



WHITE PAPER

Managing risk – Why, when, how?

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Key Travel would like to thank all of our contributors who have been involved in helping us put together this white paper.



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Managing risk – Why, when, how?

DEFn. [RISK]:

the possibility of incurring
misfortune or loss; hazard

DEFn. [ASSESSMENT]:

evaluation; estimation

DEFn. [MITIGATE]:

to make or become less
severe or harsh; moderate

Executive Summary

As the risks surrounding international travel or working abroad have been highlighted through 24-hour media coverage of world events and incidents, employer duty of care and employee anxieties combine to push risk management to the top of the agenda.

Historically, duty of care was low on employers' priority list. Organisations took the view that employees knew what they were letting themselves in for when they took the job and therefore they should accept any risk that came with that.

Now, employers are legally required to take duty of care and with that comes risk assessment, management and mitigation. And in the charity, faith and NGO sectors, employees often travel and work in areas that everyone else is steadfastly avoiding, so risk goes with the territory. But risk is a nebulous entity, which makes defining the risks to which your travellers are subject even more important.

In producing this white paper we talked to experts and practitioners to look at the variety of risks staff may encounter, what the options are for mitigating those risks and how policies should be constructed and disseminated to all parties.

And just as organisations are obliged to ensure they look after their employees, so those travelling on their behalf have a responsibility to know how to look after themselves.

We briefly cover the legal element and the technology available to support your policy. But the issue is bigger than anything that might be happening on the ground at home or abroad, and the existing physical and mental health of travellers and their ongoing welfare should be taken into account.

Although many in these sectors have excellent risk policies, for greatest effect they should be embedded in travel policy and practice, and some organisations are only beginning to consider their strategy.

This document is intended to be a call to action - a risk policy is a must for any organisation that has people travelling, whether in the UK or farther afield.



"I'm reluctant to go to Nigeria due to general safety and security issues there. A colleague was in Kenya on her way to the shopping mall when the terrorists attacks happened there."

Key Travel Insights Survey, 2014/15

Introduction

As an ever-changing world throws up challenges to traveller safety that range from extreme weather conditions and civil unrest to terrorism, ensuring duty of care for employees is increasingly high on organisations' priority list.

Events that affected travellers' safety in 2014 alone included the shooting down of Malaysia Airlines flight 17, disappearance of aircraft MH370, the siege in Lindt Café, Sydney, and the outbreak of Ebola in West Africa. Beyond catastrophic events that attract huge media coverage there are many smaller incidents and volatile, changing levels of risk in many areas. Risk management can no longer be an option.

This white paper spells out the need for organisations to assess and mitigate risk for their travellers, covering both the legal requirements of duty of care and the potential practical and emotional consequences of neglecting to do so. It highlights some of the many threats, from tiredness, through complacency to terrorist activity, and will give you the tools to audit and update your travel and risk policy.

We have spoken to a wide range of experts to ensure a broad spectrum of angles have been dissected, including International SOS; travel safety solutions consultancy Planet Wise; occupational and travel health provider InterHealth; travel technology

company Amadeus, which recently launched a risk management tool; plus frontline insights from Christian Aid and European Interagency Security Forum (EISF).

Mitigating risk is no easy task and an effective risk policy is a detailed, comprehensive document that is, most vitally, widely communicated. In other words, creating it is likely to be labour-intensive and time-consuming. We explain why a risk policy is a pre-requisite, covering the law, the need for a strategy that embraces pre-, during and post travel, duty of loyalty – the traveller's responsibility, policy compliance and mandating, occupational health, due diligence, communication, catering for the human factor – fallibility, digital tools, Ebola and lessons learned.

When reading this, if you find yourself asking, "Have I done this?", then your risk management strategy may not be as watertight as you think; it may not deliver duty of care nor protect travellers and equip them to handle the hazard they encounter. It is time to consider or re-consider your risk mitigation policy.

Risk management, the imperative:

If there were any doubt as to the necessity of having, communicating and enforcing a travel risk policy, a recent survey *Risk Assessment – An Insight*, conducted by Key Travel with over 1500 responses tells the story: nearly a quarter of respondents or their colleagues had been overseas when a serious incident happened in a location they were travelling to.

In addition, a third of respondents also felt global incidents and crises impacted the sense of security they felt when travelling and of that group over 40% were travelling less frequently or to different locations as a result of this.

When asked for reasons why global incidents had affected travellers' and travel arrangers' decisions to go to certain areas, responses to the *Insight* survey ranged from the highly emotive *"I don't want to die"* to the constructive *"We must not allow what happens round the world to affect our day to day life. If we do, no one will be able to travel. We must think positive always."*

Those affected by the 'misfortune' referenced in the definition of risk makes it sound low key – until it means your employees are caught in an

outbreak of civil unrest with no way of getting back or are seriously ill with no access to medicines or medical care.

Whether they are travelling to Spain, Suriname or Sierra Leone, there is always the possibility that something may go wrong and any organisation that fails to measure possible risks and do their best to mitigate the worst of them can find itself wrestling with problems way beyond the event.

In the case of humanitarian aid agencies, their need to manage risk is necessarily higher than many organisations, and their work in Ebola-stricken countries Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea, is evidence of this. But they do everything conceivable to protect their employees.



Risk and the law

In the UK, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Act 1999 legislates that companies have a duty of care to do all that is reasonably practicable to ensure that those they employ and those they do not employ, but who are affected in some way by their business activities, are protected from being exposed to risk of harm.

This defines the audience for which an organisation is responsible – locals, expats, international assignees and/or dependents.

The Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Law 2007 adds to the above liabilities of employers,

making them responsible if the way in which its activities are managed or organised causes a death and amounts to a gross breach of duty of care to the deceased. This applies to the UK but does not mean a firm is absolved of responsibility if an employee dies abroad.

We are a humanitarian charity and therefore visiting areas that are of high risk is part of our work. We take every incident seriously, and will always assess the situation before sending a traveller there... and obviously the traveller has to be comfortable."

Key Travel Insights Survey, 2014/15

Risk and its varieties

Risk is as diverse as it is widespread, including road traffic accidents, civil unrest and extreme weather conditions. *"During the volcanic ash cloud, many people could not get out of their location because their employer did not have a plan B, they thought traveller tracking was enough,"* says Managing Director of Planet Wise, Mark Hide. In other words, expect and plan for the unexpected.

Other factors can also present a risk such as unfamiliarity with a new destination, causing increased vulnerability; fatigue when driving; flaring of chronic health conditions, lost medication, illness; opportunistic crime; travel delays; and imprisonment. And alcohol guidelines are increasingly common in travel policies, with customers' preventing travellers from charging alcoholic drinks on expenses.

In short, there is no such thing as a 'safe' trip. And even within one country, potential hazards can vary

enormously. Ebola, terrorist activity, political unrest, natural disaster and risks specific to lone female travellers were the five main factors that affected organisations' decision to travel, according to respondents to the Insight survey.

The message is clear: approach apparently high risk and low risk destinations with the same care and attention - you and your employees need to be equally prepared for travel to both.

"The safety and security of travellers is something we take seriously as an organisation, but there is also an onus on the traveller to have done their own risk assessment, consulted FCO site, and overseas colleagues before making their decision to travel. We have not - in my history - ever stopped someone from travelling it would be a recommendation."

Key Travel Insights Survey, 2014/15

Managing risk: who is responsible?

An effective risk management programme is an ongoing process that starts before departure, continues for the duration and re-engages with the traveller on their return and beyond.

The need for preparation cannot be overstated and this has to be done with numerous disciplines within the organisation - HR, risk management, security, occupational health and safety manager, senior management and travel team. Risk is everyone's responsibility, which means it is essential to ensure one person takes ownership. **Create a team consisting of one person from each department and then make one person responsible for executing that policy and communicating it to the organisation's TMC (Travel Management Company) and other suppliers, so that they are also compliant.**

Most important, the message and example have to come from the top, i.e. the CEO and board, to ensure that best practice permeates throughout the organisation. This promotes compliance to a policy that should be mandated.

