



## **Security Awareness Overseas - An Overview**

Travel Health and Safety

Africa; East Asia & Pacific; Europe; Near East; South Central Asia; Western Hemisphere

6/1/2005

Chapter I.  
Introduction 1

Chapter II.  
Preparing To Travel 3  
Have Your Affairs in Order 3  
Important Papers 3  
Useful Information 4  
Emergency Notification 4  
Miscellaneous Tips 5

Chapter III.  
In Transit 7  
On the Plane 7  
At an Overseas Airport 7  
Car Rentals 8  
Public Transportation 8  
In-Transit Accommodations 9  
Hotel Crime 9  
Civil Unrest 9  
Hotel Fires 10  
If a Fire Starts 10

Chapter IV.  
Terrorism 13  
U.S. Policy 13  
Terrorist Demands 14  
Terrorist Surveillance 14  
Hijackings 15  
Armed Assault on the Ground 15



Kidnappings 16  
Captivity 16  
Behavior Suggestions 16  
Avoidance of Capture or Escape 17  
Rescue 18  
Additional Precautions 18

Chapter V.  
Overseas Crisis Planning 19  
Culture Shock 19  
Symptoms 19  
Successful Handling 20

Chapter VI.  
Helping Children Adjust 21  
Before the Move 21  
Relocation Crisis 21  
Stress During Crisis 22

Chapter VII.  
Security for Children 23  
Rules for Children 23  
Rules for Parents 23  
Child-Watch Checklist 24  
Checklist for Babysitters 24

Chapter VIII.  
Evacuation 25  
Preparation 25  
If Evacuated 26

Chapter IX.  
Residential Fire Safety 27  
Smoke Detectors 27  
Fire Escape Plan 28  
Fire Drills 28  
Fire Extinguishers 28  
Use of Window Escapes 29



A Summary of Fire Safety Reminders 29  
The Final World 30

Chapter X.  
Community Participation in Security 31  
Safety in Numbers 31  
What You Can Do 31  
Other Useful Steps 31

Chapter XI.  
Conclusion 33

Overseas Security Advisory Council  
U.S. Department of State

## INTRODUCTION

### Chapter I. Introduction

Personal security abroad is a major concern of individuals and companies and thus, a natural forum for an OSAC publication. This booklet, along with such previous OSAC publications as Security Guidelines for American Families Living Abroad, will surely find a wide audience and make a strong contribution to the security and well-being of American citizens who live and work abroad.

We gain a great sense of security and self confidence knowing we are prepared for potential crises. This booklet provides assistance in preparing us to face those emergencies we may encounter while living or traveling overseas. Many potential overseas crises may be eased or averted by taking the time to read and study the information that follows.

Cultural misunderstandings and inadequate local support services often make crises abroad more intense than similar situations in the United States. Overseas, we must assume greater responsibility for our own safety.

Information and suggestions in this booklet have been collected from several government and private sources. Personal experiences of those who have been through particular crises abroad have added substantially to the store of ideas and advice. The experience of each-whether hostage, crime victim, evacuee, or other-is distinct. Yet there are common



threads that provide guidelines on how to handle crises successfully. We hope, in this booklet, to pass those guidelines on to you.

Although we have attempted to organize tips and information according to whether your stay will be temporary or permanent, most apply to either situation.

## Chapter II. Preparing To Travel

### Have Your Affairs in Order

Many hostages have expressed regret that their affairs were not left in better order for their families. An evacuation, illness, or death can often place a family in a similar situation. Three actions, taken before you depart, will alleviate this potential problem:

- Discuss and plan with your family what should be done in the case of any emergency separation. All adult family members should be aware of these plans.
- Supply family and close friends with the emergency notification numbers found on page 4. They serve both to notify you while you are overseas in the event of an illness or death in your family in the United States and to provide your family in the U.S. with information about you in case of a crisis abroad.
- See that all important papers are up-to-date. List papers and leave originals with a family member or attorney in the United States. Carry only copies to your overseas assignment. Safe deposit boxes and bank accounts are very useful but may be sealed on the death of an owner. Therefore, make sure your representative has joint right of access.

### Important Papers

Your collection of important papers might include:

- Will
- Birth and marriage certificates
- Guardianship or adoption papers for children
- Power of attorney for spouse or relative



- Naturalization papers
- Deeds, mortgages, stocks and bonds, car titles
- Insurance papers-car, home, life, personal effects, medical
- Tax records
- Proof of termination of previous marriage(s)
- Child support/alimony agreements
- Proof of membership in any organization or union that entitles the estate to any benefits

#### Useful Information

An information list might include:

- Bank account numbers and addresses
- Passport numbers
- Duplicate passport pictures in case passport needs to be replaced due to loss
- U.S. and local driver's license numbers
- Insurance policy numbers and names of carriers
- Social Security numbers
- Credit card numbers
- Travelers check numbers and issuing bank
- Medical and dental information, distinguishing marks and scars, and medicine and eyeglass prescriptions
- Assets and debts



- Names and addresses of business and professional contacts
- Updated inventory of household and personal possessions with pictures/videos
- Employment records for each family member; resumes, references, commendations
- Personal address list
- Fingerprints, current photos/videos, voice recording, known handwriting samples of family members

#### Emergency Notification

While abroad, you may need to be notified of an emergency involving someone in the United States. And during a political, social, or natural crisis abroad, your family in the United States will be anxious to get news of you.

The appropriate telephone numbers below should be given to your family for such purposes.

