The Research Security Office congratulates you on your upcoming international travel. This means that you will represent Auburn University at a global level and will portray the professionalism and education excellence that categorizes us as one of the best institutions of higher learning in the US. The RSO wants to be part of this great event by ensuring that your experience abroad is safe and productive. Therefore, we’ve created this briefing for AU personnel traveling to foreign countries. In this briefing you’ll find useful tips to help you stay safe and help you protect any sensitive or proprietary information.

Regardless of the destination, US travelers in general face high risk of kidnapping or other terrorist acts. You, not only as an US citizen but as an AU employee, run an added risk due to the valuable information that foreign persons or organizations could gain from you. Enemies of the US use information stolen from US travelers to either gain military or economic advantage over the US, or to use it against the US in the form of terrorist attacks on US soil and/or US assets abroad.

This is why the RSO requires AU employees traveling overseas to read carefully these security tips. We want you to be aware of the potential risks and learn ways to mitigate those risks:

I. **PERSONAL PROTECTION**

Terrorism, loosely defined, is the use or threat of violence to achieve political or social goals. It is violence for effect.

Usually perpetrated by extremist organizations, the spectrum of terrorist activities runs from annoying harassment and false threats to kidnapping and assassination.

Terrorists have learned that their advantage is the ability to strike in such a way and at such a time as to confuse, demoralize, and blunt any response to their action. Because of terrorists’ limited supplies and manpower, they must catch the victim by surprise, without protection. Their goal is a fast, easy attack and a safe getaway.

In the United States, we have been fortunate in experiencing few major terrorist incidents. However, U.S. citizens abroad, especially American business executives, have become a primary target for terrorist activities.

Generally, terrorists are most successful when an individual is lax or otherwise vulnerable. However, an alert and knowledgeable traveler can minimize the likelihood of attempted terrorist activity.

**Prior To Trip**

1. **Check with your Security Representative** regarding potential problems in the foreign countries and particular cities to be visited.
2. **Restrict trip and itinerary information** to your close family and necessary business associates only.

3. **Use reliable hotels** recommended by colleagues or the U.S. Embassy or Consulate.

**Upon Arrival**

1. **Maintain a low profile.** Avoid display of company affiliation when registering at your hotel.
2. **Ensure that the locks on your hotel room door(s) are in working order.** If in doubt, change rooms promptly. If there is a door connecting to another room, check the lock and deadbolt to be sure they are secure.
3. **Avoid going out alone.** Try to travel with a group of people. There is safety in numbers.
4. **Do not leave materials in your hotel room** that identify who you are, why you are there, who you are to visit and when, or your schedule and return flight plans.
5. **Utilize the hotel vault or secure storage** for valuables. Nothing left in a hotel room is secure.
6. **Avoid carrying large amounts of cash.** Use traveler’s checks.
7. **Beware of friendly strangers,** particularly if chance conversation reveals they are interested in your special field.
8. **Avoid actions identifying you as an American** or someone wealthy or important.
9. **Avoid establishing a routine schedule.**

**Automobile Travel**

90% of all terrorist attacks occur while the victim is engaged in auto travel.

1. **Keep your vehicle in good running condition** and know its capabilities and limitations. An inside hood latch and locking gas cap are highly recommended.
2. **Keep the gas tank at least half full** at all times.
3. **Keep alert to your immediate surroundings.**
4. Develop the habit of **informing your whereabouts and your activities to someone locally and/or someone in the US. Maintain constant communication with those individuals**, letting them know when you leave “Point A” and when you arrive at “Point B”.
5. **Be sensitive to the possibility of surveillance.** Before leaving, check up and down the street for suspicious cars.
6. While driving, keep your car doors locked and windows open no more than two inches.

7. Use well-traveled highways, avoiding backroads and night travel, especially when alone. Stay away from unfamiliar regions, dangerous slum areas, and isolated country roads.

8. Use the center lane on all highways to avoid being forced to the curb.

9. Be alert at all signals, stop signs, and intