



WHITE PAPER

# Managing risk – Why, when, how?

AUGUST 2016





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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

This white paper was commissioned by Key Travel. Over the past 12 months, our customers have increasingly spoken to us about travel risk management. As the risks surrounding international travel and 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 travel 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 accept duty of care and with that comes risk assessment, management and mitigation. And in the education sector, employees sometimes travel and work in areas that everyone else is steadfastly avoiding, so risk goes with the territory: during the Nepalese earthquake, while Northumbria University was desperately trying to get people out, geographers were desperately trying to get in. But risk is a nebulous entity, which makes defining the risks to which your travellers are subject, even more important.

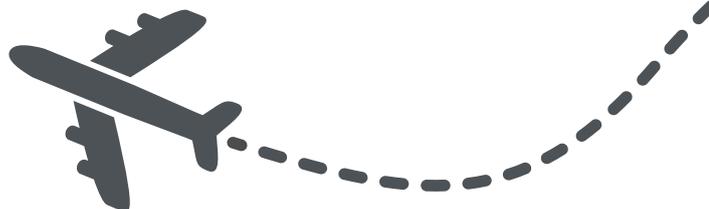
In producing this white paper, we talked to experts and practitioners to assess the variety of risks staff may encounter, what the options are for mitigating those risks and how policies should be constructed and disseminated to all parties. And just as organisations are obliged to ensure they look after 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 also be taken into account.

Although many institutions in the education sector 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 is responsible for people travelling, whether in the UK or farther afield.**

“

During the Nepalese earthquake, while Northumbria University was desperately trying to get people out, geographers were desperately trying to get in. ”





*"I would think twice about going to Paris or Brussels following the terrorist attacks in Paris. I am also a bit wary about going anywhere now."*

Key Travel Insights Survey, 2015/16

## 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 staff is increasingly high on an organisation's priority list.

Events that affected traveller safety in 2015 and 2016 included the earthquake in Nepal, terrorist events in Paris, Brussels and Nairobi and latterly the loss of EgyptAir Flight 804 over the Mediterranean. Beyond catastrophic events that attract huge media coverage, there are many smaller incidents that bring changing levels of risk in many areas: risk management is no longer an option, it's a necessity.

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 gives 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 has been dissected, including International SOS; travel safety solutions consultancy Travel Wise; occupational and travel health provider InterHealth; travel technology company Amadeus, which recently launched a risk management tool; plus insights from Universities

Safety and Health Association (USHA), Birmingham University, which is in the process of creating a risk policy, Northumbria University, and other institutions that participated in Key Travel Duty of Care Seminars in November 2015 and February 2016.

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 hazards they encounter. It is time to consider or reconsider your risk mitigation policy.**

## Risk management, the imperative:

If there was 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, tells the story: one third of the 1000 academic respondents felt global incidents and crises impacted on 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.

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 around the world to affect our day to day life. If we do, no one will be able to travel. We must think positive always."**

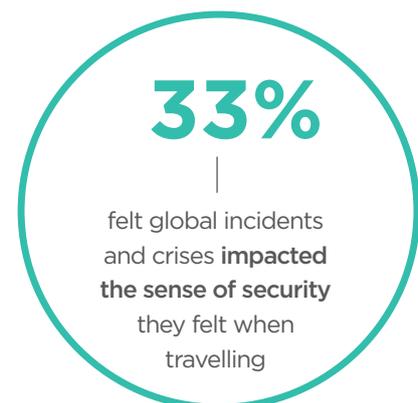
The 'misfortune' referenced in the 'definition of risk' makes it sound low key – until it means your employees are caught in an outbreak of civil unrest with no way of getting back or are seriously ill without access to medicine or medical care.

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.

**“** *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, 2015/16

This applies as much to universities as any other organisation. They have international teams travelling to student fairs and visiting partners, students travelling in pursuit of their studies or as volunteers, and academics travelling in the interest of research – and not all of them to safe destinations. Educational establishments need to know they can provide the necessary support when an incident occurs but also to give thorough briefings before departure.





## 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 Act 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 a student or academic dies abroad.

“The definition in the scholastic sector corresponds to ‘in loco parentis’ because institutions are taking on responsibility for people who are somewhat travel naïve and complacent about risk.”

**Regional Medical Director for International SOS (ISOS)**  
**Jonathan O’Keeffe**

# 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 Travel Wise, Mark Hide. In other words, expect and plan for the unexpected.