- U.S. Embassy/Consulate  
(Day)  
(Night)
- U.S. Corporate HQ  
(Day)  
(Night)
- Corporate Security
- Local Legal Counsel
- Local Police
- Airline(s)
- Red Cross



- Department of State
- Host Country Embassy, Washington, D.C.
- Local Company Office
- Residence
- International Operator
- Relatives

Before initiating calls, the caller in the United States should have the following information available:

- Your name, company, and current location
- Name and relationship of family member
- In case of death-date of death
- In case of illness-name, address, and telephone number of attending physician or hospital

#### Miscellaneous Tips

The corporate traveler should also consider the following, which will assist and possibly protect him/her during the actual journey:

- Obtain International Driving Permit.
- Prepare a wallet card identifying your blood type, known allergies, required medications, insurance company, and name of person to contact in case of emergency.
- Remove from wallet all credit cards and other items not necessary for trip.
- Remove unessential papers, such as reserve, military, or humorous cards, e.g., "Honorary Sheriff."



- Put a plain cover on your passport (covers available in stationery stores);
- Use hard, lockable luggage.
- Be sure luggage tags contain your name, phone number, and full street address; that information is concealed from casual observation; and that company logos are not displayed on luggage.
- Inform family member or friend of specific travel plans.
- Give your office a complete itinerary. Be sure to notify the local company manager of your travel plans.
- Obtain the name(s), address(es), and telephone numbers of your local office(s).
- Obtain small amount of local currency if possible.
- Be aware of airline safety records when booking vacation trips while overseas; do not include company name in reservation.
- When possible, mail personal papers to yourself at the local overseas office.
- If you do not speak the local language have the name and address of each place you may want to go to placed on a 3 x 5 card in that language, which you can show to taxi drivers if they do not understand English.

Stay informed! Check for any travel advisories pertinent to countries you plan to visit. Call the Department of State's Citizens Emergency Center (see page 35), or your company's Corporate Security Department.

### Chapter III. In Transit

Most of the following suggestions apply to any travel; several are specifically directed at surviving a terrorist situation. It is recognized that the level of risk varies from country to country and time to time, so that you may need to choose among the suggested options or modify the concepts to meet your needs.

If you plan to stay in one country any length of time while traveling, especially in a country that is in a period of civil unrest, register with the embassy or consulate and provide a copy of your



itinerary. Registration makes it easier to contact you in case of an emergency and to evacuate you if necessary.

### On the Plane

Carry-on luggage should contain a supply of any regularly taken prescription medicines (in original containers labeled with the pharmacy name and prescribing physician), an extra pair of eyeglasses, passport, and carefully chosen personal documents (copies only!).

Dress inconspicuously to blend into the international environment. Consider wearing no jewelry.

On foreign carriers, avoid speaking English as much as possible. Do not discuss business or travel plans with fellow passengers, crew, or even traveling companions.

Select a window seat in the coach section. This position is less accessible by hijackers inflicting indiscriminate violence.

Memorize your passport number so you do not have to reveal your passport when filling out landing cards.

### At an Overseas Airport

Maintain a low profile, and avoid public areas as much as possible. Check in quickly and do not delay in the main terminal area. Do not discuss travel plans indiscriminately.

Survey surroundings, noting exits and safe areas. Stay away from unattended baggage. Verify baggage claim checks before and after flight. Always maintain custody of your carry-on bag.

If an incident occurs, survival may depend on your ability to remain calm and alert. During a terrorist attack or rescue operation, you do not want to be confused with the terrorists and shot. Avoid sudden moves; hide behind something and drop to floor.

### Car Rentals

Ideally, choose a conservative model car with locking trunk, hood, and gas cap; power brakes and steering; seat belts; quick accelerating engine; heavy duty bumpers; smooth interior



locks. In a hot climate, choose air conditioning. Keep the gas tank at least half full.

Before getting into the car, examine it for strange objects or wires inside, around, or underneath it. If found, do not touch; clear the area and call police.

When driving, lock the doors, keep windows rolled up. Neither you nor a passenger should have an arm hanging out of a window, especially not if you are wearing a watch or jewelry and you are in stop-and-go traffic. Also, do not display a purse, hand-bag or briefcase on a seat in the car-if they can't be kept out of view, lock them in the trunk.

Avoid being boxed in by other cars. Vary routes. Check for suspicious individuals before getting out of the car.

Lock the car when unattended. Never let anyone place a package inside or enter the car unless you are present.

#### Public Transportation

Stay on your guard against pickpockets and petty thieves while in a bus/train terminal or at a taxi stop. Avoid carrying a wallet in your hip or easily accessible coat pocket. Carry a purse/handbag that you may firmly grip or secure to your body. Beware of people jostling you at busy stations.

Take only licensed taxis. Generally those found in front of terminals and the better hotels are the safest. You may pay a bit more, but the companies are more likely to be reputable and normally the drivers have been screened. Be sure the photo on displayed license is of the driver. Have the address of your destination written out in local language and carry it with you. Get a map and learn the route to your destination; note if taxi driver takes you a different or longer way.

Try not to travel alone in a taxi, and never get out in deserted areas. If the door doesn't lock, sit near the middle of the seat so you will thwart thieves who might open the door or smash a window to grab a purse, briefcase, or wallet.

On subways, choose a middle car but never an empty car. On buses, sit in an aisle seat near the driver. Stand back from the curb while waiting for a bus.

Avoid arriving anywhere at night and using dim or vacant entrances to stations or terminals.



Utilize only busy, well-lit stations.

Take as little luggage as possible; ideally, no more than you can comfortably carry.

### In-Transit Accommodations

Accommodations in many countries differ considerably from those found in North America and Western Europe. Safety features required in U.S. hotels, such as sprinkler systems, fire stairwells, and emergency lighting, often are either lacking or inoperable. The following measures will enable you to better plan for unforeseen contingencies in hotels.

