

## WHAT WE CAN DO FOR YOU

- Issue an emergency passport to get you back to the UK.
  - Contact family and friends and ask them to help you with money or tickets.
  - Tell you how to transfer money.
  - In an emergency, cash a sterling cheque for you worth up to £100 if supported by a valid banker's card.
  - Help you get in touch with local doctors, interpreters, lawyers and local British organisations.
  - Visit you in hospital and pass messages to your family if you wish.
  - If you are arrested, we will visit you, advise about local lawyers and the local legal and prison systems, and pass messages to your family if that is what you want. If you are under 18, we must inform your parent or guardian of your arrest.
  - As a last resort, and as long as you meet certain conditions, give you a loan to get you back to the UK. This loan must be repaid. There is no law that says we must do this. Each case is dealt with on its own merits and circumstances. You will be asked to sign an undertaking to repay the loan.
- ... BUT WE CANNOT**
- Intervene in court proceedings or get you out of prison. Nor can we give legal advice or get better treatment for you than is given to local people.
  - Pay your hotel, medical, legal, travel, or any other bills.
  - Get you somewhere to live, a job or a work permit.

We are committed to helping British nationals in trouble overseas. The main Consulate is usually in the capital city. There are often smaller consular offices, including Honorary Consulates, in other cities and towns.

Carry a list of British Consular Offices in the countries you plan to visit. You can get the addresses from your local library, from the Foreign & Commonwealth Office in London or from our website (see below).

Working hours in most British Consulate offices usually follow the local pattern, but telephone first. Most British Consulates operate an answerphone service telling you the office opening hours and arrangements for handling emergencies.

In countries where there is no British Consular Office you can seek help from the Embassies and Consulates of other EU member states.

## TRAVEL INFORMATION

Up-to-date information on problems affecting your safety around the world is available on:

the internet [www.fco.gov.uk/](http://www.fco.gov.uk/)  
and from

Travel Advice Unit  
telephone 020 7008 0232/0233  
fax 020 7008 0155



[www.fco.gov.uk/knowbeforeyougo](http://www.fco.gov.uk/knowbeforeyougo)

## COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

We welcome the views of our customers on the quality of the service we provide. Please write to: Head of Consular Directorate, Foreign & Commonwealth Office, Old Admiralty Building, London SW1A 2PA.

*Western Union is there to help should you ever lose your wallet or run out of money.*



UK Freephone 0800 833 833 (24 hours)

For further information on Western Union visit:

[www.westernunion.com](http://www.westernunion.com) or [www.westernunion.co.uk](http://www.westernunion.co.uk)

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Foreign &  
Commonwealth Office

# BACKPACKERS AND INDEPENDENT TRAVELLERS

## Essential Information



More and more travellers are setting off to explore exotic and remote parts of the world. Most have a trouble-free trip. For many, their journey changes their life.

But sometimes those changes aren't good ones. Every year some end up in prison. Some get very ill. Some die. We know, because our staff have to help their families pick up the pieces.

We don't want to scare you. We don't want to stop you going. But we do want you to take care of yourselves. You can stay out of trouble if you follow three basic rules:

- Tick off the checklist of things to do before you go
- Follow the guidelines for what to do when you're there
- Avoid trouble spots by following our travel advice

Of course, if you do get into trouble then our staff in 220 offices around the world are ready to help you. But we'd rather you didn't get into trouble in the first place!



## BEFORE YOU GO

- Get information, including Travel Advice issued by the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, on each country you plan to visit. Some places are dangerous, see 'Avoiding Trouble Spots' section below.
- Get full travel insurance to cover illness, injury and loss of money, baggage and tickets; if you intend to participate in high risk activities or hire a motorised vehicle, check your insurance covers everything.
- Ask your doctor or a specialist travel clinic about vaccinations and other health needs.
- Make sure you have enough money for your trip. Traveller's cheques are the safest way of taking cash abroad.
- Take a credit card.
- Take a UK telephone charge card.
- Take a photocopy of your passport and visas and some spare passport photographs.
- Take a padlock and chain to secure your baggage at airports, railway stations, on buses, etc.
- If you have to carry medicine get a doctor's note in case you are stopped by customs or lose your medicine and need to replace it.
- Read a good guide book.
- Leave details of your journey with your family and tell them of any change of plan.

## AVOIDING TROUBLE SPOTS

Before travelling, take time to find out about your destination. Talk to your travel agent or tour operator about possible risks. Read a good guide book. Ask friends who have visited the area. Check the news for reports of problems in the places you plan to visit. Consult the FCO's Travel Advice which is regularly updated on the web: <http://www.fco.gov.uk/>. Things can change quickly and without warning. Make sure you are properly informed.

## WHEN YOU ARE THERE

- Never get involved with drugs. You could face massive fines, long prison sentences in grim conditions, even the death penalty. We cannot get you out of prison.
- Obey the local laws. In most countries the use of cameras and binoculars may be prohibited, particularly near military sites. Use of binoculars and cameras in such areas, even for innocent purposes such as bird-watching and plane-spotting, can be misunderstood.
- Do not leave your baggage unattended, especially at airports, train or bus stations.
- Never carry packages through customs for other people.
- Do not drive someone else's vehicle through customs, or across a border. Be careful who you lend your vehicle to.
- Do not drink alcohol in a country where laws do not allow it.
- Never hitch-hike.
- Telephone home regularly.
- If you are going to arrive late at night, book your hotel before you get there.
- Only change your traveller's cheques and money in banks, or authorised foreign exchange offices.
- Dress modestly and respect local customs.
- Be security conscious. Avoid unlit streets at night. Carry only the minimum amount of cash when sightseeing.
- **It is normally safer not to resist violent theft.**