At the time, some universities did not even have traveller tracking. Bristol University academics were scattered worldwide: *“And we had no way of tracing who was where,”* says travel booker for the University, Rebecca Scott. *“Some people had booked their own flights and some through the Travel Management Company (TMC), and schools were not maintaining registers on where staff were. It was chaos and that prompted us to put in place policies and procedures surrounding where staff are, which we do to the best of our ability.”*

An escalation policy is also important and King's College London revised its policy with input from the Senior Programme Officer. As a result, if a student is involved in an incident, it escalates to the Director of Student Services, and from there, to the Head of Administration, depending on the nature of the event; and those people have responsibility out of hours. The policy was centrally designed, rather than in one department, in order to get the feedback from as many people as possible.

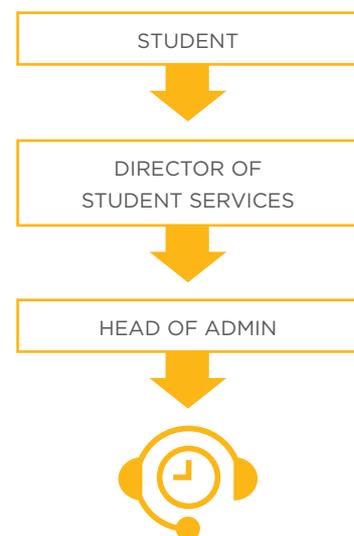
It should not stop there: **make sure your TMC account manager knows the process, so that its 24-hour emergency service understand what procedure should be followed.**

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 companies 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. Epidemics, terrorist activity, political unrest, natural disasters and risks specific to lone female travellers were five main factors that affected an organisation's 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 academics need to be equally prepared for travel to both.**

## EXAMPLE ESCALATION PROCESS FLOW





# 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. **Key Travel is working with Birmingham University to construct a travel and risk strategy and together they have assembled a team comprising Head of Security, Insurance, Travel and Sustainability, with senior management input.** 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 college or department and then make one person responsible for executing that policy and communicating it to the organisation’s TMC and other suppliers, so that they are also compliant.**

Most importantly, the message and example have to come from the top, i.e. **the Vice Chancellor or Chief Executive, to ensure that best practice permeates throughout the organisation. This promotes compliance to a policy that should be mandated.**

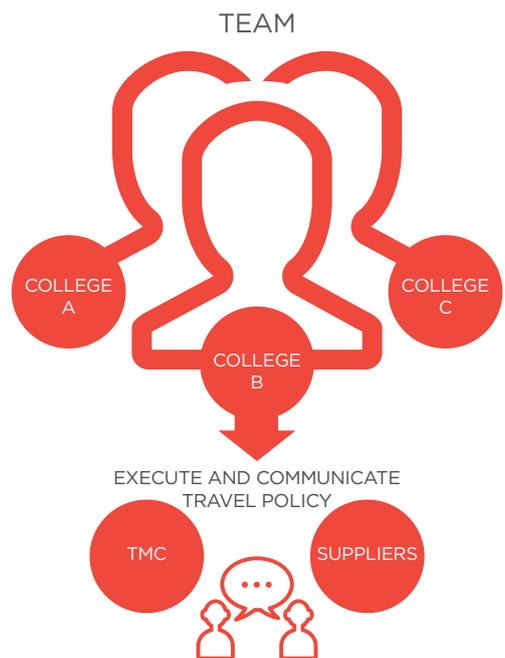
**Trinity College London has a health and safety group and a security group for its examinations board. “Where there are issues such as examinations near the Syrian border, groups work together and the final decision lies with the CEO,” says Operations Manager Lisa Petrocchi.**

Birmingham University’s policy will be rigorously policed. *“Any policy has to be signed off by the University Executive Board, they are the only people able to approve it,”* says Head of Security and Risk Chris Hoad.

However, *“Universities are by nature fragmented: Heads of College decide what is going on there, corporate service areas come under one person and administration under a registrar. That makes producing a University-wide policy difficult,”* he says. To bridge the gap, the University has already organised several cross-functional meetings.

These have highlighted that although some departments are doing quite good risk assessment, others have barely thought about equipping the traveller with the right information to ensure safe travel, and no two departments are doing the same thing.

