

Travel Smart. Travel Safe.

Helpful tips for student groups traveling domestically

WorldStrides wants you to have a safe and rewarding trip. Travel Smart, Travel Safe is designed to share some best practices based on our experience sending more than 500,000 students annually to both domestic and international destinations.



Health Safety Tips



Hygiene, Eating, and Drinking

- ✓ Wash hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer (60-95% alcohol content) when soap and water is not available; this is the top precaution against becoming ill while traveling.
- ✓ Avoid touching your face to reduce the chance of illness.
- ✓ Stay well hydrated.
- ✓ If you have food allergies, be attentive during meal periods and ask questions if you have concerns.

Medical

- ✓ Always bring prescription medications in their original pharmacy containers and bring them in your carry-on luggage with a copy of the prescription.
- ✓ If you have a medical ID bracelet, wear it at all times.
- ✓ Be sure to list any medical conditions and prescription medication (with appropriate dosages and generic names) on the medical release form to share with your Program Leader.
- ✓ Travel may increase your risk of exposure to communicable diseases, such as COVID-19, measles, monkeypox, polio, etc. It is important to be aware of signs and symptoms and let your Program Leader know if you are not feeling well. Take steps to keep yourself healthy while traveling.
- ✓ Make sure you are up to date on all routine immunizations.

Insects and Parasites

- ✓ In areas with insect threats, bring and use insect repellent to protect against bites. Wear lightweight long pants, long sleeve shirts, and socks - ideally with pant legs tucked in. Consider treating clothes and hats with permethrin spray prior to travel to further deter insects.
- ✓ Our risk partners at Exlog recommend insect repellents with at least 35% DEET. The percentage of DEET does not indicate effectiveness, just the frequency of reapplication. 15% DEET should be reapplied every 1-2 hours. 25% DEET every 2-4 hours. 35% DEET every 4-6 hours.
- ✓ If using sunscreen, apply it first, then apply insect repellent.
- ✓ Take care to avoid swimming in stagnant freshwater rivers, lakes, and ponds which may contain parasites that can lead to serious waterborne diseases.

Water Safety Tips



At the Pool

- ✓ Only swim when a lifeguard or chaperone is present.
- ✓ Obey pool rules and do not attempt to access hotel pools after they are closed.
- ✓ Pool games are fun, but no horseplay.
- ✓ Do not dive or jump into the shallow end.

At the Beach

- ✓ Only swim when a lifeguard or chaperone is present.
- ✓ Only swim in designated swimming areas.
- ✓ Always practice the buddy system, and never go swimming alone.
- ✓ It is important to understand the beach rules and what different signs and flags mean in the destination so you can follow them.
- ✓ Don't attempt to go swimming in poor weather conditions.
- ✓ Watch out for jellyfish and other sea creatures.
- ✓ Don't forget to pack sunscreen and reapply often.
- ✓ **Know how to identify and survive rip currents:**
 - Rip currents are powerful, narrow channels of fast-moving water that run away from the shoreline.
 - Rip currents are dangerous, even for very strong swimmers!
 - **If caught in a rip current, STAY CALM**
 - Motion for help immediately.
 - Swim parallel to shore to get out of the current.
 - Swim toward the shore once you escape the current.
 - **NEVER** attempt to enter the current yourself to save someone else. Instead **CALL FOR HELP IMMEDIATELY.**

Hotel Safety Tips



- ✓ Upon checking in, immediately review evacuation procedures posted in your room; if not posted, ask hotel staff and be sure to know where the nearest emergency exit is in case of fire.
- ✓ When out of your room for the day, do not leave cash, passports, computers, or valuables in plain sight. If the hotel has an in-room safe that is bolted down, you may choose to keep valuables inside.
- ✓ If your hotel room has both a deadbolt and a latch, use both when you are sleeping.
- ✓ Bedbugs, which are typically flat, brownish, and oval in appearance, are a global issue and pose an inherent risk in travel.
 - While a nuisance, remember that bedbugs are not known to carry disease nor are they a sign of uncleanliness.
 - Simple mitigation measures like never placing your luggage on your bed and checking your hotel for signs of bedbugs by pulling back the bed linens and checking the headboard and furniture around the bed, can help mitigate your exposure.
 - Speak up if you see anything suspicious.

Personal Safety Tips



Emergency Contacts

- ✓ Remember to store WorldStrides emergency contact numbers and the number of your Program Leader in your phone.

During Activities

- ✓ Pay attention to the safety briefing and follow all the rules.
- ✓ Make sure to wear any safety equipment provided, such as bike helmets, life jackets, etc.

Situational Awareness

- ✓ Most incidents can be avoided by using common sense and making good choices.
- ✓ Stay alert and focused on the instructions given by your Program Leader and/or Course Leader/Guide.
- ✓ Always use a buddy system and never venture out alone.
- ✓ Be cautious about using your smartphone while in public, especially on public transportation or while walking as this distracts you and may make you more vulnerable to accident or theft.
- ✓ Be aware of your surroundings and suspicious activities, especially when using public transportation; use taxis from hotels or designated taxi stands only; when using rideshare apps, always make sure the car model and license plate match what is in the app.
- ✓ If you see a suspicious package or are in a situation that makes you feel uncomfortable, trust your instincts, leave the area, and report the situation.

Avoiding Crime

- ✓ The most common crime in most destinations is petty theft - either pickpocketing or theft of unattended items.
- ✓ Only carry small amounts of cash or valuables with you and be discreet when make purchases.
- ✓ Leave valuable items at home. If you must carry valuables (laptop, tablet, etc.), never pack them in your checked luggage.
- ✓ If approached and told to hand over your valuables, do not resist. Everything can be replaced— except for you. Only resist if the perpetrator attempts to take you!
- ✓ If you are a victim of crime, alert your Program Leader and/or Course Leader/Guide immediately.

Technology and Social Media

- ✓ Review your security settings on your cell phone and any other electronic devices you bring on your program. Remember to leave home anything that you cannot afford to lose.
- ✓ Do not share passwords or security codes with anyone.
- ✓ Do not share your hotel room number on any technology platform.
- ✓ Do not plug your phone or mobile device into public charging stations, even in airports, as your data may become compromised. Carry your own charger and USB cord and use an electrical outlet instead.
- ✓ Bluetooth settings on mobile devices should be turned off when in mass public areas to prevent malicious actors from connecting to your device.
- ✓ Do not accept "Friend" or "Follow" requests or AirDrop materials from strangers and do not open links without first verifying the identity of the sender.
- ✓ Do not post pictures on social media with a geotag while you are still in the location where the picture was taken.

Rallies, Protests, and Discord

- ✓ Avoid protests, rallies, and large gatherings, even if they seem calm, as they can escalate with little warning.
- ✓ Do not attempt to observe and/or photograph demonstrations. Even if you are a bystander, police may consider you part of the protest if you are lingering to observe or take photos.
- ✓ If someone tries to start an argument with you or anyone in your group about politics, race, or religion, always disengage and walk away.