

Procedure 30310a: International Traveler Emergency Contact Protocol

A. Introduction

The health, safety, and security of faculty, staff, and students is a top priority of Virginia Tech, including during university-supported international travel. To provide support to university-supported international travelers in the event of an emergency, Virginia Tech [Policy 1070: Global Travel Policy](#), requires all university-supported international travelers register their travel with the Global Education Office (GEO) before their expected departure date and to provide updates as additional information becomes available or changes occur during the trip, including cancellations and travel to additional countries. Part of this registration process includes providing contact information for an emergency contact person at each traveler's destination.

B. Procedures

The Global Travel Oversight Committee (GTOC) and GEO monitor international news and events for registered destinations of university-supported travelers. In the event of an emergency, university-supported travelers have several options to reach out for assistance. If GTOC and GEO identify an emergency situation in the vicinity of reported travel destinations, this procedure will be used to notify travelers of the event or situation, gain an understanding of risks to travelers, and provide support to travelers as needed.

B.1 Traveler Resources for Emergencies

Virginia Tech [Policy 1070: Global Travel Policy](#), requires all university-supported international travelers to enroll in international emergency medical and security assistance insurance through the university's contracted provider. This insurance policy includes an emergency assistance team with a 24-hour call center that can assist with medical monitoring, medical evacuation, medical repatriation, security evacuations, emergency message transmittal, prescription drug replacement, coverage verification, payment assistance for medical expenses, medical coverage direct billing, and medical referrals. Travelers enrolled in Virginia Tech's international emergency medical and security assistance insurance policy can open a case with our contracted emergency assistance team, AXA Assistance, by calling or e-mailing:

- Outside the U.S. - +001 (312) 935-1703
- Within the U.S. - (855) 327-1411
- medassist-usa@axa-assistance.us

AXA Assistance will ask for the following information while opening a case:

- Caller's/participants first and last name
- Contact details
- Type of service requested
- Brief summary of request/incident
- Location where assistance is requested

GEO maintains a 24-hour emergency line for use by all university-supported international travelers, +1 (540) 750-5747. AXA Assistance can provide the most direct on-site support, but does not have a deep understanding of university policies, procedures, and resources. This emergency line will connect travelers in crisis with a member of GEO that can assist with determining a course of action to navigate

the emergency, or connect travelers with appropriate Virginia Tech support resources. In a non-emergency situation, travelers can contact GEO by emailing VTGlobalSafety@vt.edu.

University-supported international travelers can also reach out to the Virginia Tech Police Department (VTPD), +1 (540) 231-6411, extension 1, for assistance. VTPD will connect the caller with the relevant support resource(s) on-campus.

Travelers are welcome and encouraged to directly contact the [nearest U.S. embassy or consulate](#) to their location for support or assistance. University-supported travelers who are traveling under passports from non-U.S. countries are able to request support and assistance from the embassy or consulate of their home country in their destination. All travelers who are U.S. citizens are strongly encouraged to enroll in the U.S. Department of State's [Smart Traveler Emergency Program \(STEP\)](#) to receive notifications concerning local emergencies directly from the U.S. embassy or consulate, and to be eligible for emergency repatriation flights.

B.2 Contacting Individual Travelers in the Event of an Emergency

When an emergency event is identified in the destination country or general vicinity of university-supported travelers, GEO will attempt to contact travelers in the following order until contact is made with travelers or the risk is no longer present:

1. Email all individual travelers with the impacted destination on their reported itinerary to ensure travelers are aware of the event and confirm if travelers need assistance.
2. Call travelers directly on the international phone number provided during registration of their travel.
3. Call the travelers' provided emergency contact at their destination.
4. Notify GTOC and traveler's department of the lack of contact, and email and/or call travelers' emergency contacts as are listed in Banner and/or the university's study abroad enrollment management system. GTOC and traveler's department will be notified with updates concerning the traveler, as they are available.

The timeline of this outreach will be event driven, moving faster if the situation requires because of potential risk to travelers' safety. If the crisis event is deemed by GTOC to require recommending travelers return as soon as possible, the Procedure on Changes in Advisory Levels and Emergency Traveler Recall will be followed.

B.3 Contacting Group Travelers in the Event of an Emergency

Faculty and staff leading groups of students on international university-supported travel shall assist in both emergency notifications and emergency response procedures to the greatest extent possible. Groups of faculty and/or staff with a common destination will be contacted as individual travelers in the event of an emergency.

When an emergency event is identified in the destination country or general vicinity of university-supported group travelers with students led by faculty/staff, GEO will attempt to contact program or group leaders in the following order until contact is made or the risk is no longer present:

1. Email group leaders with the impacted destination on their reported itinerary to ensure travelers are aware of the event and confirm if travelers need assistance.
2. Call group leaders directly.

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3. Call the group's provided emergency contact at their destination.
4. Call program participants to connect with group leaders.
5. Notify GTOC and traveler's department of the lack of contact, then GEO will email and/or call travelers' emergency contacts as are listed in Banner and/or the study abroad enrollment management system. GTOC and travelers' department will be notified with updates concerning the traveler, as they are available.

This is the intended protocol but can vary at the discretion of GEO. The timeline of this outreach will be event driven, moving faster if the situation requires because of potential risk to travelers' safety. If the crisis event is deemed by GTOC to require recommending travelers return as soon as possible, the Procedure on Changes in Advisory Levels and Emergency Traveler Recall will be followed.