International relations, student outreach and business development are the departments that travel frequently. In addition, *“Researchers go into risky areas, students travel in pursuit of cultural studies, the environmental science departments go to places like Turkey, on the border with Syria, and medical students go on electives to West Africa,”* says Hoad. *“If something breaks out, we need to be able to pull up a list telling us exactly who is where at the touch of a button.”*





Although Birmingham University has Key Travel as its TMC (Travel Management Company), there are, as is the case with most universities, still ‘rogue’ non-compliant travellers who “book on Expedia, pay using their credit card and claim it back on expenses”, he says. “There is no control and we have not got a clue where that person is. And the insurance aspects are questionable – there is no safety or security information getting through to that person.” Lack of centralised control and establishing a contact protocol in the event of an incident are two of his main concerns.

Northumbria has dealt unequivocally with the rogue element. “We have said that no travel will be refunded on expenses. All staff travel has got to go through travel provider,” says Insurance Advisor for the University Anne Hudson. “It has not gone down well, but it has been accepted. All complaints have been handled very well by the Senior Management Team, explaining that governance over health and safety are the reasons for doing that, so gradually people are starting to complain less. We have been quite firm about it.”

However, it is not so easy to do this for student travel. “Although our provider is Key Travel, there are an enormous number of students who travel independently and they could set out from anywhere in the world because we have a lot of distance learning students. We have to address that in the future,” she says.

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, just 22% of their institutions provided travellers with destination and risk management training and briefings before departure.

In 2011, USHA (University Health and Safety Association) and the Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA) published Guidance on Health and Safety in Field Work.



of institutions provided travellers with destination and risk management training and briefings before departure

The document was predicated on BS8848, the British Standard for organising and managing visits, fieldwork, expeditions and adventurous activities outside the UK.

The Safety In Field Work Project Group, which created the document, was chaired by Andrew Knight of USHA and included representatives from the Royal Geographical Society, six universities and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. In addition, “Eversheds gave us the underpinning legal opinion so that it would stand up in court if a University said it had followed the sector guidance.”

And Knight joined the ‘8848 Committee’ to provide an empirical link between the BSI standard and the document the group was creating. “We wanted to say that if a University followed the guidance, it would get conformity with 8848,” he says. It is a framework, however, and is therefore not prescriptive, allowing organisations to decide how to implement it.

It describes core actions which relate to the legal duties of an institution, supported by good practice guidelines for implementing the core actions. The document was reviewed in 2013 and “people said it worked for them and provided the flexibility to create the arrangements they needed”, says Knight. It is available on the UCEA website (<http://www.ucea.ac.uk/en/publications/index.cfm/guidance-on-health-and-safety-in-fieldwork>).



*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 website, 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 Survey, 2014/15

## 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.*

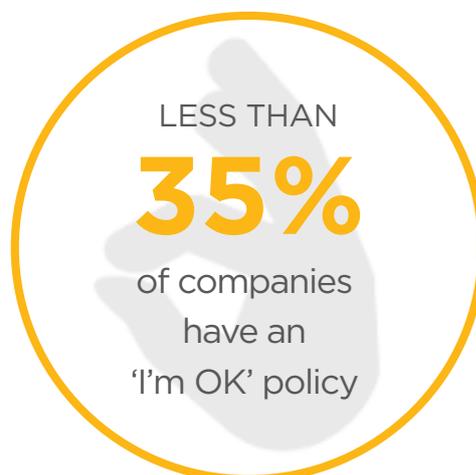
Duty of loyalty should include an ‘I’m okay’ policy, so that if there is a disaster or incident, there is an obligation on the part of the employee to call HR or a central source and confirm that they are, indeed, OK. According to research from International SOS, less than 35 per cent of companies have 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.

However, duty of loyalty in academia is a thorny issue.

*“Studies done around 15 years ago showed that duty of loyalty among academics was to their discipline or subject, not the institution,” says USHA’s Angus Clark. “Their attitude is, ‘it’s my grant, I’ve sourced that money and I’ll spend it on what I want, and no one is going to get that information out of me until I’m ready to publish’. That is always there in the background.”*

This creates a potential conflict between duty of loyalty to the institution and the discipline they are pursuing but as International SOS’s Tim Willis points out: *“The two don’t need to be mutually exclusive because it comes back to the freedom to do what they need to do there. People may not want to share their location but then call the institution to say, ‘I’m in trouble, help me’. They can’t have it both ways.”*

An academic should do their own risk assessment and part of that is to notify the University of their contact details, so that if the itinerary is changed, they are obliged to tell the University about it.





