



## STM Emergencies: Preparing Team Leaders to Respond in a Crisis

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Short-term missions since 1992, SOE National Board, Taylor's International Service-Learning Program, 88 trips to 24 countries

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## Webinar overview

- ▶ **Biblical guiding principles**
- ▶ **Pre-field:** assess partners, develop policy, crisis file, risk mitigation, communicate policies/resources and train team leaders
- ▶ **On-field:** case study, team leader responses, types of crises, risk mitigation, health issues, boundaries & preventing harassment
- ▶ **Post-field:** report full details, evaluate/improve, provide member care support, host follow-through

**Outcomes:** gain awareness of issues, increase understanding of their significance, & be equipped to refine strategies

**Crisis:** involves immediate danger, a real or potential threat that will involve extensive resources in response

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## Standards of Excellence in STM

### Excellent Short-Term Mission Is Characterized by

1. God Centeredness
2. Empowering Partnerships
3. Mutual Design
4. Comprehensive Administration
5. Qualified Leadership
6. Appropriate Training
7. Thorough Follow-Through




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## "Mission Trip Suit Heads to Trial"

Seven years ago, a Mississippi teen went on an STM to Costa Rica with his church. While exploring the beach, a big wave knocked him into the ocean, where he drowned. His mother sued the church for \$1 million for wrongful death, charging that the trip leader should have known the beach was dangerous. A trial court dismissed the case in favor of the church. But the Mississippi Court of Appeals reversed the decision, ruling, "A jury must decide what constitutes proper and adequate supervision."

(Christianity Today, "Gleanings," June 2016)




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## "Student Wins \$42 Million for Tick Bite on Field Trip"

[Conn. private boarding school China trip, 15-year-old student]

...Munn's parents flew to China and brought her to New York where she was diagnosed with tick-borne encephalitis. The Munns sued the school for her injuries which include severe neurological damage...

The family's attorney argued at trial that the school made several missteps. Parents were not told that the students would go to rural areas, and the school failed to provide them information about the possible risks of disease in China, sending them a link to health risks in Central America instead. While insect repellent was used at other times during the trip, it was left behind on the day of the hike.

<http://blogs.lawyers.com/2013/04/student-wins-42-million-for-tick-bite>

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### Biblical guiding principles

- ▶ Obedience to God's call took Jesus and his followers straight into dangerous situations
- ▶ "To live is Christ to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21)
- ▶ "Radical abandonment to the reality of heaven is not a contradiction to careful forethought and proactive risk minimization" (Paul Borthwick)

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### Matthew 10:16-25

"Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves" (v. 16; cf. Mt. 10:22; Jn. 15:18)




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### Matthew 10:16-25

"Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves" (v. 16; cf. Mt. 10:22; Jn. 15:18)

- ▶ Give appropriate concern, but not unnecessary anxiety. Avoid under-response & overreaction
- ▶ "When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next" (v. 23). Not a suicide mission
- ▶ "A student is not above his master" (v. 24)

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## 2 Cor. 12:7-10

- ▶ Paul's thorn was "a messenger of Satan to harass" (v. 7)
- ▶ Yet God did not remove it even when Paul pleaded. It became
  - A pride killer (v. 7)
  - A stage for God to show up & show off his power (v. 9, Sarah Lebharr Hall)
- ▶ "Unless there is an element of risk in our exploits for God, there's no need for faith" (Hudson Taylor)

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## Biblical guiding principles

- ▶ Calls to count the cost (Lk. 14:25-35, Proverbs)
- ▶ Reminders about the spiritual forces of evil (Eph. 6)
- ▶ **Balance mission calling & shepherding people**




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## Pre-field policies & procedures

- ▶ **Start with prayer** & seeking God's will for your STM ministry
- ▶ **Assess potential partners**
  - Seek compatibility on risk management
  - Ensure partners promote safe practices
  - Ask about their policies to protect minors; how they vet staff
  - Ask about safety concerns/timing; read between lines

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## Pre-field policies & procedures

### ► Crisis management policy

- Risk threshold
- Objective risk assessment
- Crisis management team (CMT)
- Release forms
- Preparation for team leaders/members
- Response policies & procedures: insurance, communication plan, member care, evacuation, negotiate in hostage situation? who will travel home with ill person? lead in their place? ...

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## Pre-field policies & procedures

### ► Crisis file/emergency packet - 1 @sending entity, 1 or more with leaders, have redundancies (paper, flash drives, cloud...)

