

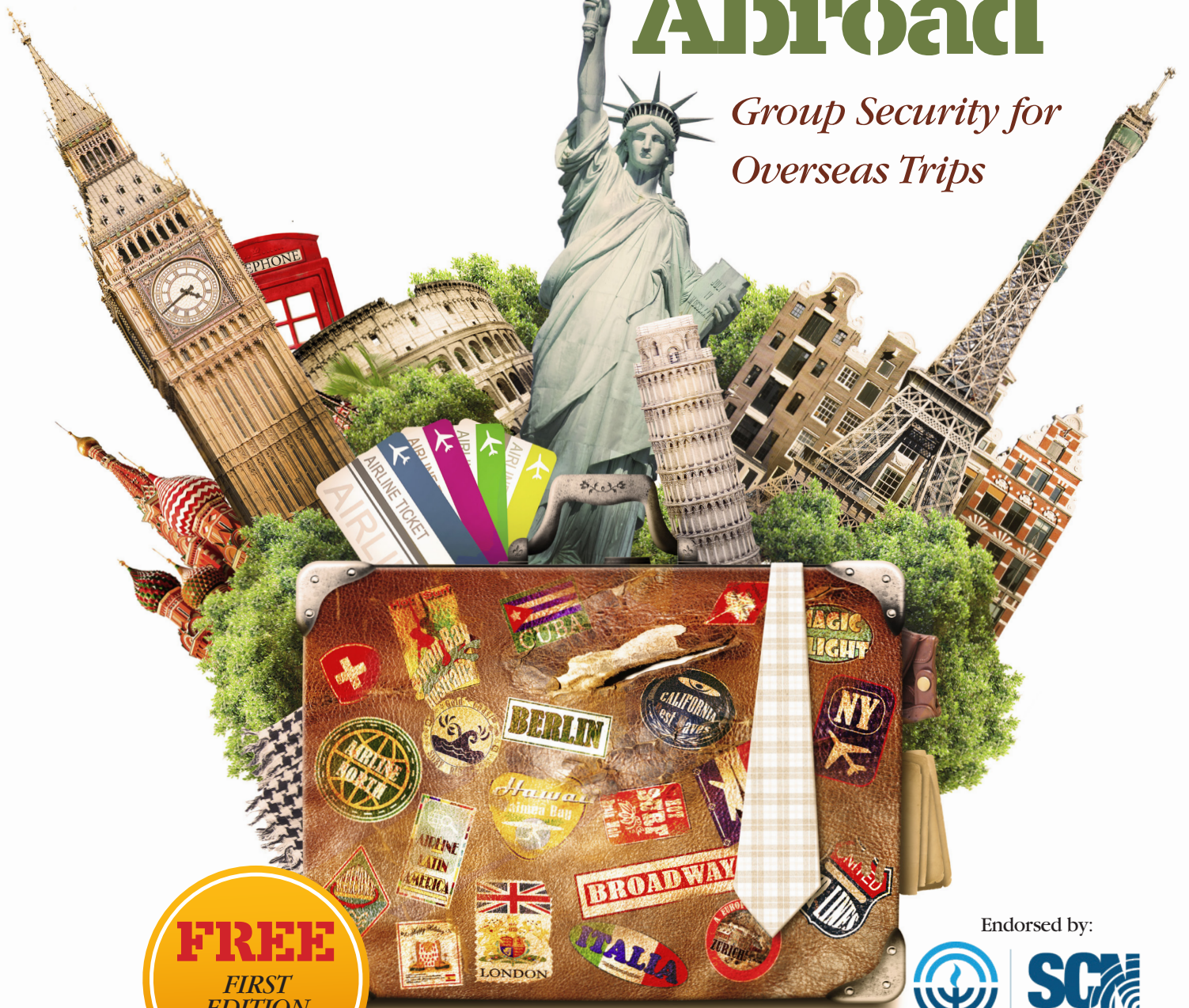


The Keep Your Community Safe Initiative Presents:

April 2016

STAY Safe Abroad

Group Security for Overseas Trips



FREE
FIRST
EDITION

Endorsed by:



THE STRENGTH OF A PEOPLE. THE POWER OF COMMUNITY.

