



In case of an emergency situation abroad, such as a personal medical emergency, natural disaster, political unrest, or anything that changes the circumstances of the country you are in at the time, it is important that you are prepared. Developing an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) will make it easier for you to deal with a crisis situation. You should begin developing your EAP before you depart for your program.

### **Steps to Take Prior to Departure:**

1. Review the country specific information on the US Department of State International Travel website ([http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_1765.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1765.html)). If there is a Travel Alert listed for the country you will be visiting, be sure to review the details of the alert. Travel to countries listed with a Travel Warning is strongly discouraged.
2. Attend an orientation with your Program Coordinator to discuss health and safety information for the country or countries you will be visiting.
3. Create a card to carry that includes contact information for your health insurance carrier, your Program Coordinator or Study Abroad office and your personal contacts (friends and/or relatives).
4. Leave a copy of your contact card with your Program Coordinator or Study Abroad office and with your personal contacts.

### **Steps to Take Upon Arrival:**

1. Register with the nearest US Consulate/Embassy as soon as you can. If you are not a U.S. citizen register with the consulate/embassy of your home country.
2. Update your contact card to include contact information for the nearest hospital, police, fire, 911 emergency equivalent, local government/visa office, translator, US Embassy/Consulate and the Sponsor University Program Coordinator.
3. Ask about the Program Provider or Sponsor University's emergency plan(s), and/or local area emergency plans. Become familiar with emergency notification systems, if present, and other specific instructions related to emergencies.
4. Establish two evacuation routes (if possible) from your place of residence and your workplace at the Sponsor University. Your evacuation route should include a safe alternate destination point determined by you and the University Sponsor Program Coordinator or designee. When planning your route, remember that elevators and electric doors may not operate at a time of crisis.
5. Create an emergency kit that includes items such as emergency cash, credit cards, traveler's checks and first aid items.
6. Familiarize yourself with all possible methods of transportation (airport, train, bus, Metro, rental car, boat/ferry).
7. Print out a copy of your EAP and attach copies of your passport and visa, your emergency contact card information, your driver's license, your medical insurance coverage card and any special medical needs treatment information.

## When a Crisis Occurs

When an emergency occurs, you may experience the following range of emotions. These feelings are normal responses to a difficult situation:

- Disbelief Fear Anger
- Anxiety/Panic
- Difficulty Concentrating
- Denial
- Worry/Concern
- Stress Excitement
- Depression, Shock, Etc.

There are some things you can do to calm your emotions and make yourself feel safer in an emergency/crisis situation. The following list gives some tips on how to maintain your physical safety and mental health during a crisis:

- Realize your feelings are normal
- Find/make a safe environment
- Maintain a basic self-care regimen (shower, shave, get dresses, exercise, etc.)
- Avoid confrontation, both physical and verbal
- Take one step at a time
- Assess what you can and cannot control
- Ask for help
- Create a support network

Your first step should be to ensure your own safety. Stay calm and assess the situation. Identify what type of emergency situation is taking place. If possible, follow your pre-determined evacuation route and get to your alternate destination point. If your pre-determined route or alternate destination points are not safe, get to an area away from immediate threat.

Once you are in a safer location, update others about your situation. If you have a method of communication at your disposal, get in touch with your emergency contacts so they can help you. Have them assist you in finding what you need (medical care, transport, a lawyer, etc.). Keep trying. If you cannot get a hold of anyone to help you don't give up. Try alternate methods of communication and transportation until you are able to reach someone. If you need to move to another location, let anyone you have previously contacted know where you are going.

After you have removed yourself from any immediate threat and made the necessary emergency contacts, you may need to move to a more permanent location for treatment/assistance. Consider your transportation options and get yourself to the appropriate location (hospital, police station, embassy/consulate, contact's home, counseling center, etc.). Maintain contact and update your emergency contacts on your condition and location.

If a crisis happens in your host country while you are visiting another, contact the Sponsor University Program Coordinator so that they know you are safe. If you can't reach the coordinator, contact the US Embassy in the country you are visiting and ask them to contact the coordinator. You should also contact your relatives and Program Coordinator at home to advise them that you are safe.

Dependent upon the severity of the emergency, you may eventually find yourself back at the Sponsor University. Take the opportunity to re-evaluate your EAP and make any necessary revisions to the plan or to your emergency kit.