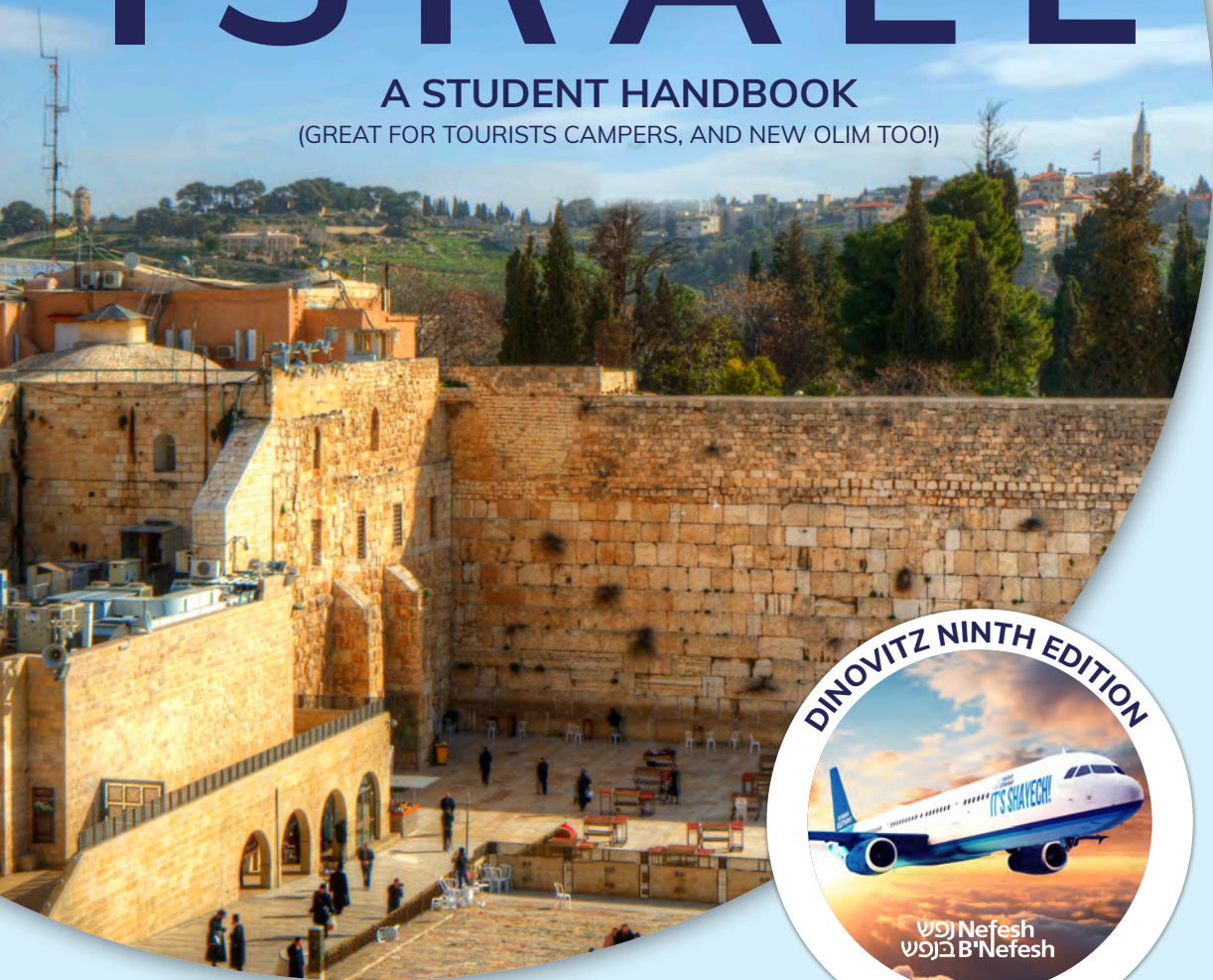


**FREE!**

# STAY SAFE IN ISRAEL

**A STUDENT HANDBOOK**  
(GREAT FOR TOURISTS CAMPERS, AND NEW OLIM TOO!)



**The Chesed Fund** & **Project Ezra**  
*LIMITED* **Of Baltimore**

**BY FRANK STORCH**

ENDORSED BY



**“Sound and practical safety & security advice;  
essential resource for students and tourists visiting Israel.”**

– Secure Community Network (SCN)

The Secure Community Network is the official safety and security organization of the Jewish community in North America.



Visit [Chesedfund.com](http://Chesedfund.com) for a free download of this guide.

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# Welcome!

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## September 2024

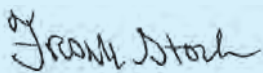
Welcome to the ninth edition of *Stay Safe in Israel*. This guide is a compilation of suggestions and essential pointers to help you during your time in Israel. You're about to embark on an exciting year of living, learning, and traveling in Israel. With G-d's help, you'll be growing spiritually and intellectually and creating positive relationships with new friends and mentors. No doubt you'll enjoy increased independence and many wonderful adventures. With these, it is important to be aware of your safety and security. This guide was written for students already in Israel or currently planning for their trips, but campers and tourists can benefit, as well.

After the horrific atrocities in Israel on October 7, 2023, and the ongoing war that has ensued, we must do our *hishtadlus* to ensure the safety of every single Jewish life. You must do whatever it takes to stay safe and by reading this guide carefully, you will be empowered to do so.

This guide is also your resource for other important information, from basic advice on taking buses and trains to hiking safety tips. My hope is that this guide helps you truly enjoy the rich abundance of *brachos* Israel has to offer, while also making sure you are safe during your special experience connecting with our homeland.

**Feel free to share your feedback and your own original ideas and safety tips to help us improve future editions of this guide. I can be reached at [info@chesedfund.com](mailto:info@chesedfund.com) or 410-340-1000.**

Kol tuv and be safe,



Frank Storch

P.S. Tell your family and friends to download their free copy of this handbook at [chesedfund.com](http://chesedfund.com)

The Chesed Fund & Project Ezra published, *Keep Your School Safe* in 2013, after the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting tragedy. Since then, we have provided many free security assessments to American, Israeli, and British schools, yeshivas, seminaries, and community organizations. *Stay Safe in Israel* is the first handbook written for post-high school students with a focus on safety in Israel. In addition to over 50,000 copies distributed internationally, we will be distributing 15,000 copies in Israel during the 2024–25 school year.

Many Chesed Fund & Project Ezra safety and security as well as community publications are available as free downloads at [chesedfund.com](http://chesedfund.com).



Preparing Our Community  
Today for a Safe and  
Secure Tomorrow™

## Special Thanks

We are grateful to every contributor to *Stay Safe in Israel*. Your help and guidance made this handbook possible. Special thanks to Danielle Sarah Storch.

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## Dedications

This edition is dedicated as a *zechus* for the immediate release of our hostages, *refuah sheleima* for the wounded, safety and protection of our soldiers, and in loving memory of all civilians, police, and soldiers killed during the October 7th massacre and war, ה'תשפ"ד.

This edition is also dedicated in loving memory of these great pillars of the Baltimore community - Rabbi Osher Bamberger, זצ"ל, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Braun, זצ"ל, Rabbi Peretz Dinowitz, זצ"ל, Rabbi Shalom Weingot, זצ"ל, and Rabbi Kalman Weinreb, זצ"ל.

Our preview edition was dedicated in loving memory of Ariel Newman, ע"ה, who died tragically on a hiking trip in Israel on September 10, 2014, Binyamin Yosef Insel, ע"ה, and Morris H. Mishner, ע"ה.

The Chesed Fund is dedicated in memory of Mordechai and Rebecca Kapiloff, ע"ה, Dr. Bernard Kapiloff, ע"ה, and Rabbi Norman and Louise Gerstenfeld, ע"ה.

Project Ezra is dedicated in memory of M. Leo Storch and Hannah Storch, ע"ה.

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# To Do Before Your Trip



Getting your documents in order is your first important step for a successful year.

## ID Safety

- ♦ Make a few sets of hard copies of important documents such as your passport, driver's license, birth certificate, insurance card, and the emergency card included in this guide. Keep one set at home.
- ♦ Keep digital copies of the documents (in a password-protected file) that you share with your parents so you can access them quickly from a device anywhere, even if the originals are lost or stolen. Also, take pictures of both sides of the emergency card so you have a digital copy in case of an emergency.
- ♦ Organize a folder or binder with important documents you will need for your flight, so you have easy access to them at the airport.
- ♦ Once you arrive in Israel, store the copies in a safe place, separate from your passport and birth certificate.
- ♦ Consider purchasing a small, portable combination lockbox before you leave for Israel to help you keep your valuables, such as expensive jewelry or cash, safe and handy. You can attach it to your bedframe. It also can be used to store medications for safety and privacy.

## Passport

- ♦ While technically there is no requirement regarding time left on your passport when entering Israel, different airlines do have minimums, and it is better to be safe than sorry. Since you could potentially be in Israel for close to 12 months, having an additional 6 months validity, totalling 18 months before the passport expiration date, would be the safest. If your passport won't be valid, or valid for long enough, apply for a passport immediately since they can sometimes take months to receive. If necessary, use a passport expediting service.
- ♦ If your passport is stolen, report the theft immediately to [travel.state.gov](https://travel.state.gov) to protect yourself from identity theft.

## Visas and More

- ♦ Starting on January 1, 2025, unless you are an Israeli citizen or have an Israeli identity number, in order to enter Israel, you must have an ETA-IL (Electronic Travel Authorization). To

apply for this new visa, visit [israel-entry.piba.gov.il](https://israel-entry.piba.gov.il). As per the Interior Ministry, even though students applying for the visa intend to study, students must choose 'Visit/Tourism' when applying for an ETA-IL; if 'Study' is selected the ETA\_IL application will be denied. The ETA-IL is valid for up to 2 years or until the expiration of your current passport - whichever occurs first. Currently there is no fee, however, as of January 1, 2025, there will be a fee of 25₪ (approximately \$7).

- ♦ An ETA-IL will allow you to be in Israel for up to 90 days per visit. For longer stays, you will need to apply for the appropriate visa. If you are a student, you will need to get an additional student visa after 90 days, even if you have an ETA-IL. Your school can help you obtain one but you will need to bring your original birth certificate from home.
- ♦ If you have been issued a student visa and would like to work, find out whether that is allowed on a student visa. If you enter as a tourist, you will need to update your status with the Israeli Ministry of Interior when you become a student. For visa information, visit [mfa.gov.il/mfa/consularservices/pages/visas.aspx](https://mfa.gov.il/mfa/consularservices/pages/visas.aspx).
- ♦ If you are an Israeli citizen or have dual citizenship, visit the Israeli embassy six months before you leave the US to get a draft exemption or deferment. Schedule this as soon as possible, as there may be delays.
- ♦ Renew your driver's license before your departure, if it's set to expire before you return.
- ♦ If you have turned 18 or will turn 18 while in Israel, ask your parents to set up power of attorney (POA). It authorizes them to access your medical or college records, if needed while you are in Israel. The POA is not necessarily valid as a method to access your information in Israel.
- ♦ If you have a layover or plan to travel to Europe before or after your year in Israel, be aware that there is a new Entry-Exit System (EES) set to begin on November 10, 2024. The system will include scanning your passport, your face, and taking your fingerprints. The data will be stored for three years. The EES will be implemented at all European Union state borders excluding Cyprus, Ireland, Iceland, Lichtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland.

## Prep Your Credit Card and Cash

- ◆ Contact your credit card company to tell them the dates you will be in Israel. Some banks allow you to do this online. If you don't take this step and your account has unexpected overseas activity, the company may freeze your card without warning. They might require speaking with you directly as a precaution against potential fraud.
- ◆ Plan ahead for accessing money in Israel.
  - Get a debit or credit card from a bank, such as Charles Schwab or Capital One, that doesn't charge foreign transaction fees. If that isn't possible, but you have a safe place to store your cash when in Israel (such as your school's safe), take out larger amounts of cash per withdrawal to minimize fees.
  - If you have a smartphone, save your credit cards to Apple Pay (iPhone) or Google Wallet (Android) so that you do not always have to carry the physical cards with you. Keep a paper copy of the front and back of your credit cards at home.
  - Most shops and restaurants in Israel accept foreign credit cards, Apple Pay, and Google Wallet. However, since some do not, and you will need access to money soon after arriving, consider ordering shekalim (Israeli currency expressed as ₪ or NIS) from your bank. Get enough to hold you over until you can get to a money exchange vendor, usually referred to as a money changer. If your bank doesn't offer that option, you may need to find a different bank that does. This process can take over a week.
  - If you have a smartphone, tablet, or laptop, download apps such as Zelle, Venmo, and Paypal so that your parents have a quick and simple way to send you money. It's also helpful if you need to borrow money from a friend or pay them back.
- ◆ Changes to laws regarding business and personal cash transactions have recently been enacted. Be aware that if you plan to make a large purchase at one store, cash transactions over 6,000₪ are now illegal. The law for personal cash transactions has also changed. If you are thinking of cashing a check with your relatives or friends so that you have shekalim in Israel, the maximum amount you can now cash is 15,000₪.
- ◆ There are no legal limits to the amount of cash you can bring into Israel if you are visiting. (If it is over 80,000₪, it must be declared.)

## Check Your Insurance & Medication

- ◆ Check if your current medical insurance can be used in Israel and provides coverage for

COVID-19 treatment, mental health services, and emergency transportation services.

- ◆ Check with your school regarding which insurance companies it has relationships with. The school may recommend specific companies based on the proximity of clinics or doctors to the school.
- ◆ You can also purchase a plan through AIM, Harel, or Maccabi. These companies offer customer service and have English-speaking doctors. If you have significant or very specific medical needs, EMA Care is a medical concierge service to consider.
- ◆ Bring any medication in its original packaging and put your name on it. Bring copies of any prescriptions you may need refilled, including for glasses and contact lenses.
- ◆ If you'll need to refill any prescriptions while in Israel, ask your doctor to provide you with all the necessary information. Medication names, dosages, and availability are usually different in Israel.
- ◆ Some medications, both prescription and over-the-counter, may not be available in Israel and may only have similar and possibly less effective versions. For example, while Benadryl is unavailable in Israel, Telfast is an available antihistamine but may only treat several symptoms while Benadryl treats a wider range of symptoms. If your medication is unavailable in Israel, make sure to bring enough with you from home to cover you for the entire year. Insurance may not cover a year's worth and you may need to pay out-of-pocket or arrange for people traveling throughout the year to bring them to you.
- ◆ Check that you're current on all your standard vaccines (hepatitis, meningococcal, etc.) and bring your vaccination card.
- ◆ Consider getting the phone number of a non-Jewish neighbor. In the event of a significant medical emergency on Shabbos, while you are in Israel, they can be contacted and inform your parents since your parent's may not pick up the phone.
- ◆ Consider buying travel insurance in addition to health insurance. Check to see if your credit card company or your parents' homeowner's insurance offers free or discounted insurance. Confirm the travel insurance is in effect from the date you leave for Israel through the date you arrive back home. When researching policies, keep in mind that coverage may differ based on the company, so be certain to choose one that will cover items such as your laptop, phone, camera, jewelry, medical devices, and sports equipment.
- ◆ To save money, if you're not planning to drive in Israel, cancel or freeze your driver's insurance before you leave.