- Copy of crisis management policy
- Contact info: sending entity leaders & CMT, team leaders, hosts, lodging, embassies & consulates for all team nationalities, preferred hospital, insurance provider, travel agent
- Emergency cards: for goers (see handout)
- Copies: signed passport pages, visa pages, signed release forms, etickets, air/ground itineraries




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## Pre-field policies & procedures

### ► Crisis file/emergency packet

- Emergency contacts @home for goers
- Team health profiles, insurance IDs, claim forms
- Forms on which team leaders record crisis response activities: medical treatment log, communication log, expense log
- [Team roster with passport numbers]

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## Pre-field policies & procedures



### ► Risk mitigation

- Consider timing: weather, elections, disease outbreaks, religious/political holidays, anti-U.S. sentiment... *consult host receivers*
- Screen leaders, require background checks
- Get insurance: health/evacuation & liability for int'l projects; proof of insurance for domestic projects
- Immunization procedure: ensure goers get important vaccines/prescripts
- Send first aid kit, appoint team "medic," consider epi pen, CPR training

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## Pre-field policies & procedures



### ► Risk mitigation

- Set & communicate general policies with team leaders
  - ❖ Expected conduct: team covenant, prohibited/risky activities, modest clothing, keep low profile, pair or more for outings...
  - ❖ Transportation: are drivers vetted? pick-up trucks, seat belts, road-worthy vehicles, rental vehicle insurance...
  - ❖ Specific locations: State Dept./host advice (i.e., not traveling by vehicle at night)
  - ❖ Guidelines for handling team finances
  - ❖ General communication plan: how often will leaders contact sending entity? how share updates with family/supporters?
  - ❖ Boundaries & harassment

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## Pre-field policies & procedures



### ► Risk mitigation

- Train team leaders/members on crisis prep. & response
  - ❖ Require leaders to review/know crisis mgt. policy, host partner guidelines & local laws
  - ❖ Use crisis scenarios to teach leaders
  - ❖ Provide safety orientation to team leaders/members: food/health, what to do if become lost, how to protect valuables & documents, areas to avoid, expected conduct, local laws...
  - ❖ Clarify social media & technology expectations generally & during a crisis
  - ❖ Explain that a desire to help can create unsafe situations, let hosts handle the unexpected

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## Pre-field policies & procedures



### ► Risk mitigation

- Provide resources to goers & families early in process
  - ❖ U.S. State Dept. country info: Don't hide risks!  
[travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country.html](http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country.html)
  - ❖ CDC: [wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list](http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list) for immunization recommendations & health advice
  - ❖ Register: State Dept. Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)  
[step.state.gov/step](http://step.state.gov/step) (they provide Excel template; do as team for consistency); register non-U.S. citizens with appropriate country's equivalent

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### Case study #1 armed robbery

You and your team are having a meal at a restaurant or at your lodging area. As you are finishing, three armed men enter the area and rob some of the staff. Then they come to where you are eating and tell you to cooperate with them. They frisk you and some of your team members and point their guns at you. In a foreign language, they ask for everyone's cash, phones and valuables. A few team members start crying and panicking.

- What is your first response?
- What information do you want to communicate?
- If one of your hosts is with you, will there be a difference in how you respond? If so, in what ways?
- What will you do once the men have left?
- Whom do you plan to contact back home? In the country?
- If someone is injured by a gunshot or a scuffle, what will you do regarding medical attention?

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### Case study #2 terrorist bomb

You and your team are sightseeing and visiting a local shopping district; you are spread out in small groups. A terrorist bomb attack takes place 2,000 yards away. You hear/feel the blast and the resulting sirens. People around you are screaming, panicked and running. All roads are blocked and there is no way to return to your accommodations. Travel by foot is your only option.

- Similar questions to #1 plus: What do you want to have with you?
- If some of your team members cannot be located, what will you do?




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### Case study #3 earthquake, host homes

You and your team are in home stays at various locations in the city; most of the host families do not speak English. At 2 a.m. there is a severe earthquake. You run out of the house with your host family in bare feet and on broken glass. You remember you have important information in the house. You have a few minutes to go back into the house for that information. You retrieve it and an hour later the house is on fire. Hundreds of people have died, and in your immediate vicinity there are many injured. Cell phones are working sporadically. There is no land-line phone service.



- ▶ Similar questions to #1-2 plus: What will you retrieve?
- ▶ How do you plan to contact your team? What will you tell them?

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### In a crisis team leaders should

- ▶ Stay calm, pray for wisdom, involve hosts, reassure team
- ▶ Cooperate fully with armed person, say you will cooperate, flee or hide if shooting/attacking
- ▶ Have or retrieve: crisis file, phone, cash/credit card, passports, first aid kit, map, dictionary, shoes... (go bag)
- ▶ Contact sending entity & hosts but no one else. Prevent team from communicating
- ▶ With CMT, determine other steps, communication plan
- ▶ Track & log team leader response activities

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### In a health crisis team leaders should

- ▶ Stabilize person, involve any goers/hosts with first aid or medical training
- ▶ Get to hospital with crisis file, cash/credit card
- ▶ Take along team member of same sex (& interpreter)
- ▶ Inform medical personnel of patient's allergies & pre-existing conditions if needed, yet respect privacy
- ▶ Contact insurance provider for guidance & to open a case
- ▶ Log treatment activities & expenses, keep test results, scans
- ▶ Coordinate with CMT: communication with family, next steps, evacuation if needed. Do not divulge medical diagnosis publicly

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### What can go wrong?