Christian Aid is an excellent example of this: *"The management culture is very strong in terms of safety and security,"* says security manager Neil Bullock. *"Our Chief Executive asks, 'where do I get my training?'* and that sets the standard."

Pre-trip briefings are essential and should include some kind of sign off from the traveller or their manager to ensure the traveller also takes responsibility. This is known as duty of loyalty, the employee's reciprocal attitude to the employer's duty of care. Of the Insight survey respondents, 42% provided travellers with destination and risk management training/briefings before departure but just over one third (37%) did not.



Sharing responsibility for risk – duty of loyalty?

“There is an onus on the employee to behave in a prudent fashion, so that they are not putting themselves in harm’s way or at risk because they are not respecting the policies and procedures of the company,” says regional medical director of International SOS Robert Quigley.

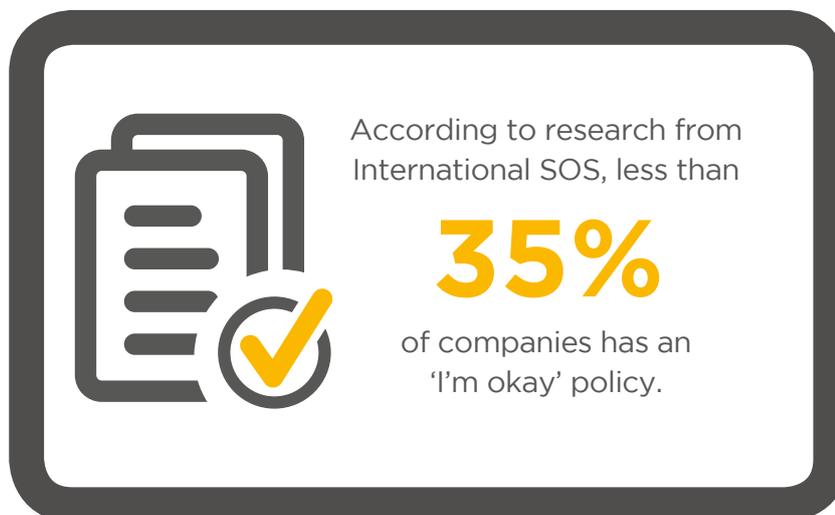
“That has a legal precedent as well. There should be a sweet spot between duty of loyalty and the duty of care that the company practises.

“Those companies that are successful in risk mitigation recognise and understand three pillars: duty of care, corporate social responsibility and company ethos. They always put employees first and are able to promote good, healthy living and risk management, and because they practise what they preach, they end up being most productive,” he says.

Duty of loyalty should include an ‘I’m okay’ policy, so that if there is a disaster or incident, there is an obligation on the part of the employee to call HR or

a central source and confirm that they are, indeed, OK. According to research from International SOS, less than 35 per cent of companies has that in place. Travellers also have a responsibility to keep their employers apprised of changes in their situation, whether that is the birth of a baby or that someone is temporarily confined to a wheelchair.

“During the Arab Spring, there was mass evacuation and some expatriates had not informed their company about their babies, a number of which did not have passports and could not board the aircraft,” says Quigley.



Managing risk policy - the role of your TMC

A more thorny issue is organisations' need for a profile of each individual, which can be a headache, due to data protection regulations.

A full profile of each traveller - personal and office mobile numbers, Twitter and Facebook addresses, etc. - is an essential part of risk mitigation. This is not 'Big Brother' but vital to ensure the company has every avenue for making contact in the event of a crisis.

