtain a visa if necessary.
- Entry requirements - Include any specific entry requirements to the host country, including any important travel documents students may need to enter.
- Finances - Discuss local currency exchange, how to withdraw money, cash vs. card economy, notifying bank of travel, scholarships available, etc.
- DuLac - Reminder that all DuLac policies apply while abroad



## HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Health abroad - Discuss health insurance abroad, any required vaccines for country entry, traveling with prescriptions, mental health awareness, available resources, etc.
- Safety abroad - Discuss travel registration, best practices based on country-specific rules/cultural norms, security plan, situational awareness, etc.
- Insurance and assistance abroad - All students are required to enroll in GeoBlue international insurance, a comprehensive medical and evacuation plan for their time abroad that covers 100% of reasonable costs among other benefits. All university travelers have access to information, advice and assistance services of International SOS, the university's international assistance partner. For more details, please visit the NDI Travel and Safety website.

## PROGRAM SPECIFICS

- Location profile - Provide details about location and basic geography or highlights
- Excursions - Include information about included excursions, provide a sample itinerary if available.
- Academics - Include course descriptions, any pre-program reading or assignments, assigned texts, course registration, etc.
- Packing - Are there certain items students need to bring or should not bring?
- Communication - Cell phone policy (are they required?), recommended apps (WhatsApp, WeChat, etc.), availability of wifi, reminder to develop a communication plan for staying in touch with family/friends back home, etc., emphasize to read all messages from STEP and International SOS including responding to any requests to confirm their safety
- Returnee - When possible, bringing in a student who has already participated in the program in the past can be very helpful!

*For more preparation information and advice, please visit the NDI Travel and Safety website. For questions or concerns about leading an international trip, please contact [travelregistry@nd.edu](mailto:travelregistry@nd.edu).*

## PART 2: ON-SITE

The on-site phase is practical and hands-on. Remember to be mindful of student well-being and to trust your instincts.

### Once you have arrived in country:

1. Test your communication plan as soon as possible. Have students test phones for their ability to receive calls, texts, emails, or use communication apps.
2. Hold an arrival orientation. Continue the tone you set on campus of good communication among the group. The first morning after a good night's sleep is a good time unless you get started right away. The orientation should include:
  - Behavioral expectations and communication protocols, including a clear policy on staying together and acceptable activities for free time. If you set specific rules/expectations, you must enforce them. Emphasize that incidents and violations of du Lac may result in dismissal from the program. Typically with the overuse of alcohol, the first warning is verbal, the second warning is written, and the third warning results in dismissal. If the first offense is egregious, immediate dismissal is acceptable (call NDI for assistance).
  - Share any predetermined emergency meeting locations and plans, including directions for how to get to the accommodation site.
  - Review any important health, safety, laws and cultural awareness information and advice for your location. A student's actions are always governed by the laws of any country to which that student travels.
  - Reiterate emergency contact information
  - Detail where and when it is safe to jog or exercise, and what is appropriate attire for your location.
  - Reinforce that students are not to engage in high-risk activities, especially those not supported by GeoBlue insurance. These include self-driving of any kind, scuba diving, hang gliding, bungee jumping, illegal activities, and taking part in group demonstrations and protests.
  - Encourage students to remain in contact with their families and friends
  - Make it clear that students can and should come to you with any medical, interpersonal, cultural adjustment, or emotional issues they

may be experiencing. Sometimes talking it through with you may be all they need.

3. Pay attention to notification from STEP and Notre Dame, including our assistance provider International SOS. If you are asked to check in, do so as soon as possible.
4. Promote a healthy amount of sleep and staying hydrated.
5. Address immediately any negative dynamics that may develop either among/between students on the trip that may result in harassment or assault.
6. Pay attention to headaches, stomachaches, flu-like symptoms, disorientation, and anyone that seems not to be him/herself. These are circumstances where you need to check in with students often in case medical help is needed. If you aren't sure whether this is necessary, we recommend that you seek medical assistance sooner rather than later. If professional help becomes necessary, arrange for access to counseling and pastoral care for students. GeoBlue has vetted physical and mental health providers who speak English in most major cities. NDI can assist with identifying these resources in advance of the trip.