## Check current Covid-19 travel requirements

- ♦ Ministry of Health, [corona.health.gov.il/en/](https://corona.health.gov.il/en/)
- ♦ Chaim V'Chessed, [chaimvchessed.com](https://chaimvchessed.com)
- ♦ Yad L'Olim, [yadlolim.org](https://yadlolim.org)

## Device Advice

- ♦ Before you leave, contact your cellphone provider to unlock your phone, so that you can switch providers. Some companies lock their phones for the first year after purchase, but if you let them know that you are traveling abroad, they may unlock the phone for you.
- ♦ You may want to buy an Israeli phone plan and a SIM card in Israel, since you will be there for a while. Some Israeli companies offer plans with American phone numbers. This helps you, your family, and your friends save money on long-distance charges. Some affordable companies are Hot Mobile or 012.
- ♦ You can also keep your American line active and use WhatsApp but then you would have to pay for long distance charges for calls outside of Israel.

- ♦ As another option, your American provider may have a plan you can use overseas. If they don't, inform them about your travel plans and ask to keep your current American number available to you when you return. You can also set up a free Google Voice number to avoid paying for an American phone number while abroad.



- ♦ If you won't be using your American phone line, freeze your cell phone number by "parking" your number at a phone number service dealer such as Number Garage or Number Barn.
- ♦ Before you leave for Israel and throughout the year, back up your devices to the cloud so if a device is lost or damaged you still have access to the data. If needed, bring extra memory cards for your digital camera.
- ♦ Become familiar with how to use Find My (iPhone) and Find My Device (Android) in case you lose or misplace your laptop, tablet, or airpods when in Israel (see page 36 'Good to Know Tips').



## Pro-Tips

- ♦ Ask your parents for information for a family member or friend in Israel who is very reliable, in case you need immediate help. Save their information as "Emergency Contact" in the description so you can easily locate it, if needed.
- ♦ Save all important contacts into your phone but keep a paper copy as well in case your phone dies or you lose your phone.
- ♦ Save your destination address in your phone and also keep a written copy. In case your arrival is delayed or your phone isn't working, you'll be able to ask a taxi to take you where you need to go without any trouble.
- ♦ Purchase and pack quality running shoes, hiking boots, and rainboots which will come in handy throughout the year.
- ♦ Purchase converters and adapters for using your electronic devices in Israel. An adapter is a small plug used to modify the shape of the plug but not convert the electrical current. They are widely used

- for many devices including computers. Adapters can be very inexpensive, but don't buy the ultra-cheap ones. Better-quality ones tend to be safer and last longer. Converters, on the other hand, convert the electric current and are necessary for appliances that require greater electricity such as hair irons, shavers, and blow dryers. Some of these appliances may operate on both US (110 volts) and Israeli (220 volts) but check yours first to be certain they do. If they don't, to reduce the risk of fire, damage to your appliance, and to ensure functionality, it is better to purchase an appliance that runs on 220 volts instead of relying on a voltage converter.
- ♦ To save on luggage space and weight, consider buying toiletries in Israel and ordering your linens from a company such as Blanket Express Plus at [blanketexpressplus.com](https://blanketexpressplus.com), which will deliver to your Israeli address (see page 42 for more details).
- ♦ Check the weather in Israel before your flight, wear comfortable clothes, and pack a sweater, just in case.

Save these Israel emergency phone numbers in your phone!

Police  
100

Magen  
David Adom  
(ambulance) 101

United  
Hatzalah  
1221

Fire  
102

Israel Poison  
Information  
04-777-1900

# Be App Happy

Download these important apps to your phone before you leave home.

## SAFETY & SECURITY APPS

### Hatzalah Global Assist



Connect with the nearest Hatzalah organization by sharing your location

### Home Front Command



Receive alerts for emergencies such as a rocket attack or earthquake

### My MDA (Magen David Adom)



Activate to send a distress call to police, ambulance, and your emergency contacts, and track your location

### News



### Red Alert



Red Alert-Cumta Tzeva Adom Tzofar

Receive real-time alerts showing times and locations of rocket and missile attacks. These apps provide various specific features and functions. Using Tzofar may provide more reliable information in Jerusalem than the other apps.

## TRANSPORTATION & TRAVEL APPS\*

### All Trails



Hiking app that provides popular hiking trails in Israel with hand-curated trail maps, driving directions, and detailed reviews.

### Gett



Find and/or reserve a cab

### Google Maps



Follow driving or walking directions and maps

### Rav-Kav by HopOn



Pay for public transit by scanning a QR code instead of a Rav-Kav card; pay with your credit card; check your Rav-Kav balance, and more

### Moovit



As with the Rav-Kav by HopOn, pay for public transit by scanning a QR code instead of a Rav-Kav card; pay with your credit card; check your Rav-Kav balance and more—known to provide more accurate bus times

### MPC Mobile Passport Control



Avoid lengthy wait times at US Customs lines and use the MPC Express Lane instead, by providing data to US Customs through the app

### MyTSA



Find information on airport delays and search items that can and can't go in checked or carry-on bags and through security

### Rav-Kav Online



Scan your phone online instead of a card at a Rav-Kav payment unit when using public transit; load credit to your card; see your balance; check bus routes; and more

### Waze



Get real-time driving directions based on live traffic updates

### Yango



Find and/or reserve a cab or use for food delivery

\* Note that the direction apps listed will not notify you that they may guide through an Arab neighborhood. It's always safer to check your route with someone familiar with your destination.

## GENERAL INFORMATION APPS

### Fast Israeli Shekel Converter



Figure out how much you are spending in dollars when you use shekels or vice versa, based on up-to-date exchange rates

### Google Translate



Translate Hebrew to English or English to Hebrew

### MyZmanim



Check halachic davening times for any location

### Ramzor



Find everything Covid-19-related for Israel

### Shabbat Shalom



Check Shabbos candle lighting and Havdalah times for various locations in Israel



# Sharing Your Location

Sharing your location with friends when going out is highly recommended as a great way to stay safe. If you do not have a smartphone, your phone will not offer this feature. If you have a smartphone, there are many ways to share your location. Some only allow you to share for limited amounts of time while others allow for indefinite amounts of time. Some allow you to share only with those using the same app, such as WhatsApp, or type of phone, iPhone or Android. Choose the location-sharing app that works best for you.



## WhatsApp

After selecting a contact, click the + on the bottom left corner, next to the messaging bar; choose Location, then Share Live Location. You can choose to share for 15 minutes, 1 hour, or 8 hours.



## Apple

Use the "Find My iPhone" app, click the People icon on the bottom left, click on the Start Sharing Location tab, which opens your contacts, and use the + symbol to share with any other iPhone user indefinitely.



## Google Maps

Click on the blue dot in the center of the map, then the Share Location tab in the middle of the screen on the left-hand side. The next screen allows you to choose how long you would like to share your location, with options to share indefinitely and to choose who you would like to share your location with. Use this method if you are an iPhone user and need to share it with an Android user.



## Android

Open the contact you want to share the location with, click on the arrow near the message bar on the left side, click the + symbol, and choose Location to share indefinitely with another Android user.

# Fly Right

## Luggage

- ♦ Leave valuables at home. Label all clothes and belongings with waterproof labels that state your name and Israeli phone number.
- ♦ Pack shekalim in your wallet or purse for pocket change or for taxi fare when you arrive. Although it's easy to exchange money at the airport, professional money changers typically have better rates.
- ♦ Airlines allow you to travel with one carry-on luggage and one personal item. Choosing a sturdy backpack as the personal item is a smart choice since you can then use it often in Israel for school, traveling, or hiking.
- ♦ Your carry-on luggage and personal item should be used to pack all your essentials so that if your luggage is lost or delayed, you will still have basic necessities and important items: siddur, tefillin, tehillim, eye glasses, contacts, contact solution, pain relievers, anti-nausea and prescription medications, jewelry, portable cellphone charger, laptop, tablet, camera, small first aid kit, good quality earbuds or headphones, and a change of clothes.
- ♦ To make it easier to get through Transportation Security Administration (TSA) checkpoints, pack electronic devices and liquids at the top of your carry-on so they are more easily accessible.
- ♦ Pack extra snacks and a sandwich in your carry-on in case there is a flight delay. Also, pack some chewing gum to use for cabin pressure when the airplane takes off and lands.
- ♦ Pack some zipper-seal bags in your carry-on luggage. They can come in handy when trying to keep several small items together, such as a wallet and phone, when moving through security and customs.
- ♦ If you choose to take something to Israel for a trusted friend or relative, let them know you will search it to ensure you are not transporting anything illegal, such as drugs or large amounts of money.





- ♦ Use uniquely colored luggage tags or tape to recognize your luggage quickly at Baggage Claim.
- ♦ Consider using tracking devices like Airtags or Tiles on your luggage as well as phones, laptops, and tablets. This way, if they are stolen or misplaced, they can potentially be located more easily. If you use these devices, check that their batteries are fully charged as well.
- ♦ Take pictures of your suitcases and their contents in case they're lost or stolen and you need to file an insurance claim. Make a packing list and pack a copy in your carry-on.
- ♦ Write your Israeli phone number on your luggage tag. If you don't have one, write your regular number. Put another tag with your number inside your luggage, in case the outer tag gets damaged.
- ♦ Check your airline's website for luggage size requirements because size limits vary for suitcases, carry-ons, and personal items. Measure your luggage—manufacturer dimensions may be inaccurate.
- ♦ It's best to use a small, sturdy roll-on suitcase as your carry-on, which you can then use for travel around Israel.
- ♦ Use a reliable and portable luggage scale to avoid overweight baggage fees. The limit typically is one 50-pound suitcase per regular-fare ticket, but check with your airline to confirm.

## TSA & Customs Requirements

- ♦ If you have a smartphone, download the MyTSA app to review details regarding which items may and may not go in checked or carry-on bags.

- ♦ Standard items forbidden in carry-ons include sharp objects, pointed items such as scissors with blades longer than 4 inches, screwdrivers longer than 7 inches, knives of any sort, including penknives or army knives, or anything else that can be used as a weapon.
- ♦ The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) 3-1-1 rule for liquids in carry-ons is that gels, aerosols, liquids, creams, and pastes must be 3.4 ounces (100 ml) or less per container, packed in a quart-size clear plastic zipper-seal bag, one bag per passenger. If traveling with a layover through other countries besides the US, be aware that their rules on these amounts may differ; if possible, pack these types of items in your luggage instead.
- ♦ When leaving the US, you may pack solid food in your carry-on or checked luggage, but liquid foods or gels must comply with the TSA 3-1-1 rule for liquids. Check which foods may be brought into Israel. Be especially careful with fresh food. Certain types and amounts of foods may be subject to import laws and regulations.
- ♦ If purchasing items at duty-free shops, don't forget you may need to declare the items on your customs forms. Typically, the receipt will indicate whether declaring these items at Customs is required.
- ♦ For customs, security, and weight regulations, check with TSA, Israeli Immigration and Customs, and your airline's requirements. Regulations may be different for transporting oversized sports equipment, musical instruments (in a hard-shell case for checked luggage only), and other items, such as alcohol and tobacco products.
- ♦ Check US and Israeli Customs laws for carrying large amounts of money in any form (like cash and bonds), valuables, gifts, and other items.
- ♦ Unlawful or undeclared items may be confiscated and/or destroyed at the customs official's discretion. Travelers found with such items may be penalized, blacklisted, and thoroughly searched every time they fly. For a more thorough list of rules and regulations, visit [tsa.gov/travel/security-screening/whatcanibring/al](https://tsa.gov/travel/security-screening/whatcanibring/al).
- ♦ Enroll in the TSA Precheck, Clear, and/or Global Entry Programs to save time when leaving or entering the US. These programs have membership fees. Check your credit card offers since certain credit card companies provide a credit back when you purchase some of these memberships.

# Useful Flight Info

- ◆ Do not book a flight with a stopover in a country with a heightened terror risk. To check if your stopover is on the list of countries, visit [travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories). Direct flights without any layovers are safest.
- ◆ Always check with your airline for the latest luggage and security restrictions.
- ◆ It is forbidden to bring certain items into Israel, such as certain plants, seeds, firearms, knives not intended for household use, etc. Check the Israel Customs Authority website at [customs.mof.gov.il](https://customs.mof.gov.il) to learn more.
- ◆ If you plan to travel with a lulav and esrog, visit Agudath Israel's website at [agudah.org](https://agudah.org) to avoid any potential complications with the US Department of Homeland Security.
- ◆ Bringing small amounts of fresh fruit or fully-cooked and sealed dairy products in your luggage is allowed, but meat, poultry and seafood are not allowed.
- ◆ If there are other particular foods you would like to bring in to Israel, check with the Israel Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development at [moag.gov.il](https://moag.gov.il).
- ◆ Register with the State Department's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP), [step.state.gov](https://step.state.gov), for overseas travelers, which provides security updates and enables the U.S. embassy or consulate to contact you in an emergency. Saving the embassy phone number into your phone is also a good idea.
- ◆ For all information about Israel's policies for declaring items, visit [gov.il/en/pages/guide-tourist-customs](https://gov.il/en/pages/guide-tourist-customs).
- ◆ Check in 24 hours before your flight. Confirm your flight number, departure time, seat, and kosher meal. Confirm the meals are regular or glatt, depending on your preference. Print your boarding pass, even if you have a smartphone. A phone can lose power; it's best to have the document as a backup.
- ◆ Provide your family with phone numbers and the website for Ben Gurion's departure and arrival information, 03-972-3344, 03-975-5555, and 03-972-3331 or [iaa.gov.il/en/airports/ben-gurion/flight-board/?flightType=departures](https://iaa.gov.il/en/airports/ben-gurion/flight-board/?flightType=departures).
- ◆ Visit [myzmanim.com](https://myzmanim.com) to create a custom davening chart for free, since zmanim (prayer times) can be hard to calculate while traveling through different time zones. In the continental US, you can also call 516-796-2646, and in Israel call 02-650-ZMAN.
- ◆ Never leave your luggage or personal items unattended.
- ◆ Don't accept packages or luggage from strangers. If a stranger asks you to take a package and you feel threatened or intimidated, notify the police or airport security immediately.
- ◆ Keep all receipts from your airport or flight purchases, in case you need to file a claim.
- ◆ Airport WiFi is known not to be very secure. To prevent hacking on your devices, use your cellphone coverage and not the airport's WiFi for internet access.
- ◆ Don't buy drinks before going through the security checkpoint, as you'll only have to throw them out at the checkpoint. Be aware, that after the checkpoint, some airlines or airports do not allow you to take drinks or water on to the plane so you may have to dispose of those as well.
- ◆ Drink bottled water (not water from the airplane bathroom) often when flying, since it's very easy to get dehydrated.
- ◆ Airlines sometimes make important announcements regarding flight times or delays, so avoid using earbuds or headphones (or set them not to be in noise cancellation mode) so you don't miss any.
- ◆ Once you board the plane, store your boarding pass, ticket, and any receipts in your carry-on in case you need them later on (missed flight, missing luggage, etc.).
- ◆ Store your belongings in the overhead compartment or under the seat in front of you and remember to take them when you leave the plane.
- ◆ Listen to the flight attendant's emergency instructions and note where the emergency exits are located.
- ◆ Be aware that for security purposes, the Israeli government sometimes jams GPS signals during times of war. For example, if while on your flight your GPS coordinates show you are flying over Beirut, it is highly unlikely that they are accurate.
- ◆ Be wary of overly friendly people. Avoid giving out personal information during the flight. If you are uncomfortable with the person sitting next to you, politely ask the flight attendant to switch your seat, if possible.
- ◆ Check that you have all your belongings before leaving the plane, such as phone chargers, hats, etc.