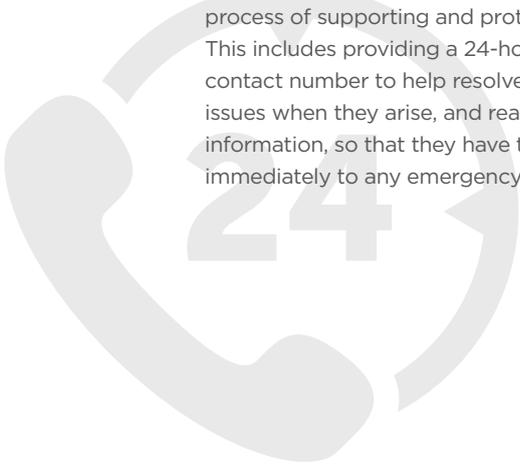
# Managing risk policy - the role of your TMC

A more thorny issue is an organisation's 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 a 'Big Brother' tactic, but a good practice that is 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 the purpose for collecting that data 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.



*"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,"* says O'Sullivan.

Birmingham University's work with Key Travel on its travel security policy and risk management process includes trialling Travel Risk Intelligence Service (TRIS), provided by The Anvil Group, with the College of Arts and Law and the University's International Relations Service. *"It needs to be stress tested, used in anger by those sending people overseas regularly,"* says Chris Hoad. Anvil's traveller tracking service will ensure touch of a button access to who is where.

*"We need a documented policy to pull all these things together, so that we can say: if you are asking people to travel on University business, you will adhere to this policy: you will risk assess the journey with TRIS and make sure people are in possession of proper information; and to make sure we have at the University, a coordinated response if something untoward happens,"* he says.





## Travel and occupational health

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

High blood pressure, 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 per cent 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.

Declaration of medical conditions is an essential part of risk mitigation, but people are often reluctant to share their personal information. *“At Northumbria, we ask about pre-existing medical conditions and rather than telling the University, we ask for the person’s medical practitioner or our recommended independent Occupational health advisor to do a review in confidence and all we get back is, ‘We met with X and we deem that they are fit to travel for the purposes stated’,”* says Anne Hudson.

In addition, illness can lead 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.

*“Stress, fatigue, anxiety, pre-existing depression – mild or moderate, are more likely to flare up when someone is outside their social circle, generally for trips of over two weeks. “This applies to students and academics alike.”* says Jonathan O’Keeffe. ”



It is also important to see the bigger picture. The risk manager of a media company during the Sochi Olympics had worked out that once they were set up, everyone there could die and they would continue to broadcast because they would still get live stream, so that was not the biggest risk. *“If you fixate purely on what you are trying to achieve, you can be blinkered to wider risks,”* says Tim Willis. *“The newspaper test, though not empirical, needs to be considered and if you feel something would impact on your reputation, then you have a duty of care.”*

In difficult areas, there are the risks of crime, illness or injury. *“It is all about: What is the first point of contact and what is the mechanism here at the University for getting assistance to them? And from a reputational point of view, how do we manage that risk?”* says Birmingham University’s Chris Hoad.

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 Director of Health Services for InterHealth Simon 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 institution 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 counterculture but everyone is susceptible to some kind of stress, either directly or vicariously. Anxiety does not just affect those in the front line.



## Post-trip assessment

When a traveller has returned home from a high risk area or returned safely after being affected by an incident in some way, it 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.

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.

Nearly two thirds of those polled in the Insight survey were not aware of an established procedure to follow to receive updates and news of what to do in risk situations. 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 Travel Wise.

An instruction to staff to familiarise themselves with the policy – a ‘mandatory read’ – is a good starting point.

**It is also essential to review travel and risk programmes regularly, to ensure they are keeping up with an ever-changing world.**

For universities there is the added complication of an influx of new people coming in each academic year, reinforcing the need for continual communication, education and training.



# 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 when something goes wrong, they realise they are on their own. This is particularly applicable if their institution does not have a local office or they are in a different time zone from their home office working hours and they have to spend time and money making new arrangements.

This behaviour drives a coach and horses through risk management programmes: neither the TMC nor the 'rogue' traveller's employer have 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,"* he says. 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 per cent of its business. The rest is risk mitigation and doing due diligence on destinations is an intrinsic part of that.