This is where your TMC can help. *"Getting that personal information is built into our need to have a profile of every traveller in order to complete their booking and we can communicate that so that they understand why it is important,"* says John O'Sullivan of Key Travel. However, unless the employer, via their TMC, requests employees' permission to access the personal data contained in the TMC's travel profile in the event of a crisis it cannot be shared. **Create a link between HR and travel profiles, and ask travellers to update their profile each time they travel. This ensures it is current.**

In fact, a TMC is an important stakeholder in the process of supporting and protecting travellers.. This includes providing a 24-hour emergency contact number to help resolve local flight and hotel issues when they arise, and real-time travel incident information, so that they have the ability to react immediately to any emergency. And ask your provider to book charity fares, which allow maximum flexibility with minimum penalty - a particular advantage when responding to an incident on a handbrake turn.

"It is a three-way relationship - company, TMC and traveller - they should be combining forces to stay in touch through the support of a robust policy, clear processes, use of traveller tracking systems and targeted timely information."

John O'Sullivan, Key Travel.



Travel and occupational health

An important part of measuring risk is assessing the health of employees before sending them overseas for periods of time.

High blood pressure or cholesterol, medical history – heart attack, stroke – all this and more can be documented. Many people do not even know their blood group.

Mental health is also a crucial factor: *“Organisations forget it is critical prior to a long term assignment not only to do a physical examination but also a psychological profile on an individual and, equally important, their dependents,”* says Quigley. *“In 90 percent of failed assignments – which can cost companies up to US\$750,000 – dependents get into some sort of medical crisis: childhood asthma that cannot be treated or someone has a mental breakdown. “And if someone is having treatment for depression or anxiety, it is not in anyone’s interest for them to be exposed to further risk of psychological trauma in the field,”* he says.

Interhealth provides travel and occupational health services for many NGOs, including in Ebola-affected areas. The risks to be managed go beyond concerns about any single employee going into the region. *“People work in pairs in the treatment centres and if one of the two was unable to perform, that compromises both people,”* says director of health services for Interhealth Simon Clift.

“It is disruptive of any project delivery if someone is at high risk of needing emergency healthcare.” This leads to reputational risk: if an organisation proves unable to complete an assignment or the quality is substandard because someone is ill or exhausted, it reflects badly on the provider.

And take nothing for granted. *“One of the biggest misconceptions is that if you have a gold-plated emergency assistance programme, you are protected,”* says Clift. *“We have people in remote parts of South Sudan and getting a Lear Jet or even a helicopter in is not an option, they have to travel to Juba to access those things.”*

Some introspection is also valuable to ensure the health of the organisation is in good order. If there is pressure from the top to deliver the goods within an unreasonable time, that goes against staff welfare. There are organisations where the idea of recognising employees’ vulnerability is counter culture but everyone is susceptible to some kind of stress, either directly or vicariously. Anxiety does not just affect those in the front line.

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Post-trip assessment

That a traveller has returned home from a higher risk area or returned safely after being affected by an incident in some way does not mean the case is closed. They should be thoroughly debriefed and that includes giving them the opportunity to talk about what they experienced and saw, and how they feel about it.

“Organisations need to have contingency plans in place,” says Lisa Reilly, executive coordinator for European Interagency Security Forum (EISF), which acts as a peer support network for around 70 partner organisations in Europe such as NGOs and foundations. *“A lot of organisations will have in-house counsellors to give psychosocial support. It is of concern in the sector that nobody wants to admit they need help, although there is growing recognition that it is OK to say, yes, I am stressed, I was affected by what has happened, and organisations are putting in place things to deal with that. It is improving,”* she says.

“However, most of the support that is available is in English or another European language and based on western culture. There is a lot of work to do on how we help staff of other nationalities,” says Reilly.

In addition, material created during the debrief should be used to create a knowledge bank, which becomes part of the briefing, so that travellers benefit from the experience of others.



Travel policy: Risk management process

Crucial to a successful risk management programme is good communication.

Around a third of those polled in the Insight survey did not know their travel policy because it had never been communicated to them or they did not know where to find it (32.6%). Furthermore of those who know their travel policy 61.7% had not referred to it for a long time. This is far too hit and miss. With the best will in the world, no traveller can be compliant with a policy they have not been alerted to and that is not easy to access.