### Hotel Crime

Stay alert in your hotel. Put the "do not disturb" sign on your door to give the impression that the room is occupied. Call the maid when you are ready for the room to be cleaned. Consider leaving the light or TV on when you are out of the room. Carry the room key with you instead of leaving it at front desk. Do not use your name when answering the phone. Do not accept packages or open the door to workmen without verification from the front desk.

When walking, remain on wide, well-lit streets. Know where you are going when you leave the hotel-if on a tour, enlist a reputable guide. Generally, the hotel will recommend or procure one. Do not take shortcuts through alleys or off the beaten path. If alone, be back in the hotel by dark. Never resist armed robbery; it could lead to violence. Always carry some cash to appease muggers who may resort to violence at finding no reward for their efforts.

### Civil Unrest

In some areas of the world, civil unrest or violence directed against Americans and other foreigners is common. Travelers should be alert to indicators of civil unrest and take the following precautions in the event of such situations:

- If in your hotel, stay there. Contact the U.S. Embassy, consulate or other friendly embassy. Hire someone to take a note to them if phones are out of order.
- Contact your local office representative.
- Do not watch activity from your window, and try to sleep in an inside room which provides greater protection from gunfire, rocks, grenades, etc.



· If you are caught outside in the middle of a riot or unrest, do not take sides or attempt to gather information. Play the tourist who just wants to get home to his/her family.

## Hotel Fires

Many hotels abroad are not as fire-resistant as those in the United States. Interior materials are often extremely flammable. Escape routes may not be posted in hallways and exits may be few or sealed. Firefighting equipment and water supplies may be limited. There may be no fast method for alerting a fire department. Sprinkler systems and smoke detectors may be nonexistent.

You must aggressively take responsibility for the safety of yourself and your family. Think "contingency plan" and discuss it with your dependents. Begin planning your escape from a fire as soon as you check into a hotel. When a fire occurs, you can then act without panic and without wasting time.

Stay in the most modern hotel; consider a U.S. chain. Request a lower floor, ideally the second or third. Selecting a room no higher than the second floor enables you to jump to safety. Although most fire departments can reach above the second floor, they may not get to you in time or position a fire truck on your side of the building.

Locate exits and stairways as soon as you check in; be sure the doors open. Count the number of doors between your room and exit or stairway. In a smoke-filled hallway, you could have to "feel" your way to an exit. Form a mental map of your escape route.

If the hotel has a fire alarm system, find the nearest alarm. Be sure you know how to use it. You may have to activate it in the dark or in dense smoke.

Ensure that your room windows open and that you know how the latches work. Look out the window and mentally rehearse your escape through it. Make note of any ledges or decks that will aid escape.

Check the smoke detector by pushing the test button. If it does not work, have it fixed or move to another room. Better yet, carry your own portable smoke detector (with the battery removed while traveling). Place it in your room by the hall door near the ceiling.

Keep the room key and a flashlight on the bedside table so that you may locate the key quickly if you have to leave your room.



## If a Fire Starts

If you awake to find smoke in your room, grab your key and crawl to the door on your hands and knees. Do not stand—smoke and deadly gases rise while the fresher air will be near the floor.

Before you open the door, feel it with the palm of your hand. If the door or knob is hot, the fire may be right outside. Open the door slowly. Be ready to slam it shut if the fire is close by.

If your exit path is clear, crawl into the hallway. Be sure to close the door behind you to keep smoke out in case you have to return to your room. Take your key, as most hotel doors lock automatically. Stay close to the wall to avoid being trampled.

Do not use elevators during a fire. They may malfunction, or if they have heat-activated call buttons, they may take you directly to the fire floor.

As you make your way to the fire exit, stay on the same side as the exit door. Count the doors to the exit.

When you reach the exit, walk down the stairs to the first floor. Hold onto the handrail for guidance and protection from being knocked down by other occupants.

If you encounter heavy smoke in the stairwell, do not try to run through it. You may not make it. Instead, turn around and walk up to the roof fire exit. Prop the door open to ventilate the stairwell and to keep from being locked out. Find the windward side of the roof, sit down, and wait for firefighters to find you.

If all exits are blocked or if there is heavy smoke in the hallway, you will be better off staying in your room. If there is smoke in your room, open a window and turn on the bathroom vent.

Do not break the window unless it can not be opened. You might want to close the window later to keep smoke out, and broken glass could injure you or people below.

If your phone works, call the desk to tell someone where you are, or call the fire department to report your location in the building. Hang a bed sheet out the window as a signal.

Fill the bathtub with water to use for fire fighting. Bail water onto your door or any hot walls with an ice bucket or waste basket. Stuff wet towels into cracks under and around doors



where smoke can enter. Tie a wet towel over your mouth and nose to help filter out smoke. If there is fire outside your window, take down the drapes and move everything combustible away from the window.

If you are above the second floor, you probably will be better off fighting the fire in your room than jumping. A jump from above the third floor may result in severe injury or death.

Remember that panic and a fire's by-products, such as super-heated gases and smoke, present a greater danger than the fire itself. If you know your plan of escape in advance, you will be less likely to panic and more likely to survive.

#### Chapter IV. Terrorism

Although for most of us it is not a probability, terrorism is a fact. The likelihood of terrorist incidents varies according to country or area of the world, generally depending on the stability of the local government and the degree of frustration felt by indigenous groups or individuals.

Although the number of incidents worldwide has increased at the rate of 10 percent per year, less than a quarter of these have been directed against American businesses or their employees. Most acts of terrorism are directed against citizens of the country where they occur.

