



Emergency Protocol

University of Houston
Learning Abroad
Institute for Global Engagement
E. W. Cullen Bldg. Suite 105
Houston, Texas 77204-2039
713-743-9167
www.uh.edu/learningabroad



Learning Abroad
Institute for Global Engagement



Introduction

The University of Houston (UH) is committed to providing a learning environment that not only promotes the safety and well-being of its students but also an environment conducive for students to develop to their fullest potential. Learning Abroad works to ensure that partner institutions and program providers are of reasonable quality with effective crisis response plans in place. It is imperative that faculty leaders of UH programs abroad thoroughly read this document and realize that they provide 24/7 emergency support for the duration of the program.

Learning Abroad will assist faculty to develop emergency response and communication plans while abroad. While UH provides support, it is essential that both faculty and students take responsibility for their own safety and security. This is highlighted by Learning Abroad during pre-departure orientations, but must also be emphasized by faculty during pre-departure and on-site orientations.

UH cannot ensure the absolute safety of participants or eliminate all risks. However, with the partnership of UH faculty, who are critical to setting student expectations and creating a culture of safety, we do our best to run safe programs and mitigate risk.

Defining Emergencies

Before outlining a response plan, it is important to identify different types of potential emergencies as well as distinguish between real and perceived emergencies.

Types of Emergencies

- Petty theft or pick-pocketing
- Lost passport
- Minor injury or illnesses
- Missed flight, train, etc.
- Physical or sexual assault
- Significant illness or injury (physical or emotional)
- Disappearance or kidnapping of a student
- Natural disaster (earthquake, tsunami, hurricane, landside, etc.)
- Arrest
- Socio-political (riot, military coup, terrorist attack)

Perceived Emergency

Distinguishing between a real and perceived emergency is important. All emergencies, whether real or perceived, should be treated with sensitivity and good judgement, keeping UH students' well-being at the forefront. Perceived emergencies may arise from actual events (i.e. earthquake, floods) but may not actually impact the health, safety or security of UH students or faculty. Due to media attention and distortion of information, these situations may be perceived in the U.S. as more dangerous than they actually are and can be disruptive to programs abroad.



Emergency Response Plan

The first step in emergency preparedness is having a plan in place before the emergency occurs. Prior to departure, faculty leaders are required to:

1. Ensure he or she has a cell phone on his or her person at all times while abroad and that Learning Abroad has the number.
2. Establish a method of communication with students while abroad and for the duration of the program.
3. Create an emergency communication plan and share with all program participants.
4. Have emergency contact information for all student participants and carry it on his or her person while abroad (Appendix A).
5. Download smartphone app and have contact information for UH's On Call International emergency and medical insurance coverage while abroad.
6. Require all students to enroll in the U.S. Department of State's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) <https://step.state.gov/step>. Registration enrolls students in the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate abroad. It also allows students to receive safety and security information for the country and gives the embassy emergency contact information for the students.
7. Reinforce the Student Code of Conduct:
http://www.uh.edu/dos/pdf/student_code_of_conduct.pdf
8. Have contact information for the closest local consulate/embassy and keep it on your person.

Equipping Students

Pre-departure orientation and the on-site orientation discussion with students of emergency drills and communication plans will help prepare students to respond more confidently in an actual emergency. Students should be aware of the resources they have through their insurance coverage and ensure they keep the On Call International insurance information on their person at all times. Learning Abroad requires faculty to determine a "meeting place" in the event any emergency occurs while abroad, and discussion of different scenarios with students, including evacuation, i.e. hotel lobby, designated classroom, etc.

In the Event of an Emergency

Faculty leaders should follow these steps in response:

1. Assess the situation

How serious is the emergency? Who needs to be involved? Local police? U.S. Embassy/Consulate? What steps must be taken to secure students?

2. Account for and ensure safety of program participants.

Stay calm and do not panic. Your goal is to preserve the safety and well-being of the students. Obtain prompt and appropriate medical attention, engage with necessary authorities, and remove students from immediate danger if possible. When applicable, locate and contact all program participants as quickly as possible.

In a medical emergency, never leave an injured or sick student on his or her own.



3. Contact On-site (local) Partner/On Call International insurance for Emergency Help

Once you have done all that is possible to secure the well-being of students, contact your on-site partner/organization first and then On Call to initiate their local emergency response plan.

4. Contact UHPD 24/7 Hotline & UH Learning Abroad

Call the 24/7 UHPD Hotline (+1-713-743-3333). UHPD will initiate a local communication plan and involve the appropriate offices on campus. Be prepared to provide UHPD:

- Name of caller and victim (if any)—Identify that you are abroad
- Brief description of accident, injuries, emergency
- Status of any victims and all students
- Location of caller
- Location of accident or emergency
- Phone and fax number by which caller can be reached
- Whether local police, rescue or U.S. Consulate/Embassy have been contacted

Call/message Learning Abroad Assistant Director via phone or email to notify them about the issue and for additional support with the emergency protocol.

