

Site Specific Information and Assessing Risk

Site Specific Information for Work/Study Placements Abroad: Known Hazards and Risks

In the following section you will be asked to seriously consider the **risks** and **hazards** associated with the place you will be going and the activities in which you will be involved. The first step is to learn all you can about your destination and evaluate what types of risks you might be taking. This includes risks related to health, personal safety, environmental conditions, and political stability. Remember to consider the cross-cultural elements involved. Each area has hazards. It is your responsibility to research and be aware of hazards that are specific to your site.

Below is a list of questions you may want to consider when determining the risks at your destination. The web links provided will get you started in finding the answers. Once you've gathered this information your assignment will be to record the risks, and how you will deal with them in a series of charts which follow.

Health Risks

Health Risks may include diseases, nuclear hazards, pollution, water and air contaminants etc.

Questions to ask about your destination:

1. What kind of health services are available? Are English speaking doctors readily available?
2. Is national health insurance required? If so, what items are covered, which are not?
3. What diseases are prevalent? How are they transmitted?
4. Which immunizations are required to enter the country? Which are suggested?

Related Websites:

Canadian Society for International Health http://www.csih.org/trav_inf.html provides health information for Canadian travellers.

Center for Disease Control (CDC) <http://www.cdc.gov/travel> provides geographic health recommendations and a graphical travel map.

Health Canada's Laboratory Center for Disease Control http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/pphb-dgspsp/publications_e.html provides health advice for travellers including health hazard advisories and travel health recommendations.

International Association for Medical Assistance to Travellers (IAMAT) <http://www.iamat.org> has many useful publications including World Climate Charts, a Directory of Physicians, and a World Immunization Chart.

World Health Organization (WHO) <http://www.who.int/> has many useful publications including a guide for "International Travel and Health: Vaccination Requirements and Health Advice, Situation as of 1 January 2000"

Activity: Complete the [Health Risk Assessment Chart](#)



Personal Safety Risks

Personal Safety Risks may include, crime, traffic accidents, workplace hazards etc.

Questions to ask about your destination:

1. Are there any special security concerns - crime, violence?
2. What are the transportation standards in your host country? Are international drivers licenses recognized? Are Canadian ones? Are there any issues regarding local/national transportation?
3. Are there any issues around individuals traveling alone? In groups?
4. Are there areas/sites in your host country/city which are recommended to be avoided?
5. Will you be involved in any specific activities (diving, working with animals, medical work) which would pose increased risk to your well-being?

Related Websites:

Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT)

http://www.voyage.gc.ca/Consular-e/for_dest_menu-e.htm

provides country-specific travel and advisory reports, and information about the services Canada provides for its citizens abroad.

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) <http://www.iata.org>

provides information regarding air travel standards and regulations, including publications, customer focus guides, and other surveys

Intercultural & Community Development Resources Inc. <http://www.icdr.com>

provides cultural, intercultural, and multicultural resources; including publications, books, educational videotapes and games.

Canadian Public Health Association <http://www.cpha.ca>

provides information about Conferences, Policy Statements, and Periodicals about health issues.

World Travel Institute <http://www.worldtravelinstitute.com>

provides information about "do's and don'ts" for informed travel abroad; including publications, country reports, and recommended resources.

Safety Abroad First Educational Travel Information <http://www.usc.edu/dept/education/globalized/safeti/>

provides information pertaining to study abroad, in particular health and safety issues; including publications, orientations, and recommended resources.

Activity: Complete the [Personal Safety Risk Assessment Chart](#)

Political Risks

Political risks may include, demonstrations, economic instability, political or social intolerance of particular groups etc.

1. What is the political system in the country? Is the political environment stable? Are there any issues related to corruption?
2. Is there any special concern about the economic instability of the country?
3. What is the currency? Are there any issues related to currency trading?
4. What are the main characteristics of traditional daily life? Are there any issues related to dress?
5. What religion is practiced in this country? Are there any issues related to religious intolerance?
6. Are there any special concerns about the gender/sex difference? Are there any issues related to sexual intolerance?
7. Are there any special concerns about racial/ethnic difference? Linguistic difference?

8. What is the current situation of Canadian relations with your host country? What is the history? Are there any specific issues/incidents which may impact you as a Canadian visitor?

Relevant Websites:

Department of Foreign Affairs <http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/> provides country-specific travel and advisory reports, trade relationships, and other relevant information for Canadians travelling abroad.

CIA World Factbook <http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/> provides detailed information on geography, people, government, economy, communications, transportation, military and transnational issues.

Country E-thologies <http://www.e-thologies.com/> provides country-specific information.

Martindale's the Reference Desk <http://www-sci.lib.uci.edu/HSG/RefHealth.html> provides an extensive dictionary of links including over 200 official country web sites, world reports on weather, transport, culture, and so on.

Activity: Complete the [Political Risk Assessment Chart](#)

Environmental Risks

Environmental risks include, volcanoes, water quality, earthquakes, tornadoes etc.

1. Have there been any recent, or are there any recurring, natural disasters in your host country?
2. What are the contacts in host countries in case of emergency, natural disasters, or civil unrest?
3. What are the environmental issues in your host country? Pollution, flooding, extreme heat or cold, volcanoes, earthquakes, tornadoes?
4. What are the appropriate steps to take in these situations?

Facts on dealing with almost any kind of environmental danger - <http://www.fema.gov/hazards/>

Federal Emergency management agency - earthquake factsheet

<http://www.fema.gov/hazards/earthquakes/> Excellent information about what to do before, during and after a quake.

World-wide earthquake locator

<http://www.geo.ed.ac.uk/quakes/schools.html> - Information on earthquakes around the world.

Federal Emergency management agency- tornado factsheet

<http://www.fema.gov/hazards/tornadoes/> Excellent information about what to do before, during and after a tornado.

Federal Emergency management agency-hurricane factsheet

<http://www.fema.gov/hazards/hurricanes/> How to protect yourself in a hurricane and reduce damage to your residence.

Federal Emergency management agency- volcano factsheet

<http://www.fema.gov/hazards/volcanoes/> What to do if you are in the vicinity of an active volcano.

Federal Emergency management agency- wildfire factsheet

<http://www.fema.gov/hazards/fires/> Precautions and information for living in an area prone to wildfires.

American Lung association - Health tips for high air pollution days

http://www.lungusa.org/air/air_outdoor_redux3.html

Department of Foreign Affairs http://www.voyage.gc.ca/destinations/menu_e.htm

Offers an overview of any frequent or predictable natural disasters in countries around the world.

Activity: Complete the [Environmental Risk Assessment Chart](#)

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Staying Safe