When an act of terrorism does occur, it often has dire consequences: murder, hostage taking, property destruction. Much has been learned about the mentality of terrorists, their methods of operation, and the behavior patterns of both victims and perpetrators.

Alert individuals, prepared for possible terrorist acts, can minimize the likelihood that these acts will be successfully carried out against them. While there is no absolute protection against terrorism, there are a number of reasonable precautions that can provide some degree of individual protection.

#### U.S. Policy

U.S. policy is firmly committed to resisting terrorist blackmail.

The U.S. Government will not pay ransom for the release of hostages. It will not support the freeing of prisoners from incarceration in response to terrorist demands. The U.S. Government will not negotiate with terrorists on the substance of their demands, but it does not rule out contact and dialogue with hostage takers if this will promote the safe release of



hostages.

In terrorist incidents abroad affecting Americans, our government looks to the host government to provide for the safety of U.S. citizens in accordance with international agreements.

The U.S. Government is prepared to offer terrorist experts, specialized assistance, military equipment, and personnel should the foreign government decide such assistance could be useful.

#### Terrorist Demands

U.S. Government policy is to make no concessions to terrorist demands. However, such a decision on the part of private individuals or companies is a personal one and in some special circumstances may be made by the family or company of the victim. Whatever the decision, it should conform to local law.

#### Terrorist Surveillance

Terrorists may shadow an intended victim at length and with infinite patience before an actual abduction or assassination is attempted. Initial surveillance efforts may be clumsy and could be spotted by an alert target.

In most cases, more than one individual is a likely candidate for the terrorist act. Usually the choice is based on the probability of success. In one documented instance, both an American and another country's representative were under surveillance. Though the American was the first choice of the terrorists, their surveillance showed that it would be more difficult to kidnap him. Consequently, the other individual was abducted and spent a long period in captivity.

Precise risks of surveillance and popular local tactics can be explained by your company's security representative. However, you must also learn to cultivate a "sixth sense" about your surroundings.

Know what is normal in your neighborhood and along your commute routes, especially at choke points. If you know what is ordinary, you will notice anything extraordinary-people who are in the wrong place or dressed inappropriately, or cars parked in strange locations.

Be particularly observant whenever you leave your home or office. Look up and down the street for suspicious vehicles, motorcycles, mopeds, etc. Note people near your home who



appear to be repair personnel, utility crew teams, even peddlers. Ask yourself if they appear genuine.

Become familiar with vehicle makes and models; learn to memorize license numbers. Determine if a pattern is developing with specific vehicles. See if cars suddenly pull out of parking places or side streets when you pass. Cars with extra mirrors or large mirrors are suspicious.

Be aware of the types of surveillance: stationary (at residence, along route, at work); following (on foot, by car); monitoring (of telephone, mail); searching (of luggage, personal effects, even trash); and eavesdropping (electronic and personal). An elaborate system involving several people and cars might be used.

Make their job tougher by not being predictable. Eat at different times and places. Stagger professional and social activities; do not play tennis "every Wednesday at three," for example.

Know the choke points on your routes and be aware of other vehicles, vans, or motorcycles as you enter those bottleneck areas. Search out safehavens that you can pull into along the route.

Drive with windows rolled up to within 2 inches of the top and lock all doors. Report any suspicious activity promptly to law enforcement.

Avoid using unlicensed cabs or cabs that appear out of nowhere. Do not permit taxi drivers to deviate from desired route.

Be circumspect with members of the press, as terrorists often pose as journalists. Do not submit to interviews or allow photographs to be made in or of your home.

Always speak guardedly and caution children to do the same. Never discuss travel or business plans within hearing of servants. Surveillants consider children and servants to be a prime source of information. Always assume that your telephone is tapped.

In elevators, watch for anyone who waits for you to select your floor, then pushes a button for the one just above or below yours.

If you become aware of surveillance, do not let those watching you know you are onto them. And certainly never confront them. Immediately notify your appropriate company



representative.

Memorize emergency numbers, and carry change for phone calls.

### Hijackings

The experience of others will be helpful to you if you are the victim of a hijacking. Blend in with the other airline passengers. Avoid eye contact with your captors. Remember there may be other hijackers covertly mixed among the regular passengers.

Although captors may appear calm, they cannot be trusted to behave reasonably or rationally at all times. Stay alert, but do not challenge them physically or verbally. Comply with their instructions.

If interrogated, keep answers short and limited to nonpolitical topics. Carry a family photo; at some point you may be able to appeal to captors' family feelings.

Minimize the importance of your job. Give innocuous reasons for traveling. Never admit to any accusations.

### Armed Assault on the Ground

Hostages taken by ground assault are in a situation similar to hijacking except that it occurs within buildings. Business offices, banks, embassies, and trains have been targets. The same advice for dealing with hijackers applies to ground assaults. Should shooting occur, seek cover or lie flat on the floor.

### Kidnappings

Kidnapping is a terrifying experience, but you possess more personal resources than you may be aware of to cope with the situation. Remember, you are only of value to them alive, and they want to keep you that way.

The common hostage responses of fear, denial, and withdrawal are all experienced in varying degrees. You may be blindfolded, drugged, handled roughly, or even stuffed in the trunk of a car. If drugs are administered, do not resist. Their purpose will be to sedate you and make you more manageable; these same drugs may actually help you to get control of your emotions, which should be your immediate goal. If conscious, follow your captors' instructions.



## Captivity

A hostage-taking situation is at its worst at the onset. The terrorists are nervous and unsure, easily irritated, often irrational. It is a psychologically traumatic moment for the hostage. Violence may be used even if the hostage remains passive, but resistance could result in death.

