

Safety in the Field

Checklist 2: During your stay abroad

Information duty

You are obliged to contact **CDE's representative** at your destination [see the relevant country fact sheet(s)] immediately upon arrival. You will have to inform him/her about your plans, change of plans, duration of stay, places and institutions you will be visiting, and people you plan to meet. Always follow the advice of the CDE representative, especially on matters of security.

When travelling abroad you are also requested to stay in regular contact with your **HoC** or project leader and inform him/her about your contacts (local SIM, office phone, internet and skype access, etc.) and security-relevant developments and dynamics, especially if the security situation worsens. Make sure you know all required information channels, and store important numbers on your phone and on a list that you carry with you at all times.

Representation duty

While travelling, you are an ambassador of CDE, and you influence what people know or think about CDE. Language and cultural barriers, or politically sensitive issues, may make it difficult to know how to behave to ensure that you are not in danger and that CDE is represented positively.

Local CDE representatives do have that knowledge. They are in contact with government officials, represent CDE, and are often important door openers. Thus, you have a duty to follow their instructions, in particular pertaining to (a) research or work permits and other official matters, (b) security, including permission to travel to particular areas, (c) dos and don'ts in the country in general.

Accidents

In some places road traffic is, by far, the biggest safety risk. Therefore, you are requested to take all necessary precautions when using the road. **Pedestrians** are at particular risk. In countries that drive on the left, pedestrians from countries that drive on the right tend to look the wrong way when crossing the street. In towns with heavy traffic this can be fatal. Beware!

CDE strongly discourages you from using **bicycles, motorbikes, or scooters** in areas with heavy or dangerous traffic. In the same areas, you are requested not to drive a **car** unless you are an experienced driver. We strongly recommend that you never drive a vehicle after nightfall. Be aware that you could face enormous problems in case of an accident such as hitting a pedestrian or cyclist.

When travelling by road from A to B always choose the **safest means** of transportation. Enquire about the safety of various bus companies. Check the state of the vehicle (and driver) before boarding. Refuse to travel in an overloaded vehicle.

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Disease prevention

The advice provided in this section is neither exhaustive nor counter-checked by a professional. Therefore, **CDE asks you to always follow your doctor's advice while travelling.**

When travelling to remote areas, make sure to always bring your first-aid kit with you. When staying in a remote area for more than a few days, also bring along your medication kit and a list of doctors' phone numbers.

Protect yourself against **mosquito** bites in tropical countries. Bear in mind that malaria is not the only infectious disease transmitted by mosquitos, and that not all mosquitos transmitting disease are nocturnal. Whenever possible take a **blood test** in a clinic before starting treatment against malaria or other specific infectious ailments. Do not take **antibiotics** without prescription unless you are suffering from infection while in a remote area with no access to medical services.

Always carry the **package inserts** of your medicines, which contain the information about dosage and possible side effects. This is of particular importance in the case you need to take malaria treatment.

Use **common sense** and basic rules of **hygiene** pertaining to food to avoid gastric problems, which are the most common ailments during travels. Avoid raw food unless you can peel it. If no bottled water is available, make sure water has been boiled before drinking it or at least use a water disinfection tablet (available in pharmacies in Switzerland and many other countries).

In case of **sexual relations** always follow the rules of safe sex! Be safe rather than sorry and remember that depending on where you are, condoms might not be easy to find.

Crime

Strictly follow the instructions of the CDE representative at your destination. Make sure you have read the country fact sheet and stored important numbers in case of emergency.

Avoid **dangerous areas**, especially at night. Stay away from these areas if so recommended by CDE's local representatives. Try to move around in a group instead of alone, especially at night. Do not choose accommodation (hotel, apartment) in a dangerous area. Do not follow people you don't know, who may tell you stories intended to lure you somewhere unsafe.

Be prudent when retrieving money from an **ATM**: look around to see whether you are being observed or followed, and choose indoor ATMs or those with security guards. Do not count money in the open.

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In the event of a robbery or attack **do not resist** and follow the attackers' instructions. If you are the victim of a carjacking make sure the attackers can see your hands at all times, remain calm, and follow their instructions.

Violent conflicts and terrorism

As a rule, CDE does not send personnel into areas of violent conflict or war, or with a high risk of terrorism and kidnapping. Should a violent conflict erupt while you are there, immediately contact CDE's representative and/or your HoC / project leader. In doubt, also call the Swiss embassy and ask for their advice.

In areas affected by occasional terrorist attacks and kidnapping, you are obliged to follow the recommendations given by the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (see checklist 1). **These recommendations overrule any opinion of CDE staff.** If the FDFA warns against travel to a certain area, you will only be allowed to go if the head of SDC's coordination office at your destination gives you a go-ahead or if the contracting organization provides adequate security measures (e.g. security escort). In such cases you are obliged to scrupulously follow the safety instructions issued by the SDC coordination office and/or the contracting organization, and attend security briefings if so requested.