Frank Storch

Dedicated in memory of the victims of the March 2016 Bombings in Istanbul, Turkey and Brussels, Belgium
The Keep Your Community Safe Initiative is a division of The Chesed Fund, Limited and Project Ezra of Greater Baltimore, Inc.

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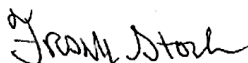
Dear Tour Companies and Operators,

The world has changed, and security precautions that were sufficient several years ago are no longer enough for today. With increased antisemitism and terror all over the world, safeguards must be implemented to maximize the safety and security of international tours. *Stay Safe Abroad* was written for tour companies to help ensure their participants' safety.

Please read this guide and share it with tour participants and other tour companies as well as anyone else who may benefit. Special thanks to Paul Goldenberg, Director, Mark Genatempo, Program Administrator, and the staff of Secure Community Network (SCN) for their tireless efforts on behalf of our communities throughout the world.

Please share your feedback to improve future editions of this guide. I can be reached at chesedfund@gmail.com or 410-340-1000. Also, visit chesedfund.com for additional safety and security guides and other helpful publications.

Wishing you safe travels,



Frank Storch



Before Tour Departure

- Before making travel arrangements, even if the location is familiar to the tour company, research possible security concerns at the destination (e.g., dangerous regions, travel warnings).
- When scheduling the tour, make sure the tour itinerary does not conflict with national holidays or large-scale public events.
- Research crime trends, terror threats and antisemitism in the destination countries.
- Avoid publicizing tour itineraries on the tour company website or elsewhere. Email a final itinerary to participants shortly before the trip begins. Caution participants to avoid publicizing trip details on social media (e.g., names of hotels, itinerary).
- Schedule direct flights if possible. Avoid high-risk airports and multiple layovers. Be wary of anyone attempting to elicit information about the group, taking an unusual interest in the group's departure/arrival time, recording or monitoring the group via audio, video, photography, or note-taking. Notify authorities immediately if suspicions arise.
- Arrange to stay in international chain hotels, since they usually have better security. Ensure accommodations are located in safe neighborhoods, away from unfriendly or crime-ridden areas.
- Inquire about which safeguards are implemented at the hotel (e.g., fences, alarms, video surveillance, frequency of room key reprogramming).
- If possible, only reserve rooms on the 2nd through 7th floors, above ground level, since these are more secure and allow for escape in the event of emergency or fire.
- Select trusted individuals in the U.S. and the destination country and inform them of the group's travel plans and vehicle GPS tracker information (see Transportation section).
- Contact the selected individuals daily during the tour to inform them of the group's schedule and/or changes. Advise them how to proceed if they do not receive the daily call.
- Research local laws and cultural norms to avoid unintentional violations of the law and to ensure the group remains inconspicuous. Share the information with participants.
- Research local doctors, pharmacies, and hospitals to recommend to participants in case of illness.
- Register with the local U.S. embassy or consulate at the destination country prior to the trip or upon arrival, so assistance can be provided if necessary.
- Enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP), which allows the embassy to easily contact American citizens in case of a family or national emergency. Register for this free service provided by the State Department at step.state.gov. Instruct participants to do so as well.
- Inform participants of the entry requirements for the destination country (e.g., visas, entry fees, customs requirements, mandatory immunizations). Also inform participants of any transit visas that may be necessary for flights with stopovers.
- If traveling with children, download the FBI Child App. The app stores a child's identifying data and can be used to share information with authorities if a child goes missing. Instruct parents to do so as well.
- Recommend that participants download an SOS app for the destination country. In the event of an emergency, the app can text or send a distress call to emergency services and preselected contacts.
- Arrange for a minimum of one armed security guard to accompany the group at all times. Do not substitute a participant with a gun for a trained guard. Ensure a suitable ratio of guards to group members.
- Only hire guards who are reputable and well-trained. Contact the local American embassy for recommendations. See *A Guide to Guards* for more information at chesedfund.com.
- Request photo IDs of guards in advance. Upon their arrival, verify the guards' identity.
- Consider hiring a trained Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) or Hatzalah member to travel with the group when possible.