## **Returning to campus:**

Notre Dame International continues to improve its resources for trip leaders, and your input is extremely valuable. Please contact Travel Registry at [travel-registry@nd.edu](mailto:travel-registry@nd.edu) if you have comments, concerns, or suggestions.

## **PART 3: EMERGENCY INCIDENTS**

No matter the amount of preparation, emergencies can happen abroad just as easily as they happen in the US. The difference is you may be in an unfamiliar environment and therefore less acquainted with the protocols and resources available to you in an emergency in a foreign country. Oftentimes, you or a trip assistant are the first people that students turn to in an emergency for help so preparation is paramount.

In order, the four most common emergencies reported for U.S. students on international education are:

1. Pre-existing mental or medical health issues.
2. Excessive use of alcohol & related poor decisions.

3. Vehicular incidents, including both watercraft and road vehicles. This includes walking out in front of traffic going in an unexpected direction.
4. Sexual Assault.

## **Emergencies**

Report all emergencies both to local authorities and NDPD. Examples of incidents/emergencies to be reported immediately to NDPD at +1 (574) 631-5555:

- Death, life-threatening injury/illness, or missing person
- Sexual violence or related incidents
- Civil/political and natural disaster evacuation
- Serious illness or injury/hospitalization (including drug overdose and mental health emergencies)
- Any incident or situation that adversely affects the trip leader(s) and will leave the students alone without supervision

## **CONTACT NUMBERS**

Notre Dame Police Department, monitored 24/7  
+1 (574) 631-5555

International SOS, monitored 24/7

+1 (215) 942-8478 (ND membership number: 398TA4831047)

Notre Dame International, monitored during business hours

+1 (574) 631-1138

GeoBlue Health Insurance outside the U.S.

+1 (610) 263-2847

## **CLERY ACT**

The Clery Act mandates that crimes be reported to campus authorities in areas that the university owns or controls, including rented or leased space in a hotel or student housing. Clery-reportable crimes include: hate crimes, arrests, arson, theft, assault, burglary, robbery, sex offences, manslaughter and murder. If a Clery Act reportable crime occurs, immediately contact the NDPD 24-hour line at +1 (574) 631-5555.

## **SEXUAL ASSAULT & MISCONDUCT**

As trip leader, you are a mandatory reporter and non-confidential resource for sexual assault and related behaviors.

This means:

1. If a student shares information with you regarding a sexual assault or related incident you should identify yourself as a non-confidential resource.
2. Your primary role is to assist all students in accessing resources, but you are also bound by federal law to share information with subject matter experts on campus.
3. In the event of a sexual assault, contact the NDPD 24-hour line at +1 (574) 631-5555. This will alert appropriate campus resources and initiate University protocols. Do not attempt to contact the family; this will be handled by the appropriate unit on campus.

## **MENTAL HEALTH & MEDICAL HEALTH ISSUES**

*If you would like assistance pre-identifying in-network hospitals before your trip begins, contact GeoBlue's international assistance number directly at +1 (610) 263-2847 or ask NDI to assist. A GeoBlue in-network hospital or care facility is optimal but not necessary in an emergency. Private-operated facilities are favored over public options.*

### ***When should I accompany a student who is going to the hospital or clinic?***

Your responsibility in a student medical or mental health emergency is to get them the support and care they need. Oftentimes, that may mean accompanying them to a hospital or clinic in a foreign country. Err on the side of caution and use your best judgment based on the student's frame of mind and current situation. Monitor the affected student's treatment and update NDI, especially if a student is hospitalized. NDI will alert the appropriate campus resources and initiate University protocols.