If taken hostage, your best defense is passive cooperation. You may be terrified, but try to regain your composure as soon as possible and to organize your thoughts. Being able to behave rationally increases your chances for survival. The more time that passes, the better your chances of being released alive.

## Behavior Suggestions

Each captivity is different, but some behavior suggestions apply to most:

- Try to establish some kind of rapport with your captors. Family is a universal subject. Avoid political dialogues, but listen attentively to their point of view. If you know their language, listen and observe; and if addressed, use it.
- Plan on a lengthy stay, and determine to keep track of the passage of time. Captors may attempt to confuse your sense of time by taking your watch, keeping you in a windowless cell, or serving meals at odd hours. However, you can approximate time by noting, for example, changes in temperatures between night and day; the frequency and intensity of outside noises-traffic, whistles, birds; and by observing the alertness of guards.
- Maintain your dignity and self-respect at all times.
- Manage your time by setting up schedules for simple tasks, exercises, daydreaming, housekeeping.
- Build relations with fellow captives and with the terrorists. If hostages are held apart, devise ways to communicate with one another. Where hostages are moved back and forth, to bathrooms for example, messages can be written and left. However, do not jeopardize your safety or the safety or treatment of others if attempting to communicate with fellow captives seems too risky.



- Maintain your physical and mental health; it is critical to exercise body and mind. Eat food provided without complaint; keep up your strength. Request medical treatment or special medicines if required.
- Establish exercise and relaxation programs. Exercise produces a healthy tiredness and gives you a sense of accomplishment. If space is confined, do isometrics. Relaxation reduces stress. Techniques include meditation, prayer, daydreaming.
- Keep your mind active; read anything available. Write, even if you are not allowed to retain your writings. If materials are not available, mentally compose poetry or fiction, try to recall Scripture, design a house, even "play tennis" (as one hostage did).
- Take note of the characteristics of your captors and surroundings: their habits, speech, contacts; exterior noises (typical of city or country); and other distinctive sounds. This information could prove very valuable later.

If selected for early release, consider it an opportunity to help remaining hostages. Details you have observed on the terrorists and the general situation can assist authorities with a rescue.

You can expect to be accused of working for the government's intelligence service, to be interrogated extensively, and to lose weight. You may be put in isolation; your captives may try to disorient you. It is important that you mentally maintain control.

### Avoidance of Capture or Escape

Efforts to avoid capture or to attempt escape have in most cases been futile. The decision, however, is a personal one, although it could affect fellow hostages by placing them in jeopardy. Several other considerations should be weighed.

To have any chance of success, you should be in excellent physical condition and mentally prepared to react before the terrorists have consolidated their position. This, also, is the riskiest psychological time. You would need to have a plan in mind, and possibly have been trained in special driving tactics or other survival skills.

If you are held in a country in which you would stand out because of race or other physical characteristics, if you know nothing of the language or your location, or if you are held in a country where anti-American or anti-Western attitudes prevail, you should consider the consequences of your escape before attempting it.



If you conclude that an escape attempt is worthwhile, take terrorists by surprise and you may make it. If their organization has a poor track record of hostage safety, it may be worth the risk.

## Rescue

The termination of any terrorist incident is extremely tense. If an assault force attempts a rescue, it is imperative that you remain calm and out of the way. Make no sudden moves or take any action by which you could be mistaken for a terrorist and risk being injured or killed.

Even in a voluntary release or surrender by the terrorists, tensions are charged and tempers volatile. Very precise instructions will be given to the hostages, either by the captors or the police. Follow instructions precisely. You may be asked to exit with hands in the air, and you may be searched by the rescue team. You may experience rough treatment until you are identified and the situation has stabilized.

Finally, it's worth keeping in mind three facts about terrorism:

- The overwhelming majority of victims have been abducted from their vehicles on the way to or from work.
- A large number of people taken hostage ignored the most basic security precautions.
- Terrorist tactics are not static. As precautions prove effective, they change their methods. There is a brief "window of vulnerability" while we learn to counter their new styles.

## Additional Precautions

Do not settle into a routine. Vary times and routes to and from work or social engagements.

Remember, there is safety in numbers. Avoid going out alone. When traveling long distances by automobile, go in a convoy. Avoid back country roads and dangerous areas of the city.

A privately owned car generally offers the best security. Avoid luxury or ostentatious cars. Keep your automobile in good repair and the gas tank at least half full. Driving in the center lane of a multiple lane highway makes it difficult for the car to be forced off the road.

## Chapter V. Overseas Crisis Planning



## Culture Shock

Culture shock is the physiological and psychological stress experienced when a traveler is suddenly deprived of old, familiar cues-language, customs, etc. Both the seasoned traveler and the first-timer, whether in transit or taking up residence, are susceptible. The sensation may be severe or mild, last months or only hours, strike in a remote village or in a modern European city, in one country, but not another-or not at all.

Culture shock is most prevalent in the second or third month after arrival when the novelty of the new country fades. Symptoms typically disappear by the fourth to sixth month, when the family has settled in and a sense of equilibrium is restored.

Traveler disorientation is a form of culture shock. You may encounter so many strange sounds, sights, and smells upon arrival in a country new to you that you may be more vulnerable to accidents or crime. You may experience this disorientation on a fast-paced business trip to several different cultures.

You can combat traveler disorientation by gathering, in advance, information of a practical nature-knowing the routine at the airport, which taxis are recommended, knowing the exchange rate, etc. Pay particular attention to any host nation cultural behavior which may affect your security or safety.

As with any type of stress, culture shock may manifest itself both physically and emotionally. If you should experience it at a time when you need to be alert to security concerns, your awareness could be impaired. But if you understand it, you can successfully deal with it.