- Purchase travel insurance to cover all aspects of the tour, including program cancellation due to unforeseen circumstances.
- Bring a GPS programmed with up-to-date maps and information for the destination country. Remember to pack the cord and charger.
- Make sure to bring the correct adapters and transformers for appliances and electronics. Remind participants to bring them as well.
- Ensure that at least one of the tour staff speaks the language of the destination country.
- Request current pictures of all group participants and keep them on file in the U.S. and in the destination country. Store them in a safe place, along with copies of participants' passports.
- Develop a safety and security manual for participants and ask a security expert to review it. Distribute the manual to all group participants and review it with them at the start of the tour.
- Make sure the manual covers medical emergencies and how to respond in the event of a terrorist attack or active shooter. Include assembly points and escape routes, maps noting local hospitals and police stations, and other pertinent security and safety protocols to follow during the trip.
- Request that participants notify tour staff of any relevant medical issues prior to the tour. Staff should inform the EMT.
- Request that participants notify tour staff of any food allergies or sensitivities prior to the tour. Research and advise participants regarding kosher food availability at the destination.
- Ensure that kosher meals are reserved for participants on flights, if available.
- Shortly before the trip, research currency exchange rates and advise participants accordingly.
- Purchase tickets in advance for any museums, sites, attractions, or activities to minimize wait time for the group.
- If the tour encompasses multiple regions or countries, apply all appropriate safety and security precautions to each area.
- When traveling with large groups, designate one or two group leaders to help ensure the group's safety. Consider offering a discount to group leaders.
- Provide group leaders with contact information for all group participants in case of emergency or other necessity. Inform participants who the group leaders are.

For Tour Participants

- Instruct tour participants to make sure their passports are current and don't expire within six months of the return date. Advise them to renew passports early enough to receive the new passports well before the departure date. If necessary, a fast track service can be used to expedite processing.
- Recommend that participants with dual citizenship research visa requirements and implications of traveling to the destination country.
- Shortly before the departure date, participants should double-check that all their documents are in order.
- Research reputable travel insurance companies and recommend that participants purchase individual travel insurance that also covers medical evacuation, etc. Recommend that they check if their credit card companies offer insurance policies.
- Before leaving the country, participants should notify their banks and credit card companies that there will be overseas activity.
- Recommend that participants confirm with their credit card companies that their cards will be functional in the destination country. Some foreign merchants require credit cards to have additional safety features (e.g., chip and pin technology).



- Advise participants to keep wallets and purses close to their bodies at all times to avoid getting pick-pocketed.
- Caution participants to avoid using ATMs at night. They should be alert to anyone attempting to obtain personal information or steal cash by standing too close behind them or loitering nearby.
- Suggest that participants save receipts and tax discount forms for Value Added Tax (VAT) at the end of the tour.
- Instruct participants to notify the group leaders, guard, and tour guide if any problem arises (e.g., missing participant, suspicious activity).
- Recommend that participants download a language translation app on their phones to more easily interact with native speakers.
- Research reputable taxi companies at the destination country and recommend participants only use those companies at the airport or while touring, if possible. They should avoid using random taxi drivers. As a precaution, they should also make sure the face of the taxi driver matches the face pictured on the taxi license.
- Advise group participants not to share itineraries with taxi drivers, even if a driver offers better rates for future trips.
- Research and recommend reputable car rental companies to participants.
- Caution participants that tourists are often victims of scams and they should be on alert.