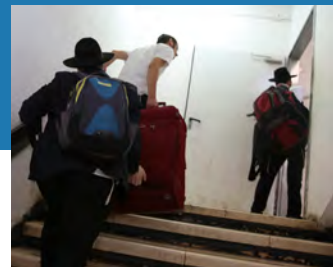


# Once You Land

- ♦ Don't be alarmed when you land and see many soldiers and ordinary citizens carrying weapons. It is normal in Israel.
- ♦ If you do not see your luggage on the carousel, it may have been put to the side because of its size or weight, like a duffel bag. Check with airport staff for help.
- ♦ There is a porter service available at Baggage Claim. The porter can help you get your luggage to the ground transportation area. Cash or credit cards are acceptable payment for arriving passengers.
- ♦ If you want a minyan, Ben Gurion Airport has shuls in the duty-free area, immediately to the right, and in Arrivals, on Level 1, Eastern Gallery.
- ♦ Set up your cell phone and contact your parents to let them know you've arrived safely.
- ♦ Your school may arrange transportation from the airport. Otherwise, options include a *monit* (taxi), a *sherut* (shared shuttle), or a pre-arranged driver. It's best to plan ahead. The train is located in the building adjacent to the airport. Keep in mind that using the train means some walking and using elevators while carrying all your bags. Also, remember that you will need to purchase a Rav-Kav, available at the train station, to take the train (see page 17 for Buses, Trains, and Light Rails).
- ♦ When leaving through Customs, make sure to choose the right line to avoid problems. In general, it's much wiser and safer to ask whether you need to declare an item than to risk appearing as if you're trying to bring something into the country illegally or to sell. Choose the line called the Green Channel (for tourists and students who have nothing to declare and whose items are tax exempt, etc.), unless you do have something to declare; in that case, choose the Red Channel.
- ♦ After exiting customs, you may be approached by random drivers offering you a ride. It may not be safe to use them. Instead, only use official, supervised taxi services which are available on the ground level at the Gate 3 exit and from the second level at the Gate 21 exit.
- ♦ Drink bottled water for at least the first week after arriving in Israel, especially if you have a sensitive stomach. Minerals in Israeli water can cause sickness, especially if you're not accustomed to them. Ease into drinking the water, slowly, over time. Consider investing in a travel UV water purifier or a water bottle with a built-in filter and replacement filters.
- ♦ If arriving during the summer, give yourself time to acclimate to the heat. Avoid extensive outdoor physical activity for your first two weeks in Israel.



# Welcome to Yeshiva/Seminary!



## Dorms & Dirot (apartments)

- ◆ When you first arrive, ask your roommates and *madrich* or *madricha* (dorm counselor) for their phone numbers and save them to your phone. Share the contacts with your parents, so they can reach them in case of an emergency when they can't reach you.
- ◆ Find out where your school's bomb shelter is located, so you know how to get there in an emergency. If it is locked, make sure to notify school staff and follow up with them since it should always be unlocked and accessible for an emergency.
- ◆ Don't use your school's bomb shelter as a storage unit! It needs to protect the maximum number of people in an emergency.
- ◆ Dorms and *dirahs* are not the safest places to keep money and valuables. Most schools have a safe where you can store valuables and important documents.
- ◆ If using a lockbox to store medication or valuables, share the combination code with a *madrich/madricha* or trusted friend, in case you forget the code.
- ◆ Only allow visitors into the dorm or *dirah* if the school allows it, and they can be vouched for. Don't automatically trust anyone, including people who look or seem to be religious.
- ◆ Tell delivery people to leave deliveries at the door. Don't let them inside.
- ◆ Verify that your dorm or *dirah* is equipped with a working smoke/carbon monoxide detector, fire alarm, fire extinguisher, and door and window locks. If not, inform your school.
- ◆ When leaving, even for a brief moment, check that the doors are locked.
- ◆ Have a "last-person-out" policy, where the last person to leave makes sure all doors and windows are locked.

## General Health

- ◆ If you have a medical condition or allergies, it is very important that everyone around you know how to respond if something significant happens. Keep a detailed response plan available for staff and your dorm or *dirah* mates in an easily accessible location (e.g., on the fridge, on the wall above your bed).
- ◆ Consider wearing a medical bracelet identifying

allergies or chronic medical conditions to inform everyone in the event of an emergency.

- ◆ It's very easy to become dehydrated in Israel, especially if you're not used to a desert climate. Drink often, even when you're not thirsty. MDA recommends drinking 2.7 liters of water per day which equals approximately 11 cups of water (8 oz. each).
- ◆ Getting good sleep and exercising regularly are essential and positively impact your immune system and mood. Try to keep late nights to a minimum and incorporate daily exercise into your schedule.
- ◆ Eat healthy and balanced meals and snacks. Unhealthy extremes can be signs of eating disorders, which can have serious, lifelong consequences. If you or your friends are struggling, seek help from a trusted adviser.
- ◆ Don't assume all food in Israel is kosher. Ask your school for a list of *hechsherim* to follow. Also, be aware that a restaurant's *hechsher* (kosher certification) can change suddenly or expire, so check the *hechsher* before you eat at a restaurant.
- ◆ If you have food allergies, alert your school (including kitchen staff), read labels carefully, and beware of cross-contamination. Be careful when eating out at restaurants, since they change ingredients often. Just because a certain dish was safe for you one time does not mean it will be the next, so always ask.
- ◆ If you have dietary restrictions, look out for red circle stickers on food packaging which will indicate if the product is high in salt, sugar, or oil.
- ◆ If you have food sensitivities or allergies, investigate the food items you purchase carefully. Most food label warnings are in Hebrew, so have someone fluent in Hebrew translate for you, as needed.
- ◆ Even if you have never had an allergy before, sometimes people develop them later on in life or if changing environments. If you are having repetitive digestive issues (stomach pain, nausea, etc.) or suffering repetitive cold type symptoms (runny nose, itchy eyes, etc.), it may be allergies. See a doctor who can prescribe helpful allergy medications to alleviate symptoms.

- ◆ Keep nutritious snacks in your dorm/or *dirah* and take some with you when you go away for Shabbos or travel. Some filling and healthy snack options include whole grain crackers and bread, peanut butter, fresh or dried fruit, nuts, yogurt, and hummus.
- ◆ Avoid being outside in the summer between 10 am and 2 pm. Wear a hat and reapply sunscreen (minimum SPF 30) often whenever outside, even when it's cloudy, since you can still get sunburned.
- ◆ If you have a physical disability or handicap, know that Israeli accommodations may differ from those required in the US (e.g., handicap-accessible bathrooms, elevator accessibility). Ask your school if they can provide you with the accommodations needed. Before traveling within Israel, research your destination to confirm the accommodations you need are available.
- ◆ Lice are very common in Israel. Don't share hairbrushes or accessories, keep your hair pulled back, and have your hair checked occasionally.
- ◆ If you need to visit the doctor, go with someone who speaks Hebrew or see an English-speaking doctor.
- ◆ If you have a very significant medical emergency on Shabbos and need to reach your parents, call Hatzalah in your neighborhood in the US, if you have one. They can then contact your parents directly (since your parents may not pick up the phone). If you do not know your home Hatzalah phone number, call Hatzalah Statewide at 201-613-1111, who can provide it to you.

## Mental Health

- ◆ It's normal to be homesick while adjusting to being away from familiar people and things. Israeli culture may be very different from the culture you are used to. If you are feeling overwhelmed, your dorm mother, *mashgiach* (spiritual counselor), or *shana bet* (second year) students may be able to share helpful ideas that other students used in the past. Also, speak with your parents to help determine if you need additional mental health support.
- ◆ Keep in contact with your family, especially if there are, *chas v'shalom*, terror attacks, to let them know you're okay and so that they can provide emotional support.
- ◆ If you or someone you know is suffering from trauma, addiction, or mental health issues, contact Amudim for guidance at [amudim.org.il](http://amudim.org.il) or call **02-374-0175**.
- ◆ If you or someone you know is in a relationship with a friend or mentor that feels unsafe or unhealthy, seek guidance from appropriate school staff or a trusted adult.
- ◆ Some schools designate a staff member, or a

licensed social worker or psychologist, to deal with emotional or social issues that arise. Find out whether someone you trust holds that position in your school and develop a relationship with them.

- ◆ If you are looking for a therapist, contact Get Help Israel for English-speaking mental health professionals experienced in working with gap-year students. They can be reached at 072-397-6500. Please note they are not an emergency response organization so if needed, see several options on page 38, Important Phone Numbers.

## Fire Prevention & Response

- ◆ Unplug electrical appliances when not in use.
- ◆ Always plug space heaters directly into a wall outlet; do not use extension cords. Keep heaters away from flammable materials and out of the bathroom, where they might come in contact with water. If you buy a new space heater, choose one with an automatic shutoff switch.
- ◆ Don't cover your bedside lamp with any material.
- ◆ Never leave lit candles unattended. If you are permitted to light in your room for Shabbos, use tea lights and light in a sink or in an area that's safe and nonflammable. Keep a fire extinguisher nearby. Watch out for sleeves, scarves, and hair. Use tin foil underneath the candles as an extra precaution.
- ◆ Be cautious when using a *plata* (hot plate) and *blech* (metal sheet designed to cover the stove-top for Shabbos). Some can get dangerously hot. Don't place a *blech* on top of a glass cook-top, as it can break the glass. Also, try to avoid setting up a *plata* on a formica or wood countertop or table. Only place it on a granite/quartz countertop. If buying a new *plata*, choose one with an automatic shutoff option.
- ◆ Make sure your dorm/*dirah* has a smoke/carbon monoxide detector.
- ◆ Know where your fire extinguisher is and how to use it. It is activated by pulling the pin and squeezing the handle.
- ◆ Keep an emergency flashlight with batteries handy to avoid using candles during a power outage.
- ◆ If there is a fire, immediately yell for help and warn others. Don't try to put the fire out yourself.
- ◆ Leave everything behind and get yourself and others out of the building immediately.
- ◆ Close the door behind you and do not re-enter the room or building for any reason! Call for help once safely out of the building.
- ◆ If any part of you or your clothing catches fire, don't run or try to put out the fire with your hands. Cover your face and "stop, drop, and roll."
- ◆ Cover your face and "stop, drop, and roll."

# Staying Safe & Secure



## Street Safety

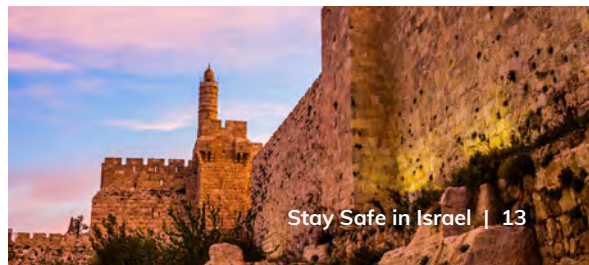
- ◆ Always know where you are. When exploring a new or unfamiliar city or neighborhood, take a map with you, or make sure your phone can access a map app, and be cautious. If you get lost, seek help from police, soldiers, or people speaking Hebrew or English. Otherwise, call someone for help rather than attempting to get to your destination by yourself.
- ◆ Always carry at least 100₪ in cash for emergency situations, such as taking a taxi when buses stop running (around 11 pm for some lines), or if you end up in a dangerous area.
- ◆ Jerusalem's Old City, with its many short, narrow, and winding streets, is very easy to get lost in. Take a map, and go with a friend or guide.
- ◆ When using the light rail to go to the Old City, get off at the stop called, "Ha'iriyah (City Hall)". Even though it is a slightly longer walk to the Old City, it is safer since the next stop is located in East Jerusalem.
- ◆ When entering Jerusalem's Old City by foot or in a taxi, it is safest to use the Sha'ar Yaffo (Jaffa Gate) entrance. **It is not advisable to enter the Arab Shuk when walking to or from the Kotel.** Other safe entrances are Sha'ar Zion and Sha'ar Ha'Ashpot (Dung Gate). Do not use Sha'ar Shechem (Damascus Gate) or other entrances not listed here.
- ◆ When leaving the Kotel through Sha'ar Ha'Ashpot, always turn right. Turning left takes you into an Arab area.
- ◆ When visiting popular or prominent locations such as museums and religious or historical landmarks, be extra cautious and mindful of the people around you and any unattended items.
- ◆ There are a lot of missionaries in Israel, many of whom speak perfect Hebrew. Yad L'Achim, an anti-missionary organization, can be reached in Israel 24 hours a day at 1-800-620-640.
- ◆ Cellphones can be stolen easily. Always keep yours in an inner backpack pocket or purse, or in a cellphone carrying case or belt clip. Be especially vigilant when using public transportation, including at stations. Don't put your phone down, even for a minute, since a thief can easily grab it and run away.
- ◆ If you have absolutely no choice but to hitchhike, don't enter a car unless the driver can answer a Jewish-themed question to verify

they are Jewish such as reciting Modeh Ani or Shema. Also, ask the driver where they are heading rather than informing them where you are headed. Open a map app to more clearly identify their destination, if necessary.

- ◆ In any situation where you feel it may be unsafe, trust your instincts, and go with your gut.

## Going Out

- ◆ If you are ever concerned for your safety, call someone and stay on the phone until you feel safe.
- ◆ Stay Alert!
  - Wearing earbuds, anything that displays your name, or fancy clothing can make you an easy target. If you're dressed up for an occasion, be extra vigilant.
  - Limit using your phone and earbuds on the street. They distract you and interfere with your ability to stay alert. If earbuds are needed while out, use only one earbud.
  - If you go walking or running, especially at night, go with a friend and stay alert. Avoid becoming lulled into a "zone." Wear reflective and bright clothing when running at night.
  - Avoid unfamiliar neighborhoods, alleyways, and unlit areas. Be mindful of your surroundings and walk purposefully.
- ◆ Keep a well-charged cellphone and fully charged portable charger with you. If your school has a no-cellphone policy during the zman (semester), borrow or rent one during *bein hazmanim* (semester break), if the school allows it.
- ◆ Before traveling, ask a reliable individual about the safety of your destination.
- ◆ Always try to go out with a friend. If you have to go somewhere by yourself at night, create a "buddy" system. Always let them know where you are going and when you will be coming back. You can use your phone to "share your location" (see Sharing Your Location, page 7). This way, your buddy always knows where you are while you are out.



- ♦ If you think someone may be following you, walk to a busier street and ask a soldier, police officer, or adult for help. You can also try to enter a store and ask the storeowner for help.
- ♦ If you want to ask a stranger to take a picture of your group of friends, choose someone who appears respectful and trustworthy, such as someone who is out with their family.
- ♦ When entering a shul, shopping mall, or other building, identify the exits, so you can leave quickly, in an emergency.
- ♦ If going out to eat, try to get seated where you can see everyone who is entering and be alert to any situation.
- ♦ Crossing the street in Israel can be a very different experience from what you are used to at home. According to Israeli law, motorists must stop for pedestrians, but they don't always. Look in all directions, and cross only at crosswalks or designated areas. If you jaywalk, you may get fined. Cross only when the light and pedestrian signal turn green, and make eye contact with drivers so they actually stop for you.
- ♦ When walking, be on the lookout for people driving scooters, motorcycles, or bikes, since they may drive even more erratically than vehicle drivers and typically do not yield to pedestrians.
- ♦ Be alert to the many tripping hazards near construction sites throughout Israel.
- ♦ If someone in a car asks for directions, be cautious when responding and do not approach the car. Even if they're very convincing, or they threaten you, don't enter the car. If the situation escalates (for example, if they show you a weapon or get out of the car and come towards you), run away immediately in the opposite direction, in a zigzag pattern. Scream, "hatzilu" (help), or "aish" (fire).
- ♦ **Don't participate in hafganot (demonstrations).** In Israel, hafganot can become violent, and include rioting in streets and setting trash cans on fire. Try to avoid being a part of a hafganah, unless your school is specifically attending one.
- ♦ If you can't take another route to avoid a hafganah, don't take pictures or get involved, as innocent people have been arrested for being in the wrong place at the wrong time. If the riot becomes very disruptive, policemen may target the area with water cannons or a foul-smelling spray to break up the demonstration.
- ♦ If your school promotes your attendance at a hafganah, practice the following safety methods:
  - Stay on the sidelines, outside of the group (furthest away from the speaker or

loudspeaker), just in case things become unruly.