## Symptoms

In children, you may notice a drop in school work and disruptive or regressive behavior. Teens may rebel with drugs or sex.

Symptoms to watch for in adults and children include:

- Sleepiness, apathy, depression
- Compulsive eating or drinking



- Exaggerated homesickness
- Decline in efficiency
- Negative stereotyping of nationals
- Recurrent minor illnesses

### Successful Handling

The trauma of culture shock is most successfully dealt with if you:

- Realize that operating in a new setting with strange sights, sounds, smells, and possibly a new language, is a different experience for each person in the family.
- Communicate with each other; have patience and understanding; be sensitive to each others' feelings and difficulties.
- Exercise! Lack of proper rest, diet, and exercise aggravate culture shock stress symptoms. Establish a daily exercise schedule quickly.
- Use the support system of experienced associates at first. Begin to participate in the life of the new country to whatever extent possible. There are many possibilities for family or individual activities within the American and international communities and in the new country. Sightsee, join a tennis club, enroll at the university, join a church, go to a concert, volunteer with the Red Cross, join Rotary.

We never build up an absolute immunity to culture shock. Yet that same sensitivity to change also means that we have the capacity to be enriched by the new experience travel brings us. Remember, each positive effort at stepping into the local culture usually opens yet another door of opportunity and diminishes the effects of culture shock.

If severe culture shock symptoms persist past six months, seek professional help.

### Chapter VI. Helping Children Adjust

#### Before the Move



Set the stage with children before the transfer process begins. Discuss the contents of this booklet with them and share what you have learned about the new country. Keep discussions informal. Bring up selected subjects during routine activities-dinner or a weekend hike. Be careful not to be apologetic about any restrictions that living overseas may place on them.

Talk to them about:

- Cultural restrictions. Teens need to understand any dress or behavior restrictions ahead of time. Help children accept the local mores rather than resent them. Make your guidelines clear.
- Health precautions. It may be the first time children have not been able to drink tap water or eat the local fruits, vegetables, and meats. They may require shots or pills to prevent the onset of local diseases.
- Stress factors. Discuss with them the stress placed on a family by such a move and how they can relieve it. Many children instinctively reduce stress through play with others or a pet or by spending hours on the phone with friends. Still, they may express anger at relocation and anxiety about what the future holds. Flashbacks and nightmares are not uncommon in these situations.

Relocation Crisis

Children are creatures of habit. Settling them into a daily routine helps them adjust more successfully to any situation-whether it's a normal move, an evacuation, a separation, or a catastrophic disaster that has affected the whole community.

Give them information on the crisis appropriate to their age level. Listen to them. Talk to them. Let them express their anxieties. Acknowledge their feelings.

Encourage them to be physically active. Little ones can play games, teenagers can help with community needs related to the crisis, such as organizing activities for younger children or cleaning up earthquake damage. Vigorous exercise and sports are good for everyone during periods of high stress.

Make opportunities for them to be with peers. The older the child the more important this is, but most need to interact with children their own age. Insist they attend school, as this is the center of life with peers.



Let them feel that they have complete parental support. In times of crisis, children regress to earlier developmental stages. Young children can become almost infantile, forget toilet training, cling to parents. School-age children may refuse to go to school, be disruptive. Even teens, who have begun to break away from parents, may need reassurance that they are still securely within the family circle.

### Stress During Crisis

A crisis is best handled collectively. Parents, teachers, family, and friends can play a part in helping any child handle a crisis. Adults should support each other in guiding children through the crisis; there is no need to feel you are in this alone. Play groups or support groups may be formed.

Parents and teachers are models. If they handle a crisis calmly, children will be less anxious.

Children "borrow" strengths from adults around them. Help them put labels on their reactions; encourage them to verbalize feelings. Play is a natural form of communication for children; it will discharge bottled-up feelings. If allowed to work through their fears, most children will emerge strengthened from a crisis.

Children need to see you express your feelings of fear and grief, too. By example, parents and other adults can show children how these feelings are handled. It's important that they see not only the expression of grief and sadness, but that they understand that the feeling will pass.

Some parents attempt to protect children by not allowing discussion about a crisis. The healthy route is to let them discuss it until they can get some psychological distance from it. Verbal repetition is a natural cathartic process.

Give them information—real details in language appropriate to their ages. Children are more painfully aware of what's going on than adults realize. And, if it's not discussed, what they do know, or think they know, can become unpleasantly distorted in their minds.

If a child requires medical attention, someone from the immediate family should stay with him or her. See that the procedures that are to be done are explained to the child.

### Chapter VII. Security for Children



## Rules for Children

Children must be taught:

- To keep a parent in sight in public places and to go to a store clerk if lost and in need of help.
- Not to go anywhere with anyone without a parent's permission.
- A password known only to family and close friends.
- Not to accept packages or letters from people you do not know.
- To know at least key phrases in the local language.
- To let someone know their location and plans.

## Rules for Parents

Parents need to:

- Teach your child never to get into a car or go into a house without your permission. Do not leave your child alone in a public place, even for a moment.
- Teach your child your home address and telephone number. Children should know how to use public phones. Keep a list of emergency numbers by your phone and make children aware of them.
- Train children not to give personal information over the phone, even though the caller purports to be a friend. "Personal information" includes whether family members are away, travel plans, where parents work, or recreation and school routines.
- Explain the importance of never divulging any information in front of strangers.
- Caution children to always keep doors locked, and never to unlock a door to a stranger without adult approval.



· Listen when your child tells you he or she does not want to be with someone; there may be a reason. Have the child present when you interview a servant who will be caring for him or her; observe their reactions.