Communication

- Require each participant to have a cell phone that has service in the country of destination. Research and offer participants information regarding cell phone plans and SIM cards that can be purchased in advance for the destination country.
- If participants do not plan to use a local service provider, then prior to the trip, they should verify that their American service provider has service abroad at reasonable rates.
- Create a text message group list to alert participants of emergencies. Provide the list to all participants.
- Provide a preprinted index card to staff and participants with emergency contact information (e.g., tour guide, guard, group leaders, hotel, police, fire department, hospitals, U.S. embassy). Remind participants to keep the card on them and to save the information into their phones.
- Recommend that participants provide tour group emergency phone numbers to their families.
- Advise participants to memorize several important phone numbers (e.g., group leader, tour guide, guard) in case their phone gets lost or the battery dies.
- Provide participants with dialing instructions specific to each destination country.
- Encourage participants to memorize basic phrases in the language of the destination country (e.g., where is the bathroom; I need medical help; I need police; I am lost).
- Make sure the tour guide, guard, and driver keep their cell phones on and charged at all times.
- Provide group leaders with two-way radios, especially if more than one vehicle is being used for the group.
- Bring a satellite emergency beacon which can notify emergency services of the group's location in an emergency.
- Bring a satellite phone, which allows for communication in areas where there is no cell phone coverage or cell towers are down.
- Bring a bullhorn when traveling with very large groups.



During the Tour

- Move the group quickly through the check-in process at the airport. Try to leave the airport promptly, as soon as all participants have their luggage.
- Ask airport staff and hotel employees to notify you if they notice anyone overly interested in the group. Contact authorities immediately if suspicions arise.
- Find out where exits are located in every hotel, building, and tour site that the group visits. Inform group participants of all exits so they can escape if there is an emergency.
- Recommend that participants always check that windows are secured upon returning to their rooms, especially ground floor rooms.
- Instruct group participants to meet strangers in the lobby instead of in their hotel rooms. Before opening their room door for visitors, they should check the peephole and make sure they know the visitor.
- Provide participants with dialing instructions for the phones in their hotel rooms (e.g., operator, emergency services).
- Check news websites several times a day and read news reports regularly to stay informed about any new security concerns or increased criminal, terror, or antisemitic activity.
- Check weather reports daily and plan excursions accordingly.
- Maintain emergency supplies in tour vehicles at all times (e.g., first aid kit, food, water).
- Urge participants to notify the group leader immediately if they become ill.
- “If You See Something, Say Something!”TM Instruct group participants to always be alert and immediately report any suspicious behavior, activities, or vehicles to group leaders, guards, and the tour guide. Tour guides should not question their instincts; they should inform authorities immediately and move the group to a safer area.
- Use additional caution and be more alert when visiting very popular or famous museums, buildings, and sites. These areas can be prime terrorist targets (e.g., the Louvre, Buckingham Palace).
- Vary the group’s schedule and make it unpredictable to hotel staff and/or observers.
- Designate assembly points at every location the group visits in case of lost participants or emergencies. Inform participants of each assembly point.
- Caution participants to avoid discussing travel plans loudly or displaying itineraries in public. Tour staff should practice discretion as well.
- Recommend that participants avoid engaging in political discussions with strangers to prevent conflict.
- Request participants notify other group members of their destination and when they expect to return from independent excursions.
- Encourage participants to walk confidently, at a steady pace. They should be alert and observe people around and behind them.
- Advise participants to walk on the sidewalk, facing oncoming traffic, if possible. Participants should avoid texting, making phone calls, or listening to music with both earphones while walking. They should also avoid joining or walking through demonstrations.
- Warn participants to be alert to vehicles driving in an irresponsible or hostile fashion. They should avoid vehicles driving erratically (e.g., not yielding to street signs, barriers, or crosswalks; swerving or speeding).
- Caution participants not to walk alone, especially at night. If an excursion is necessary, they should remain alert, be mindful of their surroundings, walk in well-lit public areas, and try to avoid walking near loiterers.
- For self-defense purposes, suggest that participants avoid walking with their hands full. Recommend that they carry a whistle, pepper spray (if legal), and/or a tactical flashlight on a key ring to shine in an attacker’s face to cause temporary blindness.
- Instruct participants to ask a policeman or soldier for help if they get lost.



- Advise participants who plan to use public transportation to avoid isolated bus or train stations.
- If participants sleep or rest in public areas, have the guard keep watch (e.g., camp sites, beaches).
- To avoid possible food contamination or tampering, instruct participants to discard opened food items that have been left unattended near strangers.