- Avoid arguing with anyone, and move away from anyone who is arguing.
- Never insult or assault a police officer.
- Do not participate in any violence. If the crowd becomes aggressive, leave the hafganah or the area immediately.
- ♦ In Israel, items left unattended are treated with extreme caution. A *chefetz chashud* (suspicious object) could be an unattended bag, package, or luggage. These items have been used in terror attacks and could contain explosives.
- ♦ Be alert to any unattended items left on the street, in a building, or on public transportation. If you notice one, do not touch it. Move a considerable distance (100 feet or more) from the object or leave the premises altogether, since some explosives can be triggered by a cell phone. Notify anyone who is near it by yelling, "chefetz chashud!" Once out of range, call the police (100), or notify any nearby soldiers.
- ♦ Do not leave your personal items unattended, as they can be mistaken as a *chefetz chashud*, cause panic, cause significant delays for yourself and others, and your items may be destroyed.

## Security

- ♦ Terrorist attacks can occur anywhere, at any time, so always be alert to suspicious people or objects.
- ♦ Pay attention to people's behavior and mannerisms. Look out for anyone exhibiting suspicious behavior (mumbling to themselves, acting very nervous, etc.), or who has a suspicious appearance (sweating profusely, bulging mid-section, etc.). Notify a policeman or soldier in the area immediately. If there is none, call the police.
- ♦ People who dress in religious garb may not be what they seem. Be aware that in the past, terrorists have dressed up as Orthodox Jews or in western-style clothing to avoid attention.
- ♦ Terror attacks usually increase during Muslim holidays, so become familiar with those dates and exercise extra caution. There is also an increase during Jewish holidays.
- ♦ Look out for cars driving erratically





and, if possible, walk on the sidewalk facing oncoming traffic to avoid a car-ramming attack.

- ◆ During times of heightened security threats or tension, whenever possible, avoid travel, large crowds, and high-profile areas such as Ben Yehuda, Geula, and Shuk Machane Yehuda.
- ◆ Following a terrorist attack, avoid going near those areas, because of the possibility of further attacks.
- ◆ The following are some of the Jerusalem neighborhoods that are considered unsafe and should be avoided: Ir David (the areas around the Old City), anywhere in East Jerusalem and the neighborhoods of Shuafat and Beit Hanina (the two stops after Givat HaMivtar on the Light Rail). Your school may also advise you of other areas to avoid. The Jewish Quarter of the Old City is relatively safe, provided all routes to get there are via Egged bus, and not through East Jerusalem.
- ◆ White and green license plates denote a West Bank Palestinian vehicle. Yellow and black license plates denote Israeli vehicles. Be familiar with the difference. (See license plate info on page 23.)
- ◆ The West Bank is divided into three “areas” distinguished by their governance. Area A is administered by the Palestinian National Authority, Area C by Israel, and Area B is under joint control. “Area A” cities include Beit Lechem (Bethlehem), Chevron (Hebron), Ramallah, Yericho (Jericho), and Shechem (Nablus). Jewish *yishuvim* (settlements) in the West Bank are almost always a part of Area C. Do not travel to, or through, Areas A or B.
- ◆ Black-colored water tanks on top of buildings typically indicate a mostly Arab neighborhood. You’re most likely to see them when on an intercity bus, or on a *tiyul* (trip) away from the city. Never enter these areas.



to use only use taxis that you order, from your school’s list of reputable Jewish companies, even if the rate is higher due to ordering them via phone. Some schools have prearranged with taxi companies to not charge students the additional fee.

- Ordering a taxi is also always preferable to hailing one, since, even if you hail a taxi from a Jewish owned company, they may use Arab drivers.
- Ordering a taxi also provides a record of your driver and your destination.
- The smartphone app GETT, similar to Uber, allows you to order a taxi. Be sure to match the license plate number provided on the app with the car that arrives to pick you up.
- If you have no choice but to hail a taxi, understand that if the driver is playing Hebrew sounding music or has a *sefer* on the dashboard, that does not guarantee the driver is Jewish and should be trusted.

### Don’t Just Get In!

- ◆ The number-one thing to keep in mind is that taxi drivers do not normally do favors. Here are some scenarios in which you should walk away and find another taxi:
  - You are outside in the freezing cold, and he offers to drive you for free.
  - He gives you his number and tells you to call him anytime you need a taxi.
  - He pulls up next to you, asks you where you’re going, and then tells you he’s going there anyway and can give you a free or very cheap ride.
  - You tell the driver that you’re going somewhere very far (like from Yerushalayim to Netanya), and he gives you a very cheap price.
  - If the driver makes you feel uncomfortable in any way, don’t get in!

# Getting Around Town

## Taxis

*While Israel’s public transportation system is a great resource, sometimes, whether because of time constraint, a particular destination, or simply for ease, you will need to take a taxi. Being aware of certain nuances and knowing how to use taxis in Israel is also an important part of the Israel experience.*

- ◆ To stay safe, consider the following factors:
  - Without being fluent in Hebrew, it would be easy for you to mistake an Arab driver for a Jewish one. Obviously, if given the choice, it is safer to have a Jewish driver than an Arab driver. Therefore, it is strongly recommended

- ♦ Don't get into a taxi if there's another passenger already in the car, even if they are in the front seat.
- ♦ Never enter a taxi if there is more than one driver present, or if you see the driver switch places with someone in the passenger seat.
- ♦ Avoid taking a taxi alone, especially to another city or at night.

### Once in the Taxi

- ♦ Don't sit in the front seat. Buckle up. Keep your cellphone and wallet or purse close to your body.
- ♦ Ask the driver to turn on the meter.
- ♦ Taxis are legally required to have a plaque showing the driver's name and taxi license number. It is usually found between the driver side door and passenger door.
- ♦ Don't be overly friendly with the driver.
- ♦ If the driver is driving unsafely and won't change his driving method after you ask him to, exit the taxi as soon as it's safe to do so, and pay him for the cost of the ride up until then.
- ♦ If you're in a taxi and the driver tells you he wants to make a quick stop or pick up someone else, tell him firmly that you don't want him to do so. If he ignores your request and pulls over, if it's a safe area, open the door so you can exit, pay him, and exit the taxi immediately.
- ♦ If the driver makes you feel uncomfortable or unsafe in any way, if it is a safe neighborhood, ask him to pull over, open the door, pay him and exit the taxi. If possible, get a receipt or write down or take a picture of the license plate number and taxi company name. Report the driver to the police, the taxi company, and your school. If it is in an unsafe neighborhood, call the police and text a school staff member or trusted adult. If you have a smartphone, share your location.
- ♦ If you have a smartphone, consider using a driving app such as Waze to monitor the route the driver is taking. Check that he's following the destination address and tell him to take main roads rather than side streets.
- ♦ When exiting a taxi, always get out on the curbside, never in the path of traffic.

### Don't Get Ripped Off

*Taxi drivers may try to make more money by taking advantage of foreign customers unfamiliar with the usual fares.*

- ♦ Don't allow the taxi driver to haggle you into a

"bargain rate." Insist that he use the meter.

- ♦ Make sure the meter is visible to you. If it isn't, respectfully ask the driver to remove whatever is covering it.
- ♦ If the driver tells you the meter is broken, legally he is not supposed to use that taxi, and this could be an attempt to charge you a much higher rate, so tell him you will get another taxi instead.
- ♦ The meter should start at a 12₪ base rate in Jerusalem but may be different in other cities.
- ♦ When arriving at your destination, open the door, (for safety purposes in the event there is any type of misunderstanding) count your change, and always ask for a receipt.
- ♦ When leaving the taxi, gather all your belongings, including those in the trunk. Leave the car door open while retrieving items from the trunk so that the driver does not drive off with them.
- ♦ If paying by cash, it is best to pay with smaller bills and count it out with the driver. If you have no choice but to use a larger bill, as you hand it to the driver, state the amount out loud, "Here is 200₪," so there is no question or confusion as to what you gave him.
- ♦ To pay by credit card, use either the Gett or Yango app. Some taxis may have credit card readers but may require swiping your physical card. Make sure to carry your credit card with you and don't rely on Apple Pay or Google Wallet. Keep at least 100₪ with you in case the taxi's credit card network is down.
- ♦ For travel from one city to another, there are set rates listed on the Ministry of Transportation's website, [mot.gov.il](http://mot.gov.il). Check the rate before you travel to ensure you are being charged correctly.
- ♦ Be prepared to pay a higher rate than the moneh (meter) says if you have luggage, the driver has to wait for you, there are multiple passengers, or you are traveling between the hours of 9 pm and 5 am. There may also be a surcharge when traveling to and from Ben Gurion Airport. The meter does have the capability to add these fees, as well as to show them on a printed receipt.
- ♦ On Erev Yomim Tovim getting a taxi is extremely difficult especially on Erev Yom Kippur and Purim. When planning to travel by taxi, plan your departure well in advance.
- ♦ Be prepared to pay a higher rate on Erev Shabbos and Erev Yom Tov. Many drivers refuse to turn on the meter on these days because they know that you would be stuck without a taxi.

# Buses, Trains, & Light Rails

Israel has a large public transportation system with many buses, trains, and light rails. Using public transportation is generally fairly safe, reliable, more affordable than taxis, and the typical way most students get around.

## Before You Travel

- ◆ Each mode of transportation covers specific areas. Buses operate on a widespread network, including routes within cities and from city to city. Trains connect various cities and regions across the country and are usually used for longer-distance travel (like Amtrak in the US), while light rails, available only in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, transport you within and between those cities (similar to the NYC subway). Note that the train and light rails operate on separate systems and are not connected.
- ◆ There are several main bus companies in Israel. Egged is the largest and operates many intercity routes out of Jerusalem and Haifa. Superbus and Extra are bus companies that operate in Jerusalem and several other cities. Dan operates mostly in Tel Aviv and some intercity routes. Some other cities have smaller local operators.
- ◆ When taking a bus to your intercity destination, check the number of stops and the total travel time, as there may be more direct buses with fewer stops and quicker routes.
- ◆ Be aware that Jewish-owned buses may have Arab drivers. Additionally, some Israeli bus companies do travel through Area C neighborhoods, such as Sheikh Jarrah and Har Hazeisim, which have a mix of Jewish and Arab residents. Some of those bus numbers include #17, 19, 34, 48, and 53. However, be aware that due to constant construction in Jerusalem, these bus numbers and routes may change often. Ask your school, if they would prefer you not use those buses. If they do allow it, just be more mindful for your safety.
- ◆ At central bus stations, you can check electronic boards for destinations, platforms, and departure times, but be aware that they are arranged alphabetically in Hebrew. At a bus stop, look for the yellow metal flags that

show route numbers and destinations. There may also be information in English. Some bus stops have electronic displays that show how long until the next bus comes.

- ◆ A new Northern Jerusalem central bus station, called Arazim, is opening at the Ramot Junction which is in an area that is a major entrance point into Jerusalem. If you are in Ramot, French Hill or Pisgat Ze'ev, and other nearby neighborhoods, it can be more useful than using the Tachana Mercazit. Currently, the terminal is only open for several intercity bus lines. Recently, two additional large bus stops have opened above ground for citywide buses. The terminal will eventually allow you to connect to the light rail.



## Get in Touch

### All Public Transportation Options

Visit [bus.gov.il](http://bus.gov.il) or call \*8787. Press 2 for English. Press 2 again for live assistance.

### Buses

#### Egged (largest bus company)

Visit [egged.co.il](http://egged.co.il) or call \*2800

#### Extra

Visit [extra-pt.co.il](http://extra-pt.co.il) or call \*6747

#### Dan

Visit [dan.co.il/](http://dan.co.il/) or call \*3527 or \*5467

#### Superbus

Visit [superbus.co.il](http://superbus.co.il) or call 1-700-700-181

### Light Rails & Train

#### General and Jerusalem Light Rail

Visit [cfir.co.il](http://cfir.co.il) or call \*2779 and press 2 for English

#### Tel Aviv Light Rail

Visit [nta.co.il/en/light-rail](http://nta.co.il/en/light-rail) or call \*9943

#### Israel Rakevet (trains)

Visit [rail.co.il](http://rail.co.il) or call \*5770





- ♦ For safety reasons, avoid the old central bus station in Tel Aviv, especially after dark!
- ♦ Avoid waiting at public transportation stops alone at night. If someone drops you off (e.g., after a Shabbos visit), ask them to wait with you until your bus, train, or light rail comes. It is preferable to travel from a central bus station which has security staff and cameras. If you must wait at a stop at night alone, choose one that is well lit.
- ♦ When traveling by bus, always check the bus stop ID to confirm it is traveling in the direction you want to go.

### Paying for Transit

- ♦ You can't pay for public transportation with cash or a credit card! This means you can't just get on the bus and pay the driver directly. Instead, you must buy a Rav-Kav beforehand. It's a contactless smart card that you scan to pay for your fare. With the Rav-Kav app, Hop On Rav Pass app or Moovit app downloaded on a smartphone, you can use a QR code to scan at the Rav-Kav payment unit instead of a card.

- ♦ There are two types of Rav-Kav cards you can purchase. One is an *anonymi* (anonymous) card that can be purchased at public transportation offices, Rav-Kav payment units at train and light rail stations, major bus stations, Rav-Kav kiosks located throughout city streets, gas stations, and *makolets* (small grocery stores). *Makolets* that sell them usually display a sign showing that they sell them, but not always. If your *anonymi* card is lost, stolen, or stops working, you cannot redeem any credit you may have had on it. On the other hand, you can share an *anonymi* card with a friend, or give or sell it to someone else.
- ♦ The other type of card is a personal card that is customized and has your name and picture on it. To buy one, you need to bring your passport or Israeli ID to a public transportation office. In Jerusalem, there is one on the third floor of the *Tachana Merkazit* (Central Bus Station), at the Hapa'amom Mall on King George, and at Davidka Square on Rechov Yaffa. You can also visit [ravkavonline.co.il](http://ravkavonline.co.il) to purchase this type of Rav-Kav, but you will need to upload your passport. The benefit to purchasing this type of card is that if it's lost, stolen, or stops working,

*\*The Tel Aviv Light Rail has underground and above-ground stations, and you need the Rav-Kav or code from your app to exit the underground ones. You don't need it for the above-ground stations, or for any station on the Jerusalem Light Rail, as of now. (The Jerusalem Light Rail has only above-ground stations currently, but there are underground ones under construction.)*

you can transfer credit to a new card. You cannot, however, share, sell, or give away this type of card.