- ▶ Political/terrorism
- ▶ Natural disaster
- ▶ Criminal
- ▶ Accidental
- ▶ Health/personal

Train leaders to tell sending entity everything that happens




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Familiarity is an enemy to discernment and wisdom  
"Be as wise as serpents..."

**WISDOM**

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### Review biblical promises

Joshua 1:9  
Psalm 46:1-3, 7  
Psalm 121:7-8  
Psalm 5:11-12  
Matt. 28:20 (note context!)  
Isaiah 41:10-11  
Isaiah 43:1-2  
2 Thess. 3:3

**BE STRONG and  
COURAGEOUS!**  
DO NOT *be* AFRAID  
OR DISCOURAGED.  
FOR THE LORD YOUR GOD  
IS WITH YOU  
WHEREVER YOU GO.  
Joshua 1:9

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## On-field policies & procedures



### ► Risk mitigation by team leaders

- Conduct on-field safety orientation upon arrival (see handout)
- Ensure team follows guidelines, intervene as needed
- Keep crisis file, phone, etc. with you always
- Prayerfully/regularly assess risk, intervene if situation is moving toward unacceptable risk. Consult with sending entity as needed
- Designate "buddy groups"
- In advance of outings, discuss rendezvous spot
- Recommend underclothing pouches for money, ID...

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## On-field policies & procedures

### ► Health risk mitigation by team leaders

- Understand insurance plan: how to open a case & file a claim
- Be familiar with team health concerns: asthma, allergies, pre-existing conditions...
- Conduct periodic team health assessments; respond as needed to prevent a crisis
- First aid kit: don't "prescribe" meds but offer options, use gloves for treating wounds

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## On-field policies & procedures

### ► Health risk mitigation by team leaders

- Inform sending entity of health issues occurring, get advice as needed
- Be careful about divulging medical diagnoses when not an emergency (HIPAA, FERPA)
- Psychotic break
  - ❖ Keep safe
  - ❖ Work with CMT for treatment or evacuation




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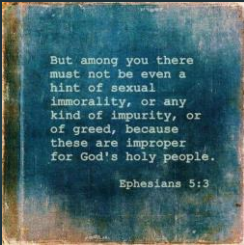
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## On-field policies & procedures



Talk with team leaders about boundaries & sexual harassment

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## On-field policies & procedures

- ▶ **Boundaries & sexual harassment** – Eph. 5:3-4
  - Team members may have difficult stories
  - Train leaders to
    - ❖ Recognize the power differential
    - ❖ Be sensitive & willing to limit freedoms
    - ❖ Proactively avoid any touching or comments (sexist or questionable humor) that could cause discomfort. Use "grandmother test." Apologize immediately if needed
    - ❖ Give equal amounts of attention
    - ❖ Not make assumptions about same sex team members
    - ❖ Ensure team members respect each others' boundaries, & hosts respect team members. Intervene as necessary

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## Post-field policies & procedures

- ▶ Report full details, debrief leaders & those involved
- ▶ Evaluate/improve for next time
- ▶ Provide member care support long-term
- ▶ Follow through with hosts as needed

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## Resources

- **Standards of Excellence (SOE) in STM** see Standard 4 in downloadable booklet [www.soe.org/explore/the-7-standards](http://www.soe.org/explore/the-7-standards)
- **Mission Nexus Webinar: Planning for Safety on Short-Term Mission Trips**, Tory Ruark, May 2016 with excellent material on risk assessment [missionnexus.org/planning-for-safety-on-short-term-mission-trips-2](http://missionnexus.org/planning-for-safety-on-short-term-mission-trips-2)
- **Developing Response Procedures to U.S. DOS Travel Warnings** (for leaders of study abroad programs), March 2010 [www.nafsa.org/Professional\\_Resources/Browse\\_by\\_Interest/Education\\_Abroad/Network\\_Resources/Education\\_Abroad/Developing\\_Response\\_Procedures\\_to\\_U.S.\\_DOS\\_Travel\\_Warnings](http://www.nafsa.org/Professional_Resources/Browse_by_Interest/Education_Abroad/Network_Resources/Education_Abroad/Developing_Response_Procedures_to_U.S._DOS_Travel_Warnings)
- **Buying STM Insurance** [www.shorttermmissions.com/articles/insurance](http://www.shorttermmissions.com/articles/insurance)
- **8 Ways to Stay Healthy on an STM** [www.shorttermmissions.com/articles/Health](http://www.shorttermmissions.com/articles/Health)
- **SOE Resource Providers** [www.soe.org/explore/resource-providers](http://www.soe.org/explore/resource-providers)
- **Delta Ministries webinars** (e.g., "How to keep social media from wrecking your STM") [www.deltaministries.com/what-we-do/resources/bible-resources](http://www.deltaministries.com/what-we-do/resources/bible-resources)

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## Questions & comments Contact information

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