5. Advise Group to Notify Emergency Contacts

In the case of a larger issue effecting the group, including a natural disaster, local incident that impacted the on-site community, or other perceived or real emergency, advise participants to notify their parents, guardians or emergency contacts of their safety. In the case of a serious student emergency, ask the students not to share personal details of the student emergency to others to maintain confidentiality of the student.

6. Continue to Monitor Situation

Take steps to gather more information utilizing all in-country resources possible. If appropriate and not done so yet, contact the U.S. Consulate/Embassy regarding non-medical crises and follow the procedures they require. Ask to be updated on the crisis on a regular basis.

7. Maintain contact with UHPD

In an ongoing crisis, continue to keep UH updated on the status of the situation via telephone, email or text. This is essential as UHPD and Learning Abroad will develop a situation-specific response plan in consultation with appropriate offices on campus.

8. Submit Incident Report

Within 24 hours of the incident, an Incident Report Form (see link below) must be completed:

<https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UnivofHouston>



Emergency Contacts and Resources

It is important in the case of an emergency that you document incident details for reporting and sharing relevant information. Faculty and students should keep an emergency contact information card on their person at all times.

On Call International Insurance (On Call)

Students are covered by On Call International for international health and emergency insurance. Students do not need to individually enroll with On Call International for their insurance coverage. They can access the coverage and support from On Call once they have committed to a Learning Abroad program. This coverage will provide services ranging from pre-trip planning to telephone advice, to full-scale medical and security evacuations.

Emergency Point of Contact Abroad & Claims

Call collect from anywhere in the world: +1 978-651-9213

Call toll-free US / Canada: 1-833-808-0236

24/7 Live Chat: www.oncallinternational.com/chat/direct

Email: mail@oncallinternational.com

Text Only: +1 844-302-5131

Download the On Call International App before traveling abroad. If traveling abroad, ensure you have the On Call plan information and contact information in the easiest place to reference it – on your phone. You can do this with a simple 2-step process without needing to login to anything or sharing any personal information. Access the link on the Learning Abroad Health & Safety webpage.

University of Houston Police Department-UHPD

UHPD Emergency Assistance (24/7) +1-713-743-3333

Learning Abroad

Main phone line: +1-713-743-9167

Assistant Director, Andie Beer: ambeer@uh.edu, cell number given individually

Overseas U.S. Citizens Services/Report a Lost or Stolen Passport

From the U.S. and Canada: +1-888-407-4747

From Overseas: +1-202-501-4444

Locate U.S. Consulate and Embassy Resources

<https://www.usembassy.gov>



Appendix A Sample Emergency Contact Information Card

For Faculty:

For Students:

Faculty Leader
UH Learning Abroad
Emergency Contact Information

- UH Learning Abroad Office**
Non-emergency international program assistance
+1-713-743-9167
M-F, 8-5 CST | www.uh.edu/learningabroad
Andie Beer | ambeer@uh.edu
- UH Police Dept 24-Hour Emergency Help**
International emergency phone line
+1-713-743-3333
- U.S. State Department**
Emergency assistance to U.S. citizens travelling abroad
+1-888-407-4747
<http://travel.state.gov>
- On Call International Insurance**
Insurance provider for both faculty and students
+1-833-808-0236 (in US & Canada)
+1-978-651-9213 (Worldwide)
Live Chat: oncallinternational.com/chat/direct

CARRY THIS CARD WITH YOU

Student
UH Learning Abroad
Emergency Contact Information

- UH Learning Abroad Office**
Non-emergency international program assistance
+1-713-743-9167
M-F, 8-5 CST | www.uh.edu/learningabroad
- UH Police Dept 24-Hour Emergency Help**
International emergency phone line
+1-713-743-3333
- U.S. State Department**
Emergency assistance to U.S. citizens travelling abroad
+1-888-407-4747
<http://travel.state.gov>
- On Call International Insurance**
Insurance provider for both faculty and students
+1-833-808-0236 (in US & Canada)
+1-978-651-9213 (Worldwide)
Live Chat: oncallinternational.com/chat/direct

CARRY THIS CARD WITH YOU

FILL IN INFORMATION BELOW

Program Director/Host Institution Contact

Local Coordinator

Housing Contact

Local Police/Emergency Number

U.S. Embassy/Consulate (24-hr phone & address)

Hospital/Clinic (phone & address)

Local Taxi/Transportation Company

Insurance Co. Name, Policy # & Phone #



FILL IN INFORMATION BELOW

Program Director/Host Institution Contact

Local Coordinator

Housing Contact

Local Police/Emergency Number

U.S. Embassy/Consulate (24-hr phone & address)

Hospital/Clinic (phone & address)

Local Taxi/Transportation Company

Insurance Co. Name, Policy # & Phone #