- ♦ While yeshiva and seminary students are not normally eligible for a student-discounted Rav Kav, some students have received one when going to an office in person with a letter from their school.

### Using a Rav-Kav

- ♦ **Bus** Scan the card once on the bus and the fare will be automatically deducted. There is a Rav-Kav payment unit near the driver and several others throughout the bus. The remaining balance is displayed, as well, but only for a short time and in small type (see below, Loading Credit and Checking Balances, for other options). If you have an app such as the Rav-Kav app, HopOn Rav-Kav Pass, or Moovit, you scan the barcode or QR code that displays on your phone.
- ♦ **Train** Pay using the Rav-Kav payment unit at the station or via your app when entering the train, before leaving the station.
- ♦ **Light Rail in Jerusalem** Pay at the payment unit on the light rail. If you are using the app, you must buy the ticket at the station, since it picks up the GPS coordinates of the station and provides a barcode based on the station's location. You cannot use the app to buy the ticket once you are between stations. An inspector may check for your barcode once on board.
- ♦ **Light Rail in Tel Aviv** Pay at the payment unit at the light rail station. You cannot pay on the light rail itself, so be certain to scan your card before you enter the light rail. The light rail station also does not allow you to exit the station if you have not paid the fare.\* If you are using the app, it is the same as on the Jerusalem Light Rail: you need to pay the fare at the station, since it picks up the GPS coordinates of the station and provides a barcode based on the station's location. You cannot use the app to purchase your ticket en route. An inspector may check for your barcode once on board.

### Loading Credit & Checking Balances

- ♦ If you board public transportation without having credit on your card, you can be fined, so make sure your card or app is always loaded with credit. You can load credit onto your Rav-Kav at the same locations where you can purchase the card, such as public transportation offices, Rav-Kav payment units at train and light rail stations, and major bus stations. There are even some shuls that have a payment unit called Nedarim Plus, where you

can load credit onto your Rav-Kav!

- ♦ You can also load credit by visiting [ravkavonline.co.il/en/](http://ravkavonline.co.il/en/), or via the smartphone apps Rav-Kav Online and Rav-Kav by HopOn. You can choose to purchase daily, weekly, or monthly passes. There is even an unlimited monthly travel pass that allows you to travel nationwide. There may also be discounts available based on which type of pass you select. There are many options so be careful and select the correct one for your needs.
- ♦ Check your Rav-Kav balance on apps such as Moovit, Rav-Kav Online, and Rav-Kav by HopOn.

### Ticket Cost & Duration

- ♦ For travel between cities, bus, train, and light rail fares are calculated based on the distance of the trip; the further you travel, the higher the fare will be. Local bus rides are approximately 6₪ a ride. Local train or light rail fare is 6₪ a ride.
- ♦ When you travel with another person by bus, you may pay for more than one fare on the self-pay screen with a single card. Keep in mind, though, that if your friend will need to board another bus separately, they won't be able to use a transfer and will need to have their own Rav-Kav for their next bus.
- ♦ On the light rail, you can add another rider if using an app, but not if using the Rav-Kav. For the train, you cannot pay more than one fare on either an app or the Rav-Kav.
- ♦ A city transportation ticket is good for trips up to 15 kilometers (approximately 9 miles) away and for 90 minutes. You can switch between a bus and the light rail, as long as it is within those 90 minutes. For trains, you are charged once you exit the train station.
- ♦ Scan your Rav-Kav every time you enter a bus, train, or light rail. It will beep every time you scan it, but if you already scanned it within 90 minutes, you will not be charged again. If you don't and are caught, you will get a ticket and have to pay a fine.\*

*\*Details of how the Rav-Kav works are subject to updates or changes, so check their website occasionally for the most current information.*

### On the Ride

- ♦ When waiting for public transportation, stay alert to any vehicles veering close to where you are standing. Terrorists have targeted bus, train, and light rail stations with car-ramming attacks. If there is a concrete barrier at a bus stop, stand behind it.

- ♦ If you're unsure whether the bus you're on is going in the direction you need to go, ask the driver. Most drivers are helpful and obviously know the bus routes well. When traveling to an unfamiliar neighborhood, sit close to the driver's seat.
- ♦ Don't travel in an empty bus, light rail, or train, especially at night. If you are the last passenger, get off if it is a safe area, and wait for the next one, rather than stay alone with the driver.
- ♦ While using public transportation, don't discuss personal information with your friends or give your credit card details over the phone.
- ♦ If you must travel on routes that are subject to rock-throwing, sit in an aisle seat to lessen the risk of an injury by window glass. It's also good to sit in an aisle seat so you can move easily to exit the bus in an emergency.
- ♦ Keep your belongings with you at all times to prevent leaving them behind or theft. Check that you have all your belongings before you leave the vehicle.
- ♦ Don't be alarmed by soldiers boarding the bus to check your bags or the bus's luggage compartment.
- ♦ If you feel uncomfortable with the person sitting next to you, don't be afraid of offending them by getting up and quietly switching seats. Safety comes before courtesy.
- ♦ If you notice something suspicious or feel threatened, alert the driver and exit as soon as possible.
- ♦ Israeli bus drivers don't always stop at each stop, even if you have pressed the stop request button. If the driver has missed your stop, you must advocate for yourself and loudly call out to the driver by saying, "*Nahag, efshar bevakashah laredet?* (Driver, please can I get off?)"
- ♦ On intercity buses, there is often a luggage compartment under the bus. Once at your stop, before leaving the bus, remember to tell the driver to open the luggage compartment so you can retrieve your luggage when you get off. Ask the driver by saying, "*Nahag, tochel liftoach bevakashah et tah hameetahn.* (Driver, are you able to please open the luggage compartment?)"
- ♦ When boarding an intercity bus, tell the driver what stop you need, so he won't miss it. You may be the only one getting off at that specific stop, and sometimes the driver doesn't stop at every stop.

- ♦ On long bus rides, the driver may sometimes stop to fill up on gas. Take advantage of this time to use the restroom or stretch your legs. Ask the driver what time he will begin driving again. Make sure to be back a few minutes early so that driver won't take off without you.

## Car Rentals, Electric Bikes, & Scooters

- ♦ To rent a car in Israel, you must be 21 or older, have a valid license, and have or obtain appropriate insurance. Always lock the car doors and wear a seat belt. Insist your friends wear seat belts, as well.
- ♦ Remember, Israel's speed limits are in kilometers, not miles ( 1 mile = 1.609 kilometers). Look out for changing speed limits.
- ♦ Don't pick up hitchhikers, regardless of how normal they look. You don't know who they really are or what their true intentions may be.
- ♦ When driving, if you're unsure of what route to take or think you may be lost, don't hesitate to pull over to a safe location, such as a well-lit gas station.
- ♦ Driving apps give an ETA for you to reach your destination, but the time may change with unexpected circumstances, so plan accordingly and leave early.
- ♦ Use transportation apps such as Google Maps, Waze, or Moovit with caution, as they may lead you into dangerous areas. If you will be using one of these apps for a trip by car, first confirm the directions they provide with someone who regularly drives in Israel to be certain you stay safe.
- ♦ If you drive an electric bike or scooter, be aware, that legally it must be registered and have a license plate. Note that all driving rules for vehicles such as following road signs, traffic lights, and giving way to pedestrians, must also be obeyed when on an electric bike or scooter.
- ♦ Wear a helmet to protect yourself in the event of an accident.



# Public Transportation Tips

## Bus

- Bus schedules can change while trains usually run on schedule. Always check schedules online or by phone before you leave.
- Kal Kav, which operates the Rav-Kav, provides bus arrival information by phone or text. Call 170-070-7050, press 1, enter the bus stop number displayed on the wall of the bus stop, press the # key, enter the bus number, then press # again. Another option is to text them with the bus stop number and bus number to find out when the bus is coming.
- Bus schedules often change for late-night bus rides, Erev Shabbos, Erev Shabbos Chanukah, Erev Shabbos before Lag B'omer, etc.
- Buses usually stop running an hour before Shabbos and Yom Tov during the winter and two to three hours before during the summer. They usually restart within an hour and a half after Shabbos and Yom Tov, but the exact time varies by city and route. For example, the last bus from Haifa to Jerusalem departs much earlier than the start of Shabbos. Always double-check the schedule for your route ahead of time, and double-check on the day of travel.
- Do not plan to take the last available bus, as it could be full or not show up at all.
- Israel is notorious for its dense population. Rush hour-like traffic can happen at any given time, especially if there are national or neighborhood events, *hafganot*, major roadwork, or traffic or weather-related accidents. This is especially true on Fridays and national holidays.
- Most bus companies and the train and light rail have Lost & Found departments (see page 17 sidebar for general phone numbers).

- Fewer buses are available during the month-long Muslim holiday of Ramadan, especially in the evenings, when Muslim drivers are breaking their fasts.

## Jerusalem Light Rail

- The Jerusalem Light Rail's last ride out on Friday, from the main Jerusalem station, departs at about 3:15 pm, and the system starts running again after Shabbos at about 9:30 pm. Departure times can also vary during the winter or summer so always check the times beforehand.

## Train

- It takes several minutes to walk from the train station entrance to the platform and trains usually run on schedule. Stations and trains can also be crowded. Leave yourself ample time to reach your platform and board.
- Trains generally operate on Fridays, but they stop running in the early afternoon and the time might vary. As with buses and light rails, always double-check the schedule for your route ahead of time, and double-check on the day of travel. Train service resumes Motzai Shabbos with a limited schedule.



# Personal Safety

If you feel concerned for your safety, trust your instincts. Be aware of your surroundings and remember, "If You See Something, Say Something."<sup>®</sup>

- ♦ Write down and memorize emergency numbers and other important phone numbers and addresses (e.g., friends, taxi company, dorm or *dirah* address, family member in Israel). Carry the information with you so that if your phone loses power, you are still able to use someone else's phone to contact someone.
- ♦ Don't lend your phone or give your phone number to strangers. Your phone or money could be stolen, or your phone could be used for criminal activities in which you could then be implicated.
- ♦ Avoid using public charging stations, since phones can be hacked that way.
- ♦ If you have allergies, carry Benadryl or Telfast when you go out. Also carry an inhaler, EpiPen, and prescription medications, if needed.
- ♦ It's a good idea to carry essentials such as tissues, band-aids, and hand sanitizer with you.
- ♦ Never leave your drink or food unattended. Drugs can and have been easily added to unattended drinks and food. For both safety and *kashrus*, don't drink from an open bottle or cup you didn't see poured, and don't eat food from an unmarked bag.
- ♦ Limit conversations with strangers, and don't be overly friendly or share personal information. Don't give out any personal or credit card information in public. A popular phishing scam involves someone calling and requesting credit card information regarding a purchase you made. If you get that type of call, ask for the person's phone number and tell them you will call them back.
- ♦ Do not respond to text messages and social media posts from numbers or people you don't recognize. Never meet with a stranger you know only through social media.
- ♦ Beware of people who try to befriend you in order to take advantage of you. They may use gifts, guilt, blackmail, or other tactics to pressure you into actions you would not normally commit.
- ♦ While far from home, you'll develop closer relationships with extended family and friends. Politely and firmly establish boundaries, including *yichud* and *negiah* (men and women avoiding seclusion and touching). Rehearse possible scenarios in your mind or with a friend. Consider creating a code word to communicate that you are uncomfortable. Decide ahead of time how to respond.

- ♦ If you are in a bad predicament, even if you think it is your fault, reach out to a trusted adult for help. Even if you feel guilty or embarrassed, your safety is more important than anything else.
- ♦ If you plan to go out at night, leave plenty of extra time to be back for curfew. The later the hour, the more dangerous it is. If you see you'll be late for curfew, don't panic. Try to think clearly. It's better to call your *mashgiach/madrich* or *madricha* and explain your situation than to do something dangerous, potentially making the situation much worse.
- ♦ When planning a *tiyul* with friends or going to a large event, check with appropriate staff to confirm your plan complies with school rules and is safe in terms of location, communication, and supplies. Tell staff when you expect to return, and update them if your plans change.
- ♦ Don't travel outside the country without approval from your school and parents, a charged cell phone, and access to money. Inform your parents of your travel plans. Research the laws of the country you are traveling to, especially with respect to what items may or may not be allowed in and out of the country.
- ♦ If you are going to drink alcohol, drink responsibly. While the legal drinking age is only 18 in Israel, that does not mean you should. On Purim, many students overindulge. This can be very dangerous. Alcohol poisoning is a very serious condition that requires immediate hospitalization. If you do drink, make sure to have your ID and a designated driver (who is not drinking!) to bring you home safely.
- ♦ Contrary to popular belief, vaping is not safer than smoking. Vapes contain toxins that increase the risk of respiratory infections, heart attack, stroke, and may negatively impact brain development. Additionally, it's addictive nature can negatively impact you during this critical year of growth.
- ♦ Being far from home can inspire greater courage and self-reliance, but use your common sense. Resist peer pressure, and think before you act. One wrong decision can have lifelong consequences.

## Self-Defense

- ♦ Request that your school host basic self-defense, CPR, and first aid courses.
- ♦ If you carry a weapon for self-defense (e.g., expandable baton, penknife), make sure it is legal and you know how to use it properly.



# License Plate Info

License plates in Israel can help you know who you are interacting with, but keep in mind that a driver with a yellow civilian license plate is not necessarily Jewish. Non-Jews who live in Israel, including Arab citizens, can also have yellow plates.

## Israel License Plates

Civilian



Police

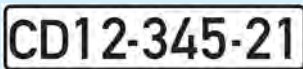


Military Tzahal



## Non-Israel License Plates

Diplomatic (starts CD),  
Consulate (starts CC)



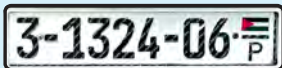
Palestinian – Government



Arab (other)



Gaza



Commercial



Public Vehicles



- ♦ Remain alert and prepared to defend yourself in a hostile situation. Think strategically and creatively, and use whatever is easily accessible to defend yourself, such as keys, pens, chairs, fire extinguisher, etc.
- ♦ If you are attacked or grabbed, scream *Hatzilu* (help) or *Aish* (fire), and run away, if you can. Activate your My MDA app, alert the police immediately, and file a report. Notify your school and parents.
- ♦ If someone tries to attack you with a knife or weapon, run in the opposite direction or towards other people, while yelling *hatzilu* or *aish!* Try to create a barrier between you and the attacker. Use a backpack, table, chair, etc. If you have no choice but to fight the attacker, try to defend yourself and block the knife or other weapon as much as possible with your forearms. Activate your My MDA app, alert the police immediately, and file a report. Notify your school and parents.
- ♦ If someone tries to rob you, toss your wallet or purse to the side, into the robber's line of sight, and run in the opposite direction. Alert the police immediately, and file a report. Notify your school and parents.
- ♦ Do not engage in a physical fight with someone, unless it is self-defense and you have no choice. Be aware that if it is not clear to police which party caused the incident, you may be arrested as well. While some Israeli laws are different than US laws, the right to remain silent until you are provided with a lawyer is the same. It is probably best to wait until you speak with a lawyer so you don't unintentionally incriminate yourself in any way.