Start with having the risk policy written up, make it widely available in print and online, and have it embedded in travel policy to ensure that compliance to one automatically means compliance to the other. *"You need proof travellers have read and understood your travel and safety policy,"* says Mark Hide of Planet Wise. An instruction to employees to familiarise themselves with the policy - a 'mandatory read' - is a good starting point in correcting this issue.

At Christian Aid, employees make an online travel request that goes through their line manager, the country manager of the destination and security manager Neil Bullock. *"As part of that approval process, they sign off on a number of things,"* he says.

"These include basic security training such as personal safety - keeping a low profile, avoiding conflict with local culture with the way they dress, what hotels to choose, avoiding public disorder situations; what to put in a grab pack so that if there is an incident, it will keep them going for 48 hours."

"We also get travellers to do their own risk assessment and to look at what is likely to be a threat to them. It gets people to engage with what they are doing and where they are going."

In addition, *"Risk management is a continuum,"* says Bullock. *"We have to be constantly updating risk and that can be daily, sometimes hourly."* **And just as Christian Aid continually assesses whether security policies need to be changed, so should you review travel and risk programmes regularly, to ensure they are keeping up with an ever-changing world.**



Mandating, non-compliance and rogue bookers – the elephant in the room

TMCs are able to supply data about travellers who have booked through preferred suppliers but there are always those who don't.

Rogue employees who ignore travel policy and use retail travel booking sites may think they are saving their company money – but only until something goes wrong and when they realise they are on their own - particularly if their organisation doesn't have a local office or if their time zone means they're outside of their home office working hours – and they have to spend time and money making new arrangements, Convey this message to your travellers.

This drives a coach and horses through risk management programmes: neither the TMC nor the rogue traveller's employer has the remotest idea where they are or how they got there. *"It leaves no efficient way to communicate contingency plans and reassurance, nor to elicit whether the traveller is OK,"* says John O'Sullivan.

Organisations should measure leakage from policy: run a telephone check on 10 people who are supposed to be in a given city, ring them and ask them where they are. And take 20 expenses claims and confirm whether the traveller booked through the preferred agency. A small sample may be an indication what is happening on a larger scale.

"A mandated policy and process is non-negotiable and pays dividends in ensuring all information is in one place and accessible. It is a basic requirement of risk management," says O'Sullivan. And that can only increase compliance.



Risk mitigation and due diligence

Organisations should do due diligence on destinations to cover every conceivable eventuality.

Medical emergencies and security are often closely related and although ISOS undertakes more than 20,000 medical evacuations per year, that is only 3 percent of its business. The rest is risk mitigation and doing due diligence on destinations is an intrinsic part of that.

However, EISF's Lisa Reilly warns: *"Over the last 12 years or so, there have been huge advances in recognising risks and in risk management but as people have brought in policies, there has been a tendency to make this a tick-box exercise and people don't take away the lessons from personal experience."*

One reason for this is a high turnover of staff in the humanitarian sector and another is difficulties in integrating information from national staff into local partnerships. This can be due to the culture of the organisation or because "management teams tend to be expatriates, which can cause a disconnection", she says.

Assessing the risks inherent in travelling and operating within high-risk areas is a slower process for many NGOs because they do not have the funds to employ specialist agencies, which are generally the domain of corporate bodies. This has led to patchy availability of information. *"Take Nigeria, for example, there is a lot of information on the areas around the oil fields because that is where businesses go but there is very little around areas where NGOs work,"* says Reilly.

"So part of the risk is that with fewer external sources, NGOs have to rely on communication among ourselves, which is improving but sharing of information is always an issue."

Christian Aid undertakes country risk ratings and taps into other source material such as specialist agencies, the charity's own resources on the ground, NGO security forums and regional networks. But local knowledge can be a double-edged sword: *"It is essential because they have got their finger on the pulse but sometimes people become desensitised to risk,"* says Neil Bullock. *"If you are living in an environment where bombs and guns are going off all the time, you get used to it."*

Countries are rated from 1 – low-risk cities such as Geneva, Brussels, London, to 5 – don't go there. But one risk can lead to another: *"Poor infrastructure in Nepal has been made worse by the earthquakes and now they are going into the rainy season and there will be lots of landslides,"* says Bullock, exacerbating the risk of road traffic accidents.

And an example of ever-changing risk is the shooting down of a Malaysia Airlines flight last year, which put air space high on the agenda. One charity discovered that airlines take widely differing approaches to risk management, which meant it was left to make decisions.

Planning for the unexpected goes with the territory. *"We are putting in place triggers so that we can get to a point where we are moving staff before things get critical,"* he says. For example, in response to activity 200km away, this could be preparing to put an office into hibernation and assessing whether the charity can work safely from another country; or making contingency plans for an election because there was disorder and rioting during the last election.

"At the bottom line, there is always going to be an incident that catches you unawares but you hope that training and planning will help you deal with that."

Risk and insurance

The human factor can cause problems, people do silly things – and often with the best intentions.

One seasoned traveller, working for a construction company on a project in Africa, was traditionally picked up on arrival by a driver in a 4 x 4. *“If the driver gets tired, I take over for a couple of hours,”* he told his horrified HR and travel managers.

As Mark Hide of Planet Wise points out: *“Is it better to have a driver fall asleep at the wheel? No, but the company’s insurance would not cover the employee as a driver and if he had an accident and killed someone, in some countries he could be stoned to death – an eye for an eye.”* An assignee who adds leisure travel to a business trip would also be at risk. Ensure travellers know what the organisation’s insurance covers – and what it does not.

An insurance company may want advance notification of where employees are working and specific cover may be required for locations but situations can change quickly and countries that were considered ‘safe’ in March might be on the red list by May. *“It is in an organisation’s best interest that they proactively let their insurer know where their people are going and if an itinerary changes,”* says Robert Quigley.

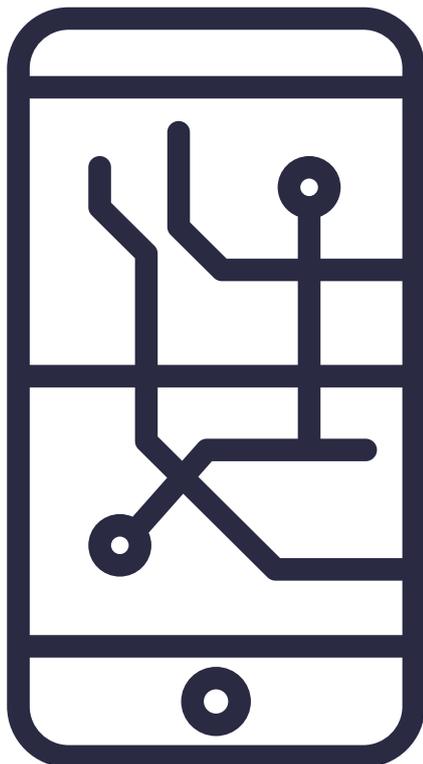


Tools for risk management

Technology has become central to good duty of care, whether that is tracking and locating travellers or timely communication.

One option for all three is Amadeus Mobile Messenger, recently adopted by Key Travel. Using travellers' itineraries, the tool allows users to see employees' locations on an interactive map, which can also be pinpointed by GPS thanks to their smartphones. Access can be pre-defined according to requirement.

"Real time updates give the latest information, critical for incident management, and the tool facilitates contact by app, text or email. Technology allows users to communicate as efficiently with 1,000 travellers as with one so that they receive information that is targeted to their location, before, during and after their trip, whether that relates to a bomb scare or a snow storm," says Claire Hansen, who oversees the company's global partnership development.



Three further functions allow dynamic management of sensitive situations. Risk intelligence provided by Riskline delivers information relevant to a traveller's location and can be transmitted automatically or proactively; Flight Monitor gives live flight status, including cancellation or delay; and Asset Management allows communication by company facility (office, factory, oil rig) worldwide.

This is one example of a number of tools available on the market that are linked to travellers' itineraries and provide alerts and mobile SOS. They offer a raft of risk management capabilities to help complete the picture for keeping - or helping - your travellers out of trouble.

It's important to remember that you may have employees travelling independently and not registered on the system or who have changed their destination whilst in-country so whilst employee tracking systems are an invaluable tool, they cannot be the only source of information, particularly in organisations where travel policy or TMC isn't mandated.

Case study Brussels Airlines: Defining and mitigating risks



Brussels Airlines has a long-standing affinity with Africa through its predecessor Sabena and this is not the first Ebola epidemic it has experienced, although it is arguably the biggest and the most media-hyped. Given its history, the airline decided to continue flying to Ebola-infected areas.

Between May 2014 and January 2015, Brussels Airlines flew some 60,000 passengers to and from Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, many of them health workers and from Doctors without Borders. The airline has instituted a comprehensive risk management programme to ensure the safety of all crew.

"The first measure we took was to change the crew base to Dakar, so that no one has to stay overnight where there is Ebola," says spokesperson Kim Daenen. *"Our security and safety department is constantly in contact with Doctors without Borders and the public health authorities in Belgium."*

Anyone who wants to get on board from the three affected countries has two temperature checks at the airport and has to fill out a medical questionnaire. If they answer three questions on the questionnaire positively, they cannot fly; nor if they have a fever. *"This ensures there would never be a passenger on board with Ebola symptoms, when Ebola would be contagious,"* she says.

"Our CEO flew to Monrovia, Sierra Leone, as a member of crew to see first hand how these operations are done and to make sure the checks are really thorough."

He has always said that if a passenger ever comes on board with Ebola symptoms, we will stop flying." This is an excellent example of where policy comes from the top, which ensures everyone takes it seriously and motivates compliance.

Pre-trip briefings are thorough. *"We sensitise our crew and every time they go on a flight to one of the three countries, they get elaborate training, a workshop where we explain in cooperation with health authorities, what they should do, should they have a passenger on board with who is feeling ill. There are special Ebola kits on the aircraft and we also have an Ebola coordinator in Belgium, who helps us make the right decisions,"* says Daenen.

This is applicable where risks are less defined and travellers' pre-trip briefings should include where their hotel is, down to street name and number, and telephone number; which taxi company to use between the airport and the hotel, and when going out from the hotel; full office address for clients and their telephone numbers; plus reminders about discussions with colleagues/clients in public places – including on the flight there/back, and meeting new contacts in the hotel where they are staying, not at an unknown location. **This is not patronising your employees, a pre-trip briefing should leave no stone unturned.**

"We have team leaders whom crew can talk to if they need to and if they don't want to fly, they don't have to. But as our coordinator in Belgium said, 'There is no reason to stop those flights because the checks are there and there is a low risk of contamination.' It is very important to keep passengers and crew safe."

Travel risk policy – take control

Creating, maintaining and communicating a risk policy requires time, analysis and application.

Creating, maintaining and communicating a risk policy requires time, analysis and application. However, both legally and morally, it is the only way to ensure you look after your travellers and equip them to look after themselves. Whether they are on a 45-minute flight to Amsterdam or 23 hours to Australia, they could be subject to any number of hazards, predictable or otherwise, as is amply illustrated by the 2010 ash cloud and the siege at the Sydney's Lindt Café in 2014.

The last word goes to EISF's Lisa Reilly: "When we talk about risk management, it is not to make us risk averse. It is saying, there is risk and we have to recognise it, minimise it as much as we can and then make decisions about what risk is acceptable to create an enabling environment to achieve the project and programmes, which is the purpose of what we do."



Mitigating risk – assessing your approach

Planning, implementation and compliance are the bedrock of good duty of care, according to International SOS, and the list developed by them below is a useful framework for reassessing your approach to risk management.



If you are unsure about quality and effectiveness of your current risk and travel management policies we recommend your organisation seeks professional support from a specialist risk or health and safety consultancy or contact the European Interagency Support Forum for further advice or membership.

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