## **IF SOMETHING HAPPENS**

Students should be encouraged to speak with you about any issues they encounter while participating in the program. However, keep in mind that you are a mandatory reporter and non-confidential resource. This does not mean the conversation must stop; you can use the following types of language:

- "I'm sorry this happened to you."
- "This is not your fault."
- "Thank you for telling me."
- "What kind of help do you need?"
- "When you are ready, help is available."

Try to remember the acronym ALGEE:

- Approach, assess and assist with any crisis
- Listen and communication non-judgmentally
- Give support and information
- Encourage appropriate professional help (offer for your or a trip assistant to accompany them)
- Encourage other support systems

## **PART 4: PRACTICE SCENARIOS**

### **Conduct**

When students fail to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner, it is your responsibility as trip leader to address the situation and appropriately counsel those individuals involved.

1. Learn about the situation by discussing, as time allows, with as many individuals involved as possible.
2. Recognize that conduct issues affect both the individuals and the community.
3. Be specific with expectations for improved conduct and potential consequences, including possible dismissal from the program.
4. Consult with on-campus resources such as NDI as needed and develop follow-up plans.

### **Drug and Alcohol Use**

#### **Contact NDI.**

Any illegal drug use or possession is reason for immediate dismissal from the program. It is critical that students understand they are in another country and are bound by those laws. If they are arrested, Notre Dame's ability to help them will be limited.

If a student is found to be intoxicated or abusing alcohol, first ensure the student's safety, but also know that alcohol abuse can result in dismissal from the program— especially if it has a negative impact on the community.

## **Robbery or Assault**

**Contact local police and NDPD, who will contact NDI.**

If an individual was physically attacked or threatened, make sure proper medical and mental care is offered. Even when no physical injuries are obvious there is often trauma. Record all information in writing including discussions with physicians and police. The American Citizen Services (A.C.S.) branch at the U.S. embassy or consulate is helpful in advising on local laws and practices. Offer to help with contacting local authorities to the extent to which the individual(s) involved wishes to include them.

## **Lost or Stolen Passport**

Replacing a passport can only be done with the support of the U.S. embassy or consulate staff of the country of origin. Most U.S. embassies and consulates cannot issue passports on weekends or holidays when the embassy/consulate is closed.

U.S. passport holders must replace their passport before returning to the United States. Contact the nearest embassy or consulate and ask to speak to the consular section to report a lost or stolen passport. If a crime was involved, report this as well. The consulate will advise on what information is needed and where a passport photo can be taken, if necessary.

The following list identifies a number of documents the embassy or consulate will need to replace a passport. Even if some documents are not available, the consular staff will do their best to assist in replacing the passport quickly.

- A passport photo
- Identification (driver's license, expired passport etc.)
- Evidence of U.S. citizenship (birth certificate, photocopy of missing passport)
- Travel itinerary such as airline or train tickets
- Police report, if available
- Form DS-11 Application for Passport (may be completed at time of application)
- Form DS-64 Statement Regarding a Lost or Stolen Passport (may be completed at time of application)

Customary fees for a replacement passport will be taken at the embassy/consulate.

## Lost or Stolen Phone

1. Direct the owner to call and text the phone and leave a message with a number to call back.
2. Use find-my-phone features immediately, if activated on the phone, to locate and lock the phone remotely. The phone has to be on with cellular data or wifi enabled for this service to work.
3. Change passwords that are downloaded on the phone. If credit cards are attached to any apps, like Venmo, Apple Pay, Spotify etc., monitor them for suspicious activity.
4. Contact the phone carrier to disable phone and data service and assist with next steps for getting a new device.
5. File a police report, which is often necessary for insurance protections.
6. Consider wiping the phone's data remotely. Though it will mean losing any data not backed up, it's the best way to ensure information is protected.