### Child-Watch Checklist

Post an information list by each phone. Your sitter should be familiar with every item.

- Family name
- Address
- Phone number
- Fire
- Police
- Medical
- Poison
- Neighbor's name
- Neighbor's address
- Neighbor's phone
- Nearest fire call box
- Miscellaneous information of importance

### Checklist for Babysitters

Ensure all doors and windows are locked and that doors are not opened to anyone.

Do not give out any information over the telephone. Simply state that Mr./Mrs. X cannot come to the phone right now. Take a message.



Never leave the children alone, even for a minute.

Know the dangers to children of matches, gasoline, stoves, deep water, poisons, falls. Know the locations of all exits (stairs, doors, windows, fire escapes) and phones in case of emergency.

List the names and ages of children.

## Chapter VIII. Evacuation

Many evacuations have taken place in past years for reasons of political instability, acts of terrorism, and natural disasters. In a number of cases, people have gone back to their new home after a short time; in others they have not returned at all. Notification times can range from a couple of hours to several weeks.

No two evacuations are the same. But there are common threads that run through all; knowing them can make an evacuation easier. What we have learned, both as a government and from individuals who have been evacuated, is distilled here for you.

### Preparation

Be prepared. Assume an evacuation could occur at any point and have everything in place to execute it. It is better to be ready and not need it, than to need it and be unprepared.

Determine the "who and where" with your family. Who should be contacted and where your family would go in case of an extended evacuation. This is especially important for single parents; employees could be required to stay in the new country while children must leave. Parents should make arrangements for emergency child care before leaving the United States.

Establish a line of credit to cover emergencies. Obtain individual credit cards for you and your spouse. Open two checking accounts; use one as an active account, and keep the other in reserve. If possible, arrange for your paycheck to be deposited in a U.S. bank. Keep only a small account in a local bank for currency exchange or local purchases.

Know the emergency evacuation plan of the school. If there is none, be an active parent organizer and ensure that one is instituted. Join or start a safety network of parents.



Keep a small bag packed with essentials-clothing changes, snack food (dry, nonperishable), bottled water, medications. Small means small; anything over 10 pounds is not small.

In your residence, group important papers together along with checkbooks, U.S. credit cards, some traveler's checks, a small amount of cash, and U.S. driver's licenses. Maintain a basic emergency supply of food, water, gasoline, and first-aid supplies.

Meet your neighbors. Learn the location of the nearest hospital, police station, and friendly embassy or consulate.

Remember pets; have inoculations current and arrange for a suitable home in case they must be left behind.

#### If Evacuated

In the event an evacuation order is given, it is crucial for parents to discuss with children what is going to happen. Even if there is very little time before a departure, talk with them about the parent who will be staying. Reassure them; explain what will take place in

the evacuation. They also need to know that the same rules and routines that structured their lives during normal times will continue.

Establish a daily routine with the children as soon as possible after evacuation and relocation. Be sure to incorporate family rituals-bedtime stories, family meals, church, pancakes on Saturday morning, whatever! Accentuate any advantages of the alternate location-museums, amusement park, proximity to grandma and grandpa.

Minimize separation from the remaining parent as much as possible. Try not to use day care for a while. The child's fear of abandonment will be intense for a time.

#### Chapter IX. Residential Fire Safety

Although fire does not sound as dramatic as terrorism, in fact it kills far more people each year than does terrorist activity overseas. In many countries fire regulations do not exist, firefighting equipment is antiquated, water sources are inadequate, and buildings are constructed with minimum standards.

Each year thousands of people die in home fires, half of them killed in their sleep by the toxic gases and smoke. Many who do survive spend months in hospitals and suffer lifelong



physical and emotional scars. Children are often killed because they panic and try to hide from fire under beds and in closets.

Most of this devastation can be prevented. In only a few years, the use of smoke detectors in the United States has cut in half the number of annual fire fatalities. Fire prevention education is gradually making the odds even better.

Take these basic steps to protect your family from fire, whether you are in the United States or overseas:

Use smoke detectors in your home.

Prepare a fire escape plan with your family.

Conduct a fire drill at least once every six months.

#### Smoke Detectors

If fire occurs in your home, you may never awaken; smoke and toxic gases kill quietly and quickly. Yet you can be saved by the same smoke that can kill you-if it activates a smoke detector.

A smoke detector sounds a warning before you can even smell the smoke or see any flames. Smoke detectors should be installed, on each floor of the residence. If you have only one, place it on the ceiling outside the sleeping area.

Smoke detectors must be tested once a month and whenever you return from vacation. Never paint them. Once a year they should be vacuumed to remove any dust or cobwebs inside that would interfere with their functioning.

Be sure everyone in the family recognizes the sound of the alert; test it with all members in the bedrooms with doors closed to be sure that they can hear it.

#### Fire Escape Plan

Since fire and smoke travel quickly, you have, at most, only minutes to escape. It is imperative that each member of the family knows what to do, automatically.



A fire escape plan is your best bet. With your family, draw a floor plan of your house marking all possible exits. Since fire could block any exit, always have an alternative way to escape. Know in advance where to go. Double check exits to be sure they open and that children can handle doors or windows by themselves.

Show all windows, doors, and outdoor features. Note escape aids such as a tree or balcony; check to ensure that they would work.

Locate the nearest fire alarm box or the neighbor's house. Teach your children how to report a fire.

Designate a meeting place outside the house. You must know immediately who may be trapped inside.

Tape a copy of the floor plan by the telephone. Advise household employees/babysitters (see page 24).