## Money

- ◆ Avoid carrying large amounts of cash. If you must, store it out of sight and securely on yourself. Consider using a money belt or pouch.
- ◆ Keep your wallet or purse close to your body at all times. If you must place it in a backpack, don't put it in an outer pocket where it can be easily pickpocketed. It is preferable to keep your wallet in a front pocket. Pay attention to your surroundings when pulling out your wallet.
- ◆ When using an ATM, make sure no one is standing too close or loitering nearby. Cover the screen, when entering your PIN, and make sure you're logged out before walking away. Avoid using ATMs at night.
- ◆ To avoid theft of your credit card information and personal data when making payments online, use only secure websites and WiFi.
- ◆ Find out your school's tzedakah policy, and keep pocket change handy. When giving tzedakah, move slightly away from the person as you open your wallet or purse.
- ◆ Keep all your receipts in a zipper-seal bag to have them at hand for duty-free tax credits, returns, or taxi cab issues.
- ◆ In Israel, some clothing or gift stores have a tourist tax called Value Added Tax (VAT) on certain clothing or gift items that cost more than about \$110. The tax amount is 18% and is refundable when leaving the country. The stores may advertise this as a "special" VAT refund. Not every store has the sign posted, so it's good to ask. The store should also provide you with a stamped form, which lists your purchases, to submit at the airport. Before leaving, when packing, keep these items easily accessible. Once at the airport, before going through security, visit the VAT counter located on the 3rd floor to receive your refund. You will need to present your purchases, forms, receipts, and passport.
- ◆ Money changers, located all over Israel, usually have better exchange rates than banks. After exchanging currency, count yours before you leave.
- ◆ Not all Israeli ATMs accept American ATM cards. (Bank Hapoalim is one exception.) There's a charge for using an international credit card at an Israeli ATM, plus, in many cases, a commission fee. Charges vary by bank, network, and ATM owner.
- ◆ Ask your parents to check credit card and bank statements for fraudulent charges or mistakes.
- ◆ When shopping, check your receipt and change to confirm everything was calculated correctly, since it can be confusing when using shekalim.
- ◆ When shopping, find out the return policy since stores don't offer the standard 30-day policy you are used to in the US. Most stores offer a 7-14 days for a cash back refund and 14-30 days for a store credit. Receipts are usually required for returns.



# Going Out for Shabbos

## Leave Early!!

- ◆ It takes much longer to get around on Erev Shabbos, and even more so on Erev Yom Tov, because of bus schedules, traffic, and the increased number of people traveling. Plan your route by Thursday and leave as early as you can, especially when Shabbos comes in early. This way, if you get lost or stuck because of traffic, you still have time to make it to your host in time for Shabbos.
- ◆ Remember that on Fridays, trains don't run in the afternoon, buses stop running anywhere between one to three hours before Shabbos, depending on if it is winter or summer. The light rail in Jerusalem stops running at approximately 3:15 pm or earlier depending on if it is winter or summer.
- ◆ If you realize en route that you won't get to your destination before Shabbos, get to a safe place. Contact your hosts and inform them. If there is enough time, contact your yeshiva or seminary as well. If you can't reach anyone, call 100 (police) and let them know you are safe. Doing so can prevent an unneeded search party and *chillul* Shabbos (Shabbos desecration).

## Safety

- ◆ Stay only with people you know personally or who have been recommended to you by someone who can vouch for their safety and kashrus. DO NOT just call numbers from a list without having references. There have been many stories of students going places for Shabbos without checking them out first and having a very uncomfortable Shabbos at best, and at worst, a traumatic experience.
- ◆ Tell someone—a dorm counselor, or a few friends—where you are going for Shabbos, and give them the host's contact information.
- ◆ Check that the route to your host is safe, especially during times of heightened security threats or tension. Bring cash in case you miss the last bus and need a taxi.
- ◆ If there's an issue regarding the family you're staying with, or you feel uncomfortable or unsafe in their house, go to the nearest shul, look for the rabbi or rebbetzin, and stay with them until after Shabbos. After Shabbos, notify your school about the issues you had, so the family can be taken off any lists given to students.
- ◆ Know your boundaries. Offer to help your hosts, but don't be afraid to politely say no if they ask you to do something you're not comfortable with.



## Guest Tips

- ◆ Inform your host by Wednesday night, at the latest, that you're coming for Shabbos. People in Israel often shop early for Shabbos.
- ◆ It's common for people to host students every week. Offer to bring linen with you to save your hosts time on their weekly laundry.
- ◆ If you or anyone going with you has allergies or food sensitivities, let your host know so they can cook accordingly. Bring basic snacks, just in case. Also, if you have an allergy to animals, don't forget to find out ahead of time whether the family has pets.
- ◆ Bring a dessert, wine, or flowers to your host as a gift. It doesn't have to be expensive; it's the thought that counts. An appropriate gift amount for one guest is in the 30₪ range. Make sure the kashrus of the dessert or wine meets your host's standards.
- ◆ Your host is doing you a huge favor by having you for Shabbos. Show how much you appreciate it by offering to arrive a couple of hours before Shabbos to help with the kids, setting the table, etc., rather than showing up 10 minutes before Shabbos.
- ◆ NEVER light candles in a guest bedroom.
- ◆ Throughout Shabbos, make it a point to talk with the host, rather than just sitting at the table talking with your friends.
- ◆ Help clean up after Shabbos (including offering to strip the linen if you used theirs).

# Crowd Safety

## Preparation and awareness can save your life!

### Before You Go

- ◆ When going to crowded events like concerts, levayas (funerals), etc., always bring a fully charged phone, portable charger, small pocket flashlight, tissues, hand sanitizer, ID, and any necessary medical devices or medication.
- ◆ Keep your phone and wallet or purse in a secure place on your body and not in a back pocket. In big crowds, they can easily be lost or stolen.
- ◆ Go with a friend, as two people can spot potential issues better than one. Choose a meeting place in case you get separated.
- ◆ Don't wear anything that can pull you down or get snagged. Wear comfortable shoes with securely tied laces.

### At an Event

*If the event feels too crowded or chaotic, go with your gut and leave before it becomes dangerous.*

- ◆ When entering a venue that is anticipating or has a very large crowd at the front, it's safer not to be part of the first group of people going inside.
- ◆ If the entrance to the venue is an open space, try to remain on the periphery or edge of the crowd instead of in the middle, so you can leave easily if needed.
- ◆ Maintain adequate space between yourself and the people next to you.
- ◆ Seek out emergency exits and medical security stations, and plan a potential escape route if necessary.
- ◆ At indoor venues, check that exit doors aren't blocked. If they're blocked, notify staff to remove the items.
- ◆ Don't sit or stand on stages or bleachers that feel unstable, or if people are jumping on or pushing them. Alert staff to the danger.
- ◆ Be careful on wet, slippery terrain, especially when going down stairs. Use handrails or banisters, if available.
- ◆ If you smell smoke or hear an alarm, don't panic. Leave promptly. Follow directions from security staff or emergency responders.

*This page is dedicated in loving memory of the 45 victims who tragically lost their lives in a crowd crush in Meron on Lag B'Omer 2021 and those who lost their lives in a bleacher collapse in Givat Ze'ev just a few weeks later.*

### Crowd Crush

*The most important thing is to remain calm so you can think clearly and make good decisions.*

#### ◆ DO

- Try to stay on your feet.
- Keep your arms at chest level to maintain your personal space and keep your balance.
- Stay away from barricades, fences, or walls, since they could trap or crush you.
- Leave via the emergency exit doors instead of the main entrance.

#### ◆ DON'T

- Don't bend down to tie your shoes or for any other reason in an unsafe crowd. If you drop something, DO NOT pick it up. It's not worth your life.
- Don't stop to take pictures or videos of an unruly or dangerous crowd. Focus instead on getting out safely.
- Don't stand still or go against the flow of the crowd. Instead, keep moving calmly and quickly in the direction of the flow without injuring others or causing panic. Take any opportunity to get to an open space or outside the venue.

### How to Survive a Crowd Crush

- ◆ If you fall, lie on your side in a fetal position and cover your head. Don't lie on your back or stomach. Your goal is to protect your head, lungs, heart, and other vital organs. Save your oxygen; don't scream.



# Trip and Hiking Safety

## Before Your Trip

### Do Your Research & Be Prepared

- ◆ When planning your hike, get advice from people who have gone on that same hike or similar type of tiyul before. If your school allows, join reputable Facebook and WhatsApp groups for hiking tips and safety information.
- ◆ Review the main roads and paths of the tiyul area beforehand with someone who knows the area well, to avoid driving through dangerous neighborhoods.
- ◆ Research the area around where you will be hiking to find the nearest supermarket, pharmacy, and hospital just in case of an emergency. Find a phone number for a local taxi company, as well.
- ◆ If you're hiking outside a national park, it's very important to have a *mapat simun shvilim* (extremely detailed map of the region). This can be invaluable for general navigation and finding your way back if you lose your way. Buy a trail map for that specific hike for each hiker, if available.
- ◆ Compile emergency items for an emergency kit. At a minimum, your emergency kit should include water, non-perishable food, flashlight, extra batteries, first aid kit, sanitation and personal hygiene items, and family and emergency contact information. If you already have an emergency kit, check it to ensure it has all items and replenish any that are missing or low in supply.
- ◆ Everyone with a smartphone should download the My MDA app in case of an emergency.
- ◆ Ensure that everyone who is joining the hike is able to meet the difficulty level of the hike. If not everyone is capable, research to see if there is an easier option. If there is one, either split into two groups or just do the easier hike instead. If there isn't an easier option, consider doing a completely different hike that can accommodate everyone's skill level.

- ◆ Don't begin a hike in the late afternoon. Sunset and nightfall occur very quickly in Israel, making it easy to get lost or injured.
- ◆ Sleep at least 6-8 hours before the hike. Inadequate sleep for two or more nights in a row is dangerous, especially if the hike will take more than one day.
- ◆ Tell someone who won't be on the hike the details of your trip, including names of all hikers, expected travel routes, contact information, and expected return time. That way, if you get lost, they'll have your trip details and can provide them to authorities.

### Weather

When hiking in the summer months, dehydration is a real danger. Much of the country's terrain is desert, and intense heatwaves known as a *chamsin* or *sharav* make it extremely easy to get dehydrated, especially if you haven't hiked in Israel before.

- ◆ Check the weather forecast and temperature before you leave. Postpone the tiyul if it's too hot, or if there is a potential for flooding. Keep yourself updated on any weather or security changes before and throughout your trip. Be prepared to end the tiyul early to ensure everyone's safety.
- ◆ Bring lots of extra water (not soft drinks) and drink continually throughout the hike. If someone exhibits dehydration or heatstroke symptoms, call for help and use the My MDA app (see a longer explanation of heatstroke and dehydration on page 35). If there is no cellphone coverage, have a medically skilled person stay behind with the dehydrated person while two others seek help.
- ◆ Avoid midday hiking in summer or, at a minimum, greatly extend the length and frequency of rest periods during the hottest part of the day. Before planning your hike, confirm that everyone is acclimated to the heat. Rest in the shade when possible.
- ◆ When traveling in areas prone to flash floods, especially in southern Israel, check frequently for weather warnings to avoid unnecessary risk to life. Flash floods occur most commonly in winter and early spring. Severe, dangerous weather changes can happen suddenly and rapidly. Ten students were tragically killed during a flash flood just a few years ago (see Flash Floods, page 34).



# Hiking Packing List

Do not count on being able to buy food, water, or any provisions near the hiking area. Each person on the hike should consider carrying the following gear:

- Backpack
- Water! The rule of thumb for hiking is approximately 1/2 a liter (16.9 oz) per hour of hiking per person but it's always safer to take more water than necessary.
- Extra nutrient-rich high calorie food
- A hat with a brim is a **MUST** when hiking in the desert. Be careful not to expose any skin to the sun. Use a cotton/polyester scarf to protect from the sun, or flip up your shirt collar.
- Loose-fitting clothing with long sleeves and long pants/skirts for hikes to increase circulation/airflow, but tight-fitting clothing for bike trips. Pack a change of clothes.
- Sunscreen (minimum of 30 SPF) from a reputable manufacturer, reapplied every few hours (even when it's cloudy).
- Cooling compression sleeves and leggings. They help draw heat away from the skin and also protect against sunburns and insect bites.
- Insect repellent containing at least 20% DEET
- Fully charged cellphone and portable charger; your phone's GPS could be used as a locator if you get lost.
- Watch
- Sunglasses
- Compass
- Multipurpose tool
- Maps
- Flashlight with extra batteries
- Waterproof matches
- Portable fire extinguisher
- Whistle
- 2-way radio or an iPhone 14 or 15 that has satellite capability
- Hiking boots or other sturdy footwear
- Reflective clothing/belts for night or bike trips
- Siddur/tefillin* for an overnight hike
- Any medications or medical devices you may need (e.g., antibiotics, asthma inhaler, EpiPen, insulin). If possible, check that all hikers know how to administer the medications or devices.
- List of emergency numbers
- First Aid Kit
  - Band-aids
  - Thermometer
  - Ace bandage
  - Antiseptic wipes
  - Pain reliever
  - Antihistamines/Benadryl
  - Oral rehydration salts
  - Tissues
  - Hand sanitizer



## On the Hike

- ♦ **Never hike alone.** Go as a group of at least four people and don't split up. Establish a buddy system.
  - Hire a guide from a reputable tour company, and preferably an armed security escort, as well.
  - Designate an experienced hiker to lead the group in front. A responsible person should follow in the back to ensure no one is left behind. Have at least one person in the group who has medical experience including first aid, CPR, and survival training.
- If you or someone in your group becomes sick or injured, keep them hydrated and sheltered, and monitor their airway, breathing, and pulse. Control bleeding with direct pressure. Call United Hatzalah or use the My MDA app to get help. If there is no service, leave the sick or injured person behind with the medically skilled person while two or more people seek help.

- **DRINK!** Stay hydrated. Pay attention to your body. Keep in mind that the urge to drink is delayed. Drink 2-3 cups of water (not soft drinks!) an hour, even if you are not thirsty. It is difficult to overhydrate.
- Stop for 5-10 minutes for every hour hiked. After 2-3 hours, stop for at least 30 minutes. Eat, drink, and rest in the shade.
- Be extra vigilant not to get lost. If anyone is missing, even for a short time, use the My MDA app.
- Stay on marked paths, and don't take shortcuts! It is best to stay on the trail you started with. There are color-coded signs on the rocks to help direct you. If you are unsure of where you are, stop immediately at the nearest safe location.
- When arriving at a fork in a path, one hiker should stay at the fork and direct the rest of the group toward the correct path.
- If your group splits up, each group should have a two-way radio and a medically skilled person.
- Designate an assembly point for your group to gather in an emergency, such as someone going missing.
- Take head counts of your group before and after leaving an area.

#### ◆ **Safe Hiking Practices**

- Don't climb on the cliffs or try to balance yourself on rocks, even if they look stable.
- Don't take selfies near cliffs or other dangerous areas. Unfortunately, many people have died this way. It is not worth the risk.
- Minefields throughout Israel are usually clearly marked. If you accidentally enter one, do not move. Stay in place and call for help.
- Exercise caution if moving rocks, because snakes or scorpions can lurk underneath. If someone is bitten, don't take chances—seek immediate medical attention.
- Camping tents should be set up only in a *chenyon layla* (night camping area). Sleep only in a tent, never sleep outside unprotected.
- When making campfires, do so only in approved areas, never close to plants or trees.
- During a heatwave it is illegal to light a fire in an open area therefore do not start a campfire.
- Check clothing and footwear left outside overnight for bugs or animals.
- If biking, remember to check the tires and brakes, and wear a helmet.



