Collin College

Study Abroad

Health and Safety Tips

I. General Health and Safety

· Be aware of your surroundings at all times, even when in areas generally considered safe. Be careful not to become overconfident after a few days or weeks and assume you no longer need to be cautious.

· Alcohol compromises one’s ability to fully be aware of their surroundings and lowers inhibitions. Use caution and avoid overindulging. Establish a plan for your return home before going out.

· Read the US Consular Information Sheet regarding countries of travel and be aware of the warnings entailed.

· Be careful with valuables, baggage, cameras, purses etc., especially in known tourist locations, airports, and near ATMs.

· Use a “buddy system” to travel in groups of two or more, especially at night.

· Be aware of your own mental and physical health. Recognize when you need rest, when you might be getting sick, and know your own limits.

· Pay close attention to the advice and information provided by local college staff.

· If you have health or safety questions or concerns, please share them staff immediately (do not be afraid, embarrassed, or shy when safety issues are concerned).

· Culture shock, homesickness, and frustration are a normal part of people’s education abroad experience. Be prepared for it and recognize when your frustrations are affecting your perspective and know that culture shock may be irrational.

· Keep records of all credit card numbers and a copy of your passport page with someone at home and keep a spare copy with you during travel in case of loss or theft.

· Carry key phone numbers for emergency contact with you at all times in case you are separated from the group.

· Register your travel with the US State Department for rapid notification in the case of an emergency.

· Develop a plan with trip leads of where to meet in the case of emergency. In the case of catastrophic emergency, be aware of locations of U.S. Consulates, Red Cross, police or hospitals in the area where you could seek help.

II. Medical Health and Safety

· Health insurance is required for all Collin College study abroad programs. In addition to coverage for general illness or hospitalization, coverage must also include emergency evacuation and repatriation of remains in the result of death.

· Use the college Emergency Information Form to declare any known illnesses, disabilities, or mental health information. This information will be used only on a need-to-know basis with program leads and college staff, and it is very important that you provide the information needed for staff to help you stay healthy and safe during travel.

· Be sure to bring a sufficient supply of any medications you may need during travel. Be aware that some countries have restrictions on what medications can be brought into their country (check consulate website for details). Eyeglass and contact wearers may wish to bring an extra pair in case of loss.

· Food and water-borne bacteria are the most common cause of sickness during travel. Take precautions to protect yourself by avoiding unwashed fruit or vegetables, un-bottled water, or uncooked foods.

· Jetlag and sleep disruption stress the body’s immune system and emotional/mental health. Be aware of effects of sleep deprivation (especially during the first days of travel). Avoid alcohol and pace activities appropriately.

· Immunizations – Consult with a physician for travel immunizations and medications. In addition to specific precautions related to the areas of travel, it is important to make sure that you are up to date on booster shots for common illnesses.

· Swine Flu and international travel. Airports and crowded tourist locations are places when contagious disease spreads fast. Be sure to wash your hands frequently, and always before eating. Be aware of those coughing or sneezing around you. If you develop signs of illness during travel or immediately after return, seek medical attention promptly and share with the doctors your travel itinerary.

III. Alcohol

· The single greatest risk statistically for a person on a study abroad program is not airline crashes, terrorism, crime, or illness; it is self-generated problems by drinking.

· As a credit course you are expected to participate in all class activities and program field trips. Don’t let evening alcohol consumption interfere with your program participation. Alcohol consumption during program activities is prohibited.

· Be aware of cultural norms for alcohol consumption. Americans tend to drink more and drink faster than most other cultures and have a higher threshold for tolerance of public