

The best practice deployment checklist for Aid Workers, Volunteers & Development Organisations



It is important to recognise that international aid & development work is hazardous. Workers are often in hazardous environments where local health support & resources are limited. When health related issues & work-life balance are not given top priority, the consequences can be catastrophic. Staff & volunteers should adhere to good practice in terms of health, safety & wellbeing. This will help to avoid preventable problems should they occur, & will minimise the impact to personal, relief & project efforts. The following are important health & safety checks to minimise risk associated with humanitarian aid work.

Pre-departure

- Review the indicators outlined in **Principle Seven** – Health, safety & security of the People In Aid Code of Good Practice in the management & support of aid personnel www.peopleinaid.org. This notes that aid & development work can place great demands on personnel in complex environments, & that there is a duty of care to ensure the physical & emotional wellbeing of staff.
- **Research your destination** prior to departure. For country specific health & safety advice & to register your overseas plans online visit www.smartraveller.gov.au.
- Are you emotionally ready for your deployment? Learn a range of **stress & trauma management strategies**. For more information regarding psychological issues relating to humanitarian aid work visit www.antaesfoundation.org.au.
- Ensure you have **complied** with your employers travel policy & administrative requirements.
- Make sure your **travel plans & contact details** are known to your organisation & next of kin prior to departure.
- Seek a **travel health consultation** with The Travel Doctor-TMVC prior to departure as per company procedures. Contact 1300 658 844 or book online at www.traveldoctor.com.au/appointments.asp.
- Ensure your **vaccines** are up to date prior to departure. Ideally commence vaccinations 4-6 weeks prior to departure. But remember it is never too late to vaccinate. You can visit www.traveldoctor.com.au to see what you may require.
- Make sure you have **adequate supplies** of your regular prescription medication & always carry your **Travellers' Medical Kit** provided by The Travel Doctor-TMVC.
- Ensure you receive **health, safety & security briefing** before departure. Be familiar with contingency plans & evacuations procedures before arriving.
- Ensure you have **travel insurance** & that you are familiar with the medical support & emergency contact details.
- Organise links for **telemedicine**. Your destination will most likely have limited health care facilities. The Travel Doctor-TMVC can provide you with details for many places.

- Make sure your **passport is valid** at least six month past your expected return date & ensure any relevant visas have been obtained. Carry additional copies of your passport photo page in case you need a replacement while overseas.

While in the field

- Notify your agencies of any reportable **incidents**.
- Carry with you at all times details of local health care facilities & your insurance medical support **contact details**.
- While overseas, follow the preventative health advice in **The Travel Doctor-TMVC Health Guide for International Travellers**.
- Contact your insurance provider **medical support** if you require medical advice, support, treatment or hospitalisation.
- **Request support** if you are involved in a stressful incident, or experience difficulties related to your time overseas. Ignoring the signs will not only affect yourself, but those around you.
- Know your organisation's **contingency plans & evacuation procedures**.

Post deployment

- Ensure you receive a **debriefing** or **exit interview** with your employer at the end of your deployment. Health checks, personal counselling & careers advice should be made available to you.
- International aid work is stressful. Request **psychological support** from HR or your manager should you experience any difficulties. The transition back home can be just as difficult as your time abroad. **Allow time to adjust**.
- If you are **sick or injured** while overseas, you may need an appointment with The Travel Doctor-TMVC upon return. Remember that some infections such as malaria can appear several months after exposure!

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