- Prevent bug bites by wearing long sleeves and pants and using insect repellent containing at least 20% DEET.
- Check before, during, and after your hike for your belongings.
- Extinguish a campfire thoroughly before going to sleep or leaving the area.
- ◆ **If You Get Lost**
  - Don't panic. Stay calm, and try to think logically. Breathe through your nose slowly and calmly.
  - Find shelter, use your phone's My MDA app, call police (100), and/or emergency contacts. If possible, stay in the same location to make it easier to find you.
  - Send a text to school staff to notify them that you are lost. Even if there doesn't seem to be any cell or WiFi coverage, a text can sometimes still get through.
  - An iPhone 14 or 15 allows you to connect to satellite for emergency services in the absence of WiFi or cell coverage. Set it up beforehand to share your medical information and notify your emergency contacts. The satellite connection can be maintained even if your phone screen is locked.
  - Change your voicemail greeting so that even if your phone loses power, others can be informed of your situation.
  - Use a whistle to attract attention, or shout for help intermittently.
  - If you don't have a cellphone but are on a marked trail, try to spot trail markers and follow them to safety.

- If you can't find a trail, look for a stream or streambed. In summer, a dry streambed looks like a very sandy path with indentations that run in a flowing motion. Follow even a small stream or path, as it may lead to a larger stream or path, which may be close to a road. Once you find a road, seek help.
- If it is getting dark and you are still lost, climb a tree to be out of reach of wild animals. Don't try to seek help at night, given the many dangers.

#### ♦ Water Safety

- Follow the rules of the area you are swimming in.
- Never swim alone or in unguarded waters!
- Confirm that everyone in your group can swim, and use a buddy system.
- Keep a fully charged cell phone, powered on, stored in a waterproof case or zipper-seal bag, in a dry spot nearby.
- If swimming in a pool, the water color should be a clear blue, not aqua, green, or cloudy. Do not swim in the water if it is not blue.
- Don't swim when there is lightning, thunderstorms, or strong currents. Never use a beach umbrella when there is lightning.
- Wear waterproof sunscreen because sun exposure is increased when in the water or when swimming.
- When boating or doing any water sports, wear a correctly-sized life jacket and water shoes with good traction.
- Open bodies of water may have undercurrents that can tire or drown even a strong swimmer. Get out of the water if you start to feel tired, cold, or experience muscle cramps.

- Never dive or jump into the water, since you can't know how deep the water is or if there are underwater rocks. In addition, jumping into cold water may cause shock or severe muscle cramps.
- Look out for jellyfish in the summer. If you get stung, don't rub sand, scrape, or apply any pressure to the area. Once back at your dorm or dirah, soak the area in 107°F to 115°F (42°C to 45°C) standard tap hot water, for 20 to 40 minutes. After soaking in hot water, apply antihistamine or steroid creams.
- If you receive a deep cut or puncture wound while swimming, immediately get out of the water and call for a medic or lifeguard. Clean the affected area with bottled water, use antibiotic ointment, and bandage the wound. See your doctor when you get back to school.
- Unless you are a lifeguard, don't attempt to rescue someone who is drowning. Amateur rescue attempts can lead to additional deaths. Summon a lifeguard immediately. Use your My MDA app or or call United Hatzalah.

## After the Hike

- ♦ After the hike is over, check your entire body for ticks. If you find a tick, use tweezers and remove it immediately and fully. Do not leave any remnant in your skin. Notify school staff and do not throw the tick out. It will need to be sent to a lab for testing to see if it carries Lyme disease, and you may also be provided with an antibiotic to help prevent Lyme disease. Lyme disease can affect your long-term health significantly if left untreated.



A rip tide, or rip current, is a strong current flowing straight out from the shore towards deeper water. If you find yourself in one, your instinct may be to fight against it, because it feels like you are being pulled under. In truth, it just pulls you away from shore. Try not to panic or fight the current, so as not to exhaust yourself. Instead, try to remain calm, call and wave for help, and swim in a sideways direction, parallel to the shore and toward the beach at an angle, to get back to shore.



# Security & National Disaster Alerts



Israel's Home Front Command operates a communication system that provides early warnings whenever civilians are in imminent danger so that they take immediate action for protection. The Home Front Command has three ways of alerting civilians: through alerts via their app on cellphones, through their National Emergency Portal on home computers, and by activating sirens in threatened areas. When receiving an alert or a siren sounds, it is crucial that you act quickly and without hesitation.



## Home Front Command App

- ◆ If you have a smartphone, download the Home Front Command app. Enable location services, or it will not be able to provide alerts specific to your location. The app will sound an alert even if your phone is set to silent mode.
- ◆ The app detects your location and will alert you if you are in danger. It uses a rising and falling "Tzeva Adom (Red Alert)" alarm sound identical to the sirens used by the Home Front Command and shows how much time you have to get to a shelter.
- ◆ To tailor the app to your specific needs:
  - You can choose to receive the Tzeva Adom alert by text if you prefer text over an alarm sound.
  - For the hearing impaired, or if you prefer, the alert can be configured to flash a light on your phone and/or have a distinct, strong, 10-second vibration to warn of the impending danger.
  - You can set the app to provide alerts for 10 areas with a different unique sound (e.g., your uncle's house in Ashdod).
  - The app can be set to provide alerts in areas around your city or town.
- ◆ There are different alert sounds based on the type of threat, including natural disasters, hazardous materials, terrorist infiltration, and more. The siren alert for a terror attack can be differentiated from other sirens because it is the only siren that has an up and down rhythm to it. If an alert is for a natural disaster, such as an earthquake, the alert is a shorter alarm sound followed by a text detailing the type of threat such as "Rieedat Adamah" (earthquake).
- ◆ If you do not have a smartphone, call 03-304-4400, then press 4 to have your phone number included in a database to receive a phone call when there is an alert.

## National Emergency Portal

- ◆ You can also have alert messages sent to your computer or tablet on Shabbos or Yom Tov by signing up for them at [oref.org.il/12487-16151-en/pakar.aspx](http://oref.org.il/12487-16151-en/pakar.aspx). To receive an alert, the

portal's website must be left open. If an alert is activated, it will be sent as a sound and image to your device.

## Current News & Updates

- ◆ Stay current on any emergencies by visiting websites such as these:
  - [Israelnationalnews.com](http://Israelnationalnews.com) (Arutz 7)
  - [Israelhayom.com](http://Israelhayom.com) (Israel Hayom)
  - [Jpost.com](http://Jpost.com) (Jerusalem Post)
  - [Mako.co.il](http://Mako.co.il) (Mako)
  - [13tv.co.il](http://13tv.co.il) (Reshet)
  - [News.walla.co.il](http://News.walla.co.il) (Walla)
  - [Ynetnews.com](http://Ynetnews.com) (Ynet)
- ◆ Some radio stations do not operate on Shabbos normally, but will broadcast an alert if there is a threat, so keep your radio on one of these during emergencies:
  - Galei Israel (89.3, 94 and 106.5)
  - Moreshet (90.5, 90.8, 92.5 and 100.7)
  - Kol Chai (92.8, 93, and 102.5)
  - Kol Barama (92.1, 104.3, 105.7 and 107.6)
  - Radio Darom (101.5)
- ◆ If you have access to a television during emergencies watch channels such as these:
  - Kan11
  - Reshet Channel 13
  - Keshet Channel 12
  - Channel 14
  - Channel 9
  - Channel 140
- ◆ During an emergency, do not share unverified information with others (may be "fake news"). Only share news that has been validated by an official and trustworthy source such as the IDF, police, government agencies, or fire or medical services. Also, be careful who you share information with. You do not want information, such as soldiers' names or locations, to reach the wrong hands.

## Safe Travels

- ◆ When traveling in Israel during times of heightened security or war, consider the risks. Before traveling, check security advisories to verify your destination is not to areas such as the West Bank or the Golan Heights. Consider postponing the trip, if necessary.

- ◆ Stay extra vigilant when using public transportation, and if driving, be wary on roads and at gas stations. Try not to stray from any safe routes you had planned, as much as possible. It is worthwhile to pull over at a safe location and spend a little time figuring out another safe route, if necessary, rather than drive through a dangerous area and risk your life.

- ◆ If planning to visit a beach, be aware that most do not have bomb shelters, which will leave you vulnerable during an attack. Have a clear plan for how to seek shelter in the event of an emergency, or avoid such exposed areas altogether.
- ◆ If renting an Airbnb, find out if there is a bomb shelter in the building that you can access. If there is none, find out where the closest shelter is.

## Security Incidents

As you are already aware, Israel is often under threat of attack. During times of heightened security threats or tensions, the risk of attacks increases, and you must do your utmost to prepare to protect yourself. If you hear an emergency siren or receive an alert, you usually have between 15 and 90 seconds to find shelter. Do not delay for even one moment. Take immediate action. The Home Front Command app and website provides detailed time frames to find shelter based on your location.

### Rocket, Missile, or Bomb Response

In most parts of Israel, there is a 90-second window to find shelter after a siren or alert. Do not stay outside. Do not go outside to take pictures of the Iron Dome in action. Get to a secure space immediately. If you are unsure of how much time you have to reach the space based on the location you are in, remember that the duration of the siren is how much time you have. If it ends before you reach shelter, lie on the ground and protect your head with your hands.



- ◆ If you are on your school's campus, immediately take shelter in the designated space your school has informed you of.
- ◆ If you are not on your school's campus, choose a secure space based on how fast you can get there. There are three types of bomb shelters: a *miklat*, which is a public shelter constructed from reinforced concrete; a *mamad*, which is in a private home or apartment; and a *mamak*, which is in a building, usually one per floor.
- ◆ If you cannot get to a shelter, the next best thing is to go into an interior stairwell. Don't use an elevator. Apartment buildings with more than three floors usually have protected stairwells but only on the middle floors. Avoid the stairwells on the ground floor or top two floors.
- ◆ If you don't have enough time to get to a stairwell, choose an inner room with the least external walls or windows. Stay under the window line, and do not face the door. Do not shelter in a kitchen or bathroom, since ceramic, porcelain, glass, and mirrors can shatter and cause serious injuries.

- ◆ If you are outside and there is no building in sight, lie on the ground and protect your head with your hands.
- ◆ If you are in a vehicle,
  - In a car – Stop at the side of the road and run to the nearest building. If there's not enough time to reach a building, get out of the car, distance yourself from it, lie on the ground, and protect your head with your hands.
  - On a bus – The driver will stop by the side of the road and open the doors so you can get to the nearest building. If there are no buildings, stay on the bus, duck under the window line, and protect your head with your hands.
  - On a train – The driver will slow the train to 30 kilometers per hour for 10 minutes. Duck under the window line and protect your head with your hands.
- ◆ Stay in your location for 10 minutes after an alert or an attack, since an attack can last many minutes after the alert, or rocket fragments can still fall. Israel's Iron Dome defense system does not provide 100% protection, so you must remain in a safe location.
- ◆ Do not touch or congregate near any rocket, missile, or unidentified object that you see on the ground. Notify authorities by calling the police by dialing 100.

# Terror Attack Response

Terror attacks increase during times of heightened security threats, tensions at Israel's borders, tensions at neighboring countries' borders, or during an active war. These attacks can be indiscriminate and usually occur in crowded areas to cause the maximum number of fatalities and injuries. Transportation, communication, and other important infrastructure may be targeted. Terrorists have no regard for human life, so be vigilant at all times and take every precaution to stay safe.

**If you are approached by a terrorist, there are three possible responses. You can RUN, HIDE, or FIGHT.**



## RUN

Run away from the terrorist as fast as possible. The farther you can get from the attacker, the better chance you have of surviving. If you are able to, run in a zigzag fashion to avoid bullets. If you can no longer run, then hide.

If you are driving, continue driving until you reach a safe place.



## HIDE

Find a place to hide and remain silent. If you are able to find a room to hide in, lock the door and barricade it with any furniture available.

If possible, call the police and provide them with as much information as you can about your location. Then set the phone to silent to avoid alerting the terrorist and remain silent.

Do not leave your safe location until the police arrive and tell you it is safe to do so.



## FIGHT

If you are left with absolutely no choice, then use all your strength to try to disarm and fight off the attacker. Use whatever makeshift weapons you can find around you such as rocks, wooden or metal rods, or even a metal belt buckle or keys.

***Always remember, even if you think there's nothing you can do in a given situation, you can always daven.***



# Natural Disasters & Weather Emergencies

## Earthquake

Israel is at risk of earthquakes because it is located at the juncture of the African and Arabian tectonic plates. The Israeli Meteorological Service (IMS) at [ims.gov.il/en](https://ims.gov.il/en) provides current updates when there are increased risks of extreme weather or natural disasters such as earthquakes and flash floods.

- ◆ The Home Front Command app sends an alert if there is an earthquake.
- ◆ During an earthquake, the ground or floor may vibrate, windows may rattle in their frames, and objects may fall.
- ◆ If an earthquake occurs while you are outside, remain in an open area away from buildings, trees, electric poles, and cables.
- ◆ If you are in a car, pull to the side of the road and wait in the vehicle until the earthquake ends. Do not stop on or under a bridge or on an overpass.
- ◆ If you are inside, try to get outside to an open area, away from buildings and electricity poles. If you can't get outside, move to a safe location, such as a miklat, and leave the door and windows open.
- ◆ If there is no miklat, mamad, or mamak, move to a stairwell. If there is not enough time to get to a stairwell, stand in a doorway, or go to the inner corner of the room you are in and protect your head with your hand. Try not to stay near external walls, windows, mirrors, or shelves.
- ◆ After an earthquake, depending on your location, there may be a small risk of a tsunami. If you are in a coastal area it is advised to move away from the coast.

## Flash Flood

Flash floods can occur when there are sudden bursts of heavy rain in a short time. Fast-moving waters become very powerful and life-threatening. You can be knocked off your feet and swept away into the current. The most common area for flash floods is the Judean Desert (from the Dead Sea down to Eilat).



- ◆ Follow these important safety tips if there is a flash flood:
  - If there is a flash flood warning in your area, immediately move to higher ground or stay on higher ground.
  - If you are driving and find yourself on a flooded street, try to turn around and find a dry street so you can get somewhere safe. Don't attempt to drive through the flooded street. Cars can be swept away in less than 2 feet of water. If you can't, get out of the car quickly and move to higher ground. Avoid going near any downed wires. Once on higher ground, remain there and call the police for help.
  - If you are on a bus or in a taxi during a flash flood, be aware that certain roads or routes may not be accessible due to the floodwaters.