### Fire Drills

Practice your plan! Regular fire drills assure that everyone knows what to do. Change the imaginary situation from drill to drill. Decide where the "fire" is and what exits are blocked. When small children learn what to do by rote, they will be less likely to panic in real life situations.

Pets cannot be considered. The dangers of a fire are overwhelming, and the primary consideration is saving human lives. Often pets will escape before you do, anyway.

### Fire Extinguishers

Every home should have at least one fire extinguisher and one smoke detector. Be sure that the extinguisher works and that you know how to operate it.

Portable fire extinguishers can be effective on a small, confined fire, such as a cooking fire. But if a fire is large and spreading, using an extinguisher may be unsafe; you risk the dangers of inhaling toxic smoke and having your escape route cut off.

Use a fire extinguisher only after you:



- Are sure everyone else is out of the building.
- Have called the fire department.
- Are certain you can approach the fire safely.

### Use of Window Escapes

Before using a window escape, be sure that the door to the room is closed; otherwise, a draft from the open window could draw smoke and fire into the room.

Use an escape ladder or balcony if possible. If there is none, do not jump—wait for rescue as long as you can. Open a window a few inches at the top and bottom while you wait; gases will go out through the top and fresher air will enter through the bottom.

Children must know that it is all right to break a window. Discuss how to do it, using a baseball bat or a chair. Stand aside to avoid flying glass shards. Place a rug or blanket over the sill before crawling out.

Lower small children from the window. Do not leave first and expect them to follow. If they panic and refuse to jump, you will be unable to get them.

### A Summary of Fire Safety Reminders

After a smoke detector warns you of a fire, you have only a few moments to escape.

Even concrete buildings are not fireproof. Virtually all the contents of your home or office will burn very quickly and produce toxic gases that can overpower you.

Sleep with bedroom doors closed. A closed door can hamper the spread of a fire, and the chances of a fire starting in a bedroom are remote.

To escape, keep low and crawl on hands and knees. A safety zone of cleaner air exists nearer the floor.

Once out, no one should be permitted to re-enter a burning house for any reason. Hold on to children who may impulsively run back inside.



Children panic in fire and tend to attempt hiding as a means of escape. Train them to react correctly. As you escape, try to close every door behind you. It may slow the fire's progress.

Feel every door before you open it. If it is hot, do not open it. If it is cool, brace yourself against the door and open it slowly, checking for fire. A fire that has died down due to lack of oxygen could flare up once the door is open. If that happens, close the door immediately. Never waste time getting dressed or grabbing valuables.

If clothes catch fire, drop to the ground and roll to extinguish flames, or smother the fire with a blanket or rug.

Never run. Teach children to stop, drop, and roll.

#### The Final Word

Fires are preventable. The major causes of home fires are:

- Carelessness with cigarettes. Never smoke in bed; poisonous gases from a smoldering mattress can kill long before there are flames. After a party, look under cushions for smoldering cigarettes.
- Faulty electrical wiring. Many homes in lesser developed countries are wired insufficiently to handle the simultaneous use of many electrical appliances. Do not overload circuits. Limit appliances plugged into the same extension cord. Major appliances should have their own heavy-duty circuit. Know where the fuse box is and instruct older children and household employees on how to shut off power in case of an electrical fire.

Household current and plugs/sockets in many countries are different than in the United States. Transformers may be required to adapt U.S. appliances to the local current. Be sure your appliance, transformer, and the local current are compatible before using.

- Faulty lighting equipment. Check electrical cords for cracks, broken plugs, poor connections. Use correct size bulbs in lamps, and be sure shades are not too close to bulbs.
- Carelessness with cooking and heating appliances. Do not leave food cooking unattended. Have heating system and fireplaces inspected professionally once a year.
- Children playing with matches. Teach children fire safety; keep matches and combustibles out of their reach.

#### Chapter X. Community Participation in Security



## Safety in Numbers

As you consider the issues of safety and security, remember you are not alone. Overseas, you have the support and guidance of your company, the U.S. Embassy, colleagues, and their families. The best security results from information and support flowing between these entities.

Remember, you also have a responsibility to them. Do your part to contribute to the safety and security of the community.

## What You Can Do

Keep abreast of current events, not only in the country, but internationally. Know what's going on in the country and in the world that could affect that country. Watch TV news programs, read newspapers, attend embassy security briefings periodically. It is your responsibility to keep current.

Locate yourself in relation to emergency services and places of refuge. Assist newcomers to do the same.

## Other Useful Steps

- Assemble a list of telephone numbers.
- Maintain a set of local maps.
- Meet neighbors and friendly people in your neighborhood.
- Locate fire department and police stations.
- Pinpoint nearest hospitals and clinics.
- Know how to reach friendly diplomatic missions.
- Know how to get accurate information.
- Don't repeat rumors.



- Establish an identification (I.D.) system for children.
- Establish and participate in a neighborhood warden plan and a buddy system.
- Prepare and keep current a telephone notification system.
- Identify an alternative notification system in the event telephone service is lost.
- Be a good listener. Be sensitive to special needs in your community. Single parents and employed couples may need help arranging security for their children. People who are ill, pregnant, or have new babies may have limited mobility. Elderly, dependent parents are a growing concern. Those who are isolated may need help in getting information. You can refer those with needs to the appropriate person.

## Chapter XI. Conclusion

Although this booklet contains many tips for successful travel and residence abroad, it is by no means all inclusive. Additional information is available from a variety of sources, ranging from travel brochures, magazines, and books, to conversations with persons who have lived or traveled to your assigned country.

You can never know too much about what you're getting into. Prior organization and preparation will significantly reduce your anxieties, lessen the shock of adjustment, and enable you to settle in with relative ease to a safe and enjoyable experience abroad.