Staying Inconspicuous

- When making reservations, use a generic company name, rather than an obviously Jewish or American name. For example, instead of “Jewish Tours” or “American International Tours,” call the group “Destination Tours.”
- Do not label vehicles with the tour group’s name. Avoid any other features that identify vehicles as Jewish, American, or Western. Avoid using the English alphabet on vehicle signs if the country uses another alphabet.
- Place an identifying generic symbol such as a number, picture, or object (e.g., colorful umbrella) in the vehicle window. Instruct participants how to identify the tour vehicle.
- If visiting a site where the safety of Jewish tourists is of concern, participants should attempt to look more like locals (e.g., hats should cover yarmulkes and tzitzis should be tucked in).
- Advise participants to avoid wearing or using clothing, bags, symbols, or labels that identify the group as foreign.
- Advise participants to avoid dressing ostentatiously, too casually, or in any way that broadcasts “rich American tourist.”
- Advise participants that in the event of an emergency they should stay calm and follow the instructions given (e.g., from authorities, guards, tour guides, and/or group leaders). Instruct the EMT to administer medical assistance as needed.
- Advise participants that if they hear gunshots, they should run in a zigzag fashion in the opposite direction. If they are too close to an active shooter and will place themselves in danger by attempting to flee, they should stay low and shield themselves behind or under a large, sturdy object. They should not move until they are certain the danger has passed or they can safely escape.

Transportation

- Hire a reputable bus company that screens its drivers regularly and thoroughly. Never hire an unknown driver off the street with a vehicle.
- Install a GPS tracker inconspicuously on the bus.
- Check tire pressure on all tour vehicles.
- Designate someone to keep an eye on the bus during tour stops. Do not allow the driver to park the bus on the street overnight. Have him park it in a garage or a safe, well-lit area.
- Instruct the driver to fill the gas tank each morning before the trip. When refueling, he should only use well-lit gas stations in a safe area.
- Check the interior and exterior of the bus each time the group boards to make sure there are no signs of tampering or suspicious packages placed on board.
- Instruct the bus driver to only use his cell phone while driving if there is an emergency.



- If the driver is unfamiliar with the route, designate one person to assist him with navigation.
- If the driver is using a GPS, require him to check the route to avoid unsafe areas. If driving through dangerous areas is unavoidable, he should drive only with clear directions.
- Instruct the driver not to stop for anyone suspicious on the road (e.g., someone who claims to have engine trouble or someone collecting money). Instruct the driver never to pick up hitchhikers.
- If anyone suspects the bus is being followed, instruct the driver to make four right turns. If the bus is still being followed, don't return to the hotel. Call the police and drive to the nearest police station or highly public area. Try to get the license plate number and a description of the vehicle and person(s) following the group.
- If the bus is attacked with eggs, instruct the driver not to use windshield wipers or fluid to remove the residue. The combination of water and eggs creates a cloudy substance that will reduce visibility.
- If the group will be using public transportation, schedule the group's arrival at the station appropriately to avoid prolonged waiting periods.
- If participants are using rental cars for independent trips during the tour, advise them to review driving plans with someone who knows the area well to avoid driving through unsafe areas. Recommend that they use a GPS and avoid taking shortcuts.



The Keep Your Community Safe Initiative (KYCSI) is a division of Project Ezra of Greater Baltimore, Inc. and The Chesed Fund Limited. Created in May 2013 with the publication of Keep Your School Safe, KYCSI creates and distributes safety and security guides for the international Jewish community. KYCSI has provided free security assessments to Jewish schools, camps, and organizations in the U.S., England, and Israel. For additional information, visit keepyourcommunitysafe.com.

Thank you to the staff of Staiman Design.

The preview edition of this publication was dedicated in memory of the lives lost in the 2012 Burgas, Bulgaria bus bombing. It was also dedicated in loving memory of Mrs. Zahava Goldwasser ע"ה, Mr. Sonder Kogel ע"ה, Mrs. Miriam Lowenbraun ע"ה, Mr. Mickey & Mrs. Ann Parker ע"ה, Mr. Geza & Mrs. Magda Reiner ע"ה, and Rabbi Dovid Winiarz ע"ה.



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May G-d hear our prayers, bless our efforts, and safeguard us from all harm.

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