**How do you know there is an earthquake?**

- Receive an alert from the Home Front Command
- See objects shaking or falling
- Feeling dizzy and having difficulty standing
- Hear the window panes rattling in their frames

**What should we do?**  
**Reach a safe place immediately**

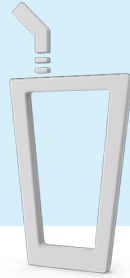
# Heatwave



There is an increased risk of heatstroke and dehydration during heatwaves. Anyone suffering from any of the following signs should call United Hatzalah or use the My MDA app to receive treatment immediately:

## Dehydration (lack of fluids)

- ◆ Profuse sweating
- ◆ Dry mouth
- ◆ Dark-colored or no urine
- ◆ Tiredness
- ◆ Dizziness
- ◆ Headaches or light-headedness
- ◆ Fever
- ◆ Impaired judgment
- ◆ Moving oddly and stumbling



## Heatstroke (inability of the body to cool off)

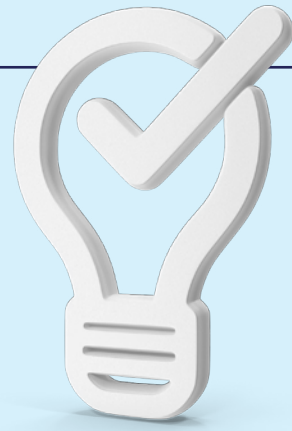
- ◆ No sweating
- ◆ Temperature greater than 104°F (40°C)
- ◆ Dizziness
- ◆ Dehydration
- ◆ Headaches, confusion, or feeling “out of it”
- ◆ Flushed or red skin
- ◆ Fainting, loss of consciousness
- ◆ Rapid pulse and/or breathing
- ◆ Nausea and/or vomiting and/or diarrhea
- ◆ Weakness
- ◆ Loss of muscle function, balance, or staggering

◆ If someone is suffering from dehydration, until medical help arrives, have them drink clear fluids or electrolyte-filled drinks (Smart Water, Gatorade, etc.). Have them eat foods with high water content, such as strawberries and watermelon. If the person becomes unconscious, wet their lips. The medical team will most likely provide IV fluids to replenish important minerals.

◆ If someone is suffering from heatstroke, until medical help arrives, if possible, move the person indoors or to a cool, shady place. Apply cool water to their skin. Do not provide them with any liquids, as they could have an adverse reaction. Instead, wait for medical help who can treat them appropriately.



# Helpful Hints



## General Health

- ◆ When visiting a hospital or clinic, bring your passport, money, and your insurance card or insurance information.
- ◆ Prepare for long wait times. Most clinics have English-speaking staff for patients who don't speak Hebrew. Call the clinic first to check so you can bring someone along with you, if needed.
- ◆ When you need non-emergency medical care for symptoms such as a cold, sore throat, or fever, visit a local Terem clinic. They are open 24/7, employ qualified medical care professionals, and provide a generally good experience. Be aware that Terem services are limited. For treatment for broken bones, IV for dehydration, or more significant medical needs, go directly to a hospital emergency room.
- ◆ If you need to see a specialist, speak to your school staff to see who they recommend. You can also reach out to Chaim V'Chessed or Ezra Lemarpeh (see pages 38-39).
- ◆ For a pharmacy in Jerusalem with late night or early morning hours, visit [jerusalem.muni.il/en/residents/pharmacies/](http://jerusalem.muni.il/en/residents/pharmacies/)
- ◆ Don't be alarmed when you hear a siren go off on Erev Shabbos or Yom Tov in Jerusalem and some other cities. Those may begin with some Jewish music and are locally operated as opposed to other sirens that are operated by the government. This is common in parts of Israel and a wonderful reminder that Shabbos or Yom Tov is arriving soon (40 minutes to candle lighting).
- ◆ On national holidays such as Yom HaShoah, Yom HaZikaron, and Yom HaAtzmaut, there will be 1-minute long sirens sounded in remembrance of those days.
- ◆ You can order Artscroll books at [Artscrollisrael.co.il](http://Artscrollisrael.co.il), and they will deliver straight to your door! You can also reach them by calling via Whatsapp at 02-656-4112 (Hebrew) or 053-541-2575 (English). Shanky's, another bookstore, can be reached at 058-538-6936 or through [shankysjudaica.com](http://shankysjudaica.com). Manny's Book Store offers same-day delivery and can be reached at 02-633-7040 or through [sifreiorhachaim.co.il](http://sifreiorhachaim.co.il).

## 'Good to Know' Tips

- ◆ If you lose your device:
  - For an iPhone, iPad, or Mac laptop, use Find My on another device to lock it remotely by using lost mode to prevent others from accessing your data. This will require the person who has your phone to enter your PIN or password. When you mark the device as lost, payment cards and passes that you use with Apple Pay are suspended. The device can display a phone number and message for the person who finds your device.
  - Android devices require you to lock your device remotely by using the Find My Device app on another device or go to [google.com/android/find](http://google.com/android/find). A custom message can also be displayed on the locked screen with a contact number for the person who finds your device.
  - You can also call your cellular provider to lock your SIM card and your phone's IMEI number. They may also be able to disable your SIM card, order a new one, or redirect your calls to a new number.
- ◆ Follow your school's guidelines for internet use. Be careful of social media and what you share online, because what you post stays online forever.
- ◆ Israel's postal system, known as the Doar, is not as fast as it is in the US. Packages mailed from outside of Israel may take 2-4 weeks to arrive. If someone is sending you a package, it is best they purchase insurance in case it gets lost.
- ◆ If you need to find a post office's location or hours, dial 171 or visit, [services.israelpost.co.il/hpcontent.nsf/entryhomepage?readform&L=en](http://services.israelpost.co.il/hpcontent.nsf/entryhomepage?readform&L=en). For help at the post office, you will need to make an appointment ahead of time.

- While Amazon does deliver to Israel, it is not always reliable and can take 2-4 weeks to arrive. There is no Amazon Prime option and only certain items, over \$49 but less than \$75, are eligible for free delivery.
- If you will be staying at a hotel, or Airbnb, research it beforehand to verify it's safe and bedbug-free. Read the contract or terms carefully to avoid any surprises or hidden fees. Confirm your reservation before leaving for the trip. You may need your passport (or copy of your passport) to avoid paying lodging taxes or fees that Israelis are normally required to pay.
- When entering into any rental agreement, request a written contract and read it very carefully.
- If renting an Airbnb for Shabbos, verify that there is key access that is not electronic.
- Israel has a large feral cat population. Don't try to feed, befriend, or interact with them. If you get bitten or scratched, seek medical attention.
- Using or selling fireworks in Israel is illegal unless you have official certification from the government. Don't take the risk. Arabs sometimes set off fireworks during Ramadan or weddings so do not be alarmed.
- Noise ordinances, while not always enforced, prohibit loud noise in residential areas after 11:00 pm. Exceptions are usually made during Yomim Tovim and national holidays.

## Useful Terms

- Aish (אש) - fire
- Alergia (אלרגיה) - allergy
- Bidud (בידוד) - isolation
- Bedikat Corona Nugdanim (בדיקת קורונה) - COVID-19 test/antibody test
- Beit Cholim (בית חולים) - hospital
- Chamsin (חמסין) - heatwave
- Chisun (חסון) - vaccine
- Chefetz Chashud (חפץ חשוד) - abandoned or suspicious package or suitcase
- Hafganah/Hafganot (הפגנה) - demonstration/s
- Mishtara (משטרה) - police
- Hatzilu (הצילו) - help



## Important Numbers

<b>Police</b> Emergency: <b>100</b> Non-Emergency: <b>110</b>	<b>Magen David Adom</b> (Ambulance) <b>101</b>	<b>United Hatzalah</b> <b>1221</b>
<b>Fire</b> <b>102</b>	<b>Israel Poison Information</b> <b>04-777-1900</b>	<b>Home Front Command</b> <b>104</b>



# Important Numbers *(continued)*



## **ZAKA (Rescue and Recovery)**

1220

## **Home Front Command**

1207

## **Health Ministry**

5400

## **Assault Hotline**

Female: 1202 | Male: 1203

## **Emotional Crisis/Suicide Hotline (ERAN)**

*English Speaking*

1201

## **Amudim**

*Organization providing comprehensive crisis assistance and travel information*

Israel: 02-374-0175

US: 516-636-0175

*For life-threatening emergencies:*

646-517-0222 ext. 999

## **Terem Urgent Care Centers**

1-599-520-520 | [www.terem.com](http://www.terem.com)

*Locations in Ashdod, Be'er Sheva, Beit Shemesh, Bnei Brak/Ramat Gan, Carmiel, Eilat, Jerusalem, Kiryat Gat, Maaleh Adumim, Modiin, Nahariya.*

## **Tahel Crisis Center for Religious**

### **Women & Children**

02-673-0002

## **Tvunot Family Resource Center**

02-651-6837

## **Get Help Israel Mental Health**

### **Referral Service**

072-397-6500

## **EMA Care (Eating Disorders)**

[emacare.com](http://emacare.com)

## **Ezra L'Marpeh (Rabbi Firer)**

*Medical Referrals*

03-577-7000

## **Public Transportation (Bus, Light Rail, Train)**

\*8787

## **Airlines**

Aeroflot: 655-879-7647

Air Canada: 800-247-2262

Air France: 800-237-2747

American: 800-433-7300

British Airways: 800-247-9297

Delta: 800-221-1212

El Al: 800-223-6700

Lufthansa: 800-645-3880

United: 800-864-8331

Virgin Atlantic: 800-862-8621

## **Embassies**

US – Tel Aviv

03-519-7475

US – Jerusalem

02-630-4000 or 02-622-7230

Australian Embassy

Bank Discount Tower, 23 Yehuda Ha-Levi

Street, Tel Aviv

03-693-5000

British Embassy

192 Hayarkon Street, Tel Aviv

03-725-1222 | 44-1767-667-600

Canadian Embassy

3/5 Nirim Street, 4th Floor, Tel Aviv

613-996-8885

WhatsApp: 613-909-8881

French Embassy

112 Promenade Herbert Samuel BP

Tel Aviv

03-520-8300

South African Embassy

Abba Hillel Silver Rd. 12 Ramat Gan

03-525-2566



# Helpful Resources



## In Israel

**Countrywide Lost & Found Information Center**  
59-950-0003

**Chaim V'Chessed**  
Israel: 072-243-7733  
US: 718-407-2448  
Resource organization for students and foreigners to assist in navigating Israel governmental, travel, and health services

**Jerusalem Gate Allergy Clinic**  
02-643-0797  
Allergy testing and treatment. Student program led by Dr. Natalie Daniel

**Kav Halacha**  
055-320-0200  
For general shailos, press 1, emergency shailos, press 8.

**Oleh Pay**  
Israel: 02-376-2028 | [olehpay.co.il/](http://olehpay.co.il/)  
Easy and convenient way to send money to and from Israel without bank fees

**Weather**  
03-560-0600  
For the daily weather report in English, press 3.

**Yedidim**  
053-313-1310  
Free car emergency services such as flat tires or car and home lockouts, available 24/6

**Zmanim**  
02-650-ZMAN (9626)



## To Reach US Resources When in Israel

**Poison Control**  
Dial your 3-digit international carrier code, then dial 1-800-222-1222

**Smart Traveler Enrollment Program**  
[step.state.gov](http://step.state.gov)  
A service of the US Department of State that provides the latest security updates and enables the US Embassy to contact you in case of emergency. Requires registration online.

**Suicide Hotline**  
Dial your 3-digit international carrier code, then dial 1-800-273-8255

Dedicated in loving memory of Yakov Meir Geller, ה"ע

# Getting to Know Israeli Currency

Download a conversion app such as Fast Israeli Shekel Converter, or similar, to use as a tool to calculate the exchange rate from Israeli shekels to US dollars or US dollars to Israeli shekels.

Below is a guide to Israel's bills and coins, which are in New Israeli Shekel (NIS), with denominations in *shekalim* and *agorot*. The exchange rate, which changes daily, will determine how many *shekalim* you will receive for every dollar you exchange. Until you become accustomed to Israeli currency, you can refer to this guide, which shows the approximate US dollar value for all Israeli bills and coins.

Images shown are of old and new bills, which are both currently in circulation. Note that not all stores accept the old bills.



10₪ Coin  
(Value \$2.66)



5₪ Coin  
(Value \$1.33)



2₪ Coin  
(Value 53¢)



1₪ Coin  
(Value 27¢)



Half Shekel Coin  
(Equal to 50 Agorot : Value 13¢)



10 Agorot Coin  
(Value .026¢)

Information verified as of September 16, 2024 and is subject to change. 3.76 NIS=\$1.00.

# Before You Go Back



## Passport

- ♦ Be sure your passport did not expire. If it isn't, renew it at the American Embassy in Tel Aviv (053-519-7475 or 03-519-7575), which has a very helpful staff, or at the American Embassy in Jerusalem (02-630-4000 or 02-622-7230). These appointments should be made months in advance. Don't wait!

## COVID-19 Requirements, if relevant

- ♦ Check the latest COVID-19 flight requirements at these up-to-date sites:
  - Ministry of Health-  
[corona.health.gov.il/en/](https://corona.health.gov.il/en/)
  - [chaimvchessed.com](https://chaimvchessed.com)
  - [travel.state.gov](https://travel.state.gov)
  - [yadlolim.org](https://yadlolim.org)
- ♦ Make sure to also check the requirements of any layover countries and your home country so you won't have any problems entering.

## Customs

- ♦ If you have a smart phone, avoid lengthy wait times at US Customs lines by downloading the MPC Mobile Passport Control App to provide data and allow you to use the US Customs Express Lane.
- ♦ If you're returning with a *lulav* and *esrog* purchased in Israel, US customs law requires a sticker from the Israeli Ministry of Agriculture. The sticker can be obtained from most established *esrog* dealers. Check for press releases from Agudath Israel to verify your *esrog* won't be subject to fines and/or confiscation.
- ♦ US Customs is particularly strict regarding nuts and flower seeds from other countries, and they sometimes have dogs at airports that can pick up the scent. All food must be declared.
- ♦ Be especially careful if you have stopovers in countries with unusual regulations. Check local laws.
- ♦ Although most import taxes don't apply to items purchased in Israel, you must declare anything purchased or acquired outside the US upon your return.
- ♦ No antiquities (ancient artifacts) may leave Israel. You can be stopped by security, the items can be confiscated, and you could be penalized.
- ♦ Gat, also known as *khat*, is a plant grown in Israel that has a stimulant effect. Although legal

in Israel, it is not legal in the United States and several other countries. Do not try to leave the country with *gat*, as it can be a serious drug offense and you could face imprisonment.

## Pre-Flight Advice

- ♦ Check your flight's status by checking with your airline (see page 38 for airline phone numbers).
- ♦ You can also visit [busy-tlv.co.il](https://busy-tlv.co.il) which provides pre-flight information at Ben Gurion Airport.
- ♦ If you need a porter service to help carry your baggage to the security area, request one at the information counter on the 3rd floor, opposite Gate 32, or call 052-644-2714. Only *shekalim* are accepted as payment for departing passengers. Make sure to have some with you.
- ♦ Back up your devices before you travel so if they are lost or misplaced during traveling you can still access your data.
- ♦ The Fourth Amendment to the US Constitution, which prohibits unreasonable searches and seizures, does not apply at international borders, so your belongings may be searched without a warrant. Be prepared.
- ♦ Know that if you purchase bullet-type souvenirs, such as necklaces, you may be stopped by security. It's not worth it so don't bring them on the plane.
- ♦ When leaving Israel, check with airport security about whether you are allowed to carry a water bottle or drink through the security checkpoint. Additionally, find out about whether a water bottle or drink purchased after the security checkpoint is allowed to be carried on to the plane.

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- » **Lander College for Women**  
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053.961.6627
- » **Lander College for Men**  
Lavey Freedman: [lavey.freedman@touro.edu](mailto:lavey.freedman@touro.edu)  
052.346.6595
- » **Lander College of Arts & Sciences**  
*Separate Men's and Women's divisions*  
Ora Dauber: [ora.dauber@touro.edu](mailto:ora.dauber@touro.edu)  
058.629.7453  
Miriam Paryzer: [miriam.paryzer6@touro.edu](mailto:miriam.paryzer6@touro.edu)



# STAND WITH US

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