

## **Personal Safety and Security**

### **Common practices for maintaining a low profile:**

Be selective and cautious in sharing personal information (name, lodging, itinerary) with strangers. Minimize information you reveal about your plans in public, including social media such as Facebook and Instagram.

Observe how locals dress, speak, act, and interact and do your best to fit and blend in. Be polite. Be inconspicuous. Speak softly.

- Avoid “American” hangouts.
- Avoid openly carrying items that make you stand out as wealthy, foreign, alone.
- Leave luggage in a secure "checked" area when exploring a city.

Spend time with and follow the lead of trusted local friends and colleagues in regards to how to travel, when to go out, and where to go.

- Use the language.

Plan carefully for times and places where crowds, celebrities, foreigners congregate. Minimize being there at peak times, in centers and hubs.

- Airports, including travel to and from.
- For groups, consider curfews or off-limit locations, activities.

### **Common practices for being situationally aware:**

Know how and where to access emergency services (911 equivalent, police, hospital, US or home country embassy). In particular, check for any provisions that change for travelers of different nationality, ethnicity, age, maybe gender.

Know your travel route and have an alternative. Change it if you use the same route each day. Use a reliable cab or driver, especially at night. Walk with a friend and don't wander into isolated or unknown areas alone.

In crowds, at public events, take note of exits and areas of shelter. Trust your instincts and leave if you feel exposed or uncomfortable.

Observe people and activity around you. Avoid distractions like phone calls or email when out in public. Pay attention.

- Be skeptical of “money-for-nothing” offers and other opportunities that seem too good to be true. Be cautious of free favors, especially those involving government processes such as obtaining visas or permits.
- Minimize contact with people who have questionable affiliations or who you suspect might be engaged in criminal activity.

**Guidelines for pro-active and responsible communication:**

- Discuss itinerary and travel plans with trusted friends, colleagues, and advisors. Ask for and follow recommendations for safety and for fun.
- Know how to contact your support network *in country* – program advisors, host family, embassy/consulate, emergency services, CISI insurance. Carry enough money for taxi fare and several meals in case you face delays returning to your lodging and a phone card for an emergency.
- Share your contact information with your support network and let them know when they should expect to hear from you.
- Be thoughtful about what you share with people far away, including family, friends, and on social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.). If someone is not in a position to help you, don't create panic or anxiety. Reach out instead to people who can respond.
- Do communicate with family, friends even on social media if you think they might be worried about you. Check in and let them know when you are okay.