## Large Scale Disaster (such as earthquake, flood, severe political unrest, terrorist attack, etc.)

### **Contact NDI as soon as you are safe and able to do so.**

- Account for all participants by whatever means available. International SOS will automatically send a safety check-in message to the traveler's ND email address and phone number (SMS, if the number is on file) if a major incident is reported.
- Determine the safety and health situation.
- Determine an initial safety plan for participants, e.g. whether they should stay where they are, assemble in a safer location, move to the embassy, etc.
- Confirm the details of the predetermined emergency meeting location and if that location is not accessible, determine and share an alternate meeting location.
- Contact NDI as soon as possible to provide a current assessment of the situation, discuss next steps and determine if suspension of the program and evacuation of participants to a safer location is necessary and prudent.

***Suspending programs or evacuating participants:*** Contact NDI to discuss options and next steps. ND representatives will contact our providers for



evacuation response assistance. The State Department may share advice and information from the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate regarding evacuation plans through their website, STEP notifications, or social media accounts. NDI will assist the on-campus department staff to notify family members of evacuation plans if necessary. NDI and on-campus department staff will work together on logistics to include: transportation of students and belongings and communicate any space limitations to students in advance; arrange temporary housing at arrival destination if evacuating to another location abroad; and advise participants about arranging personal affairs in the host country to the extent feasible.

## **Arrest of a Participant**

**Contact NDPD, who will contact NDI and initiate University protocols and provide overall guidance.**

Depending upon the circumstances, local legal assistance options may be provided by the University. In general, American Citizen Services, a branch of the U.S. State Department located in each embassy, can provide names of lawyers who might assist the participant (at their own expense). You may be asked to visit the participant; provide legal contacts obtained from the U.S. embassy to the student or from ND representatives; explain that legal procedures may be different from those in the U.S.; remain in contact with the U.S. embassy officer assigned to the participant; and monitor the situation during the trip.

## **Missing Person**

**Notify local police and NDPD, who will contact NDI and initiate University protocols and provide overall guidance.**

You may also be asked to notify the nearest embassy or consulate of the student's home country, and provide information and reassurance to other program participants as appropriate. When the student is located, notify all involved. If the student is injured, physically or mentally, seek appropriate treatment and follow emergency plan protocols.

## **Fatality**

**Contact NDPD, who will contact NDI and initiate University protocols and provide overall guidance.**

NDPD will coordinate with Student Affairs, which takes the lead in student fatalities. NDI will assist the international response. You may be asked to notify the U.S. embassy or consulate, assist with travel and accommodation arrangements for the deceased's family to the foreign location, arrange for meetings with physicians or the coroner, pack the student's belongings, etc., and arrange for support such as counseling services and pastoral care to be available/accessible to students, staff, and family members. After discussing with campus you might be asked to communicate with the host organizations, the deceased's classmates, friends and other involved individuals.

## **Websites referenced in this guide**

### **CDC**

[cdc.gov/travel](https://cdc.gov/travel)

### **du Lac**

[dulac.nd.edu](https://dulac.nd.edu)

### **GeoBlue Health Insurance**

[geobluestudents.com](https://geobluestudents.com)

### **International SOS**

<https://www.internationalsos.com/MasterPortal/default.aspx?membnum=-398TA4831047>

### **Notre Dame Emergency Services**

[emergency.nd.edu](https://emergency.nd.edu)

### **Notre Dame International Travel and Safety**

[international.nd.edu/travel-safety](https://international.nd.edu/travel-safety)

### **Notre Dame Office of Human Resources – Benefits While Traveling Abroad**

[hr.nd.edu/benefits/benefits-while-traveling-abroad/](https://hr.nd.edu/benefits/benefits-while-traveling-abroad/)

### **Notre Dame Police Department**

<https://police.nd.edu/>

### **Title IX**

[titleix.nd.edu](https://titleix.nd.edu)

### **U.S. Department of State Country-Specific Information**

[travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories.html/](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories.html/)

### **U.S. Department of State Emergencies**

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/emergencies.html>

### **U.S. Department of State Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)**

[step.state.gov](https://step.state.gov)



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