Pre-trip risk assessments are the first building block of a risk management programme. From conducting assessments on new destinations or high risk destinations to assessing every trip, institutions should incorporate the assessment requirement into their policy, in collaboration with their stakeholder group, risk experts and insurance company.

And an example of ever-changing risk is the shooting down of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17 in 2014, which puts air space high on the agenda. One organisation discovered that airlines take widely differing approaches to risk management, which meant it was left to make decisions.

For universities, collaborative research and grants present an added complication. *“If you have employees who are part of collaborative project and you assumed the other organisations were taking responsibility, you would be negligent: you have to be proactive and establish agreement on who assumes the duty of care, you cannot sit back,”* says John O’Sullivan.

Otherwise, *“Whoever booked and paid for the travel and made arrangements regardless of where travellers come from, takes responsibility for things going wrong. That has been tested elsewhere,”* says Jonathan O’Keefe.



## 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 4x4. *“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 Travel 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 could 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 staff and students are working and specific cover may be required for certain 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 organisation’s best interest that they proactively let their insurer know where their people are going and if an itinerary changes.”

**Robert Quigley, ISOS**

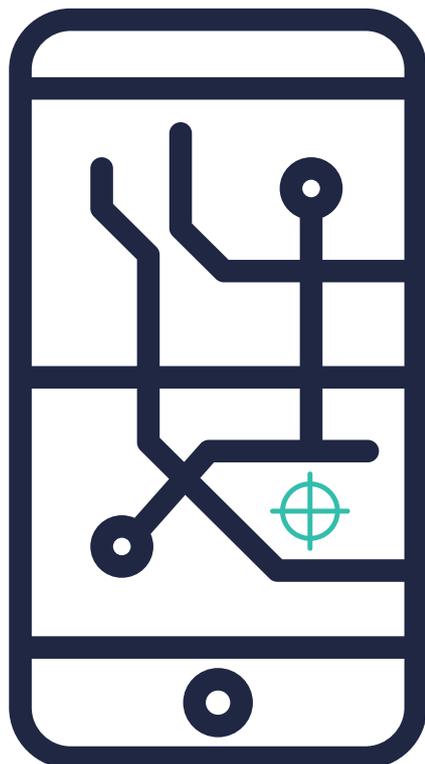


# Tools for risk management

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 Amadeus'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 keep your travellers out of trouble.

It is important to remember that you may have employees travelling independently and not registered on the system or who have changed their destination while in-country, so although employee tracking systems are an invaluable tool, they cannot be the only source of information, particularly in institutions where travel policy or having a 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 experience, 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 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 and contact details;
- Which taxi company to use between the airport and the hotel, and when leaving the hotel;
- Full office address for clients and their telephone numbers;
- Reminders about discussions with colleagues/clients in public places – including on the flight there and back, and meeting new contacts in the hotel where they are staying and 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,”* says Kim Daenan.

# Travel risk policy – take control

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 Charlie Hebdo attack in Paris in 2015.



## 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 re-assessing your approach to risk management.





## Takeaway Tips

- **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
- It is also essential to **review travel and risk programmes regularly**, to ensure they are keeping up with an ever-changing world
- 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. A pre-trip briefing should leave no stone unturned
- **Create a link between HR and travel profiles**, and ask travellers to update their profile each time they travel to ensure they are current
- **Create a team** consisting of one person from each college or department and then make one person responsible for executing that policy and communicating it to the organisation's TMC and other suppliers, so that they are also compliant
- **The message and example have to come from the top**, i.e. the Vice Chancellor or Chief Executive, to ensure that best practice permeates throughout the organisation. This promotes compliance to a policy that should be mandated
- **Approach apparently high risk and low risk destinations with the same care and attention** – you and your academics need to be equally prepared for travel to both
- **Make sure your TMC Account Manager knows the organisation's escalation process**, so that its 24-hour emergency service understand what procedure should be followed
- It is in the organisation's best interest that they **proactively let their insurer know where their people are going** and if there are any itinerary changes
- Institutions should do **due diligence on destinations** to cover every conceivable eventuality

If you are unsure about the quality and effectiveness of your current risk and travel management policies, we recommend that your institution seeks professional support from Universities Safety and Health Association (USHA). USHA's mission is to ensure the wellbeing of university staff, students and visitors through the promotion of health and safety in higher education. Membership is open to higher education institutions both in the UK and from overseas.

[www.usha.org.uk](http://www.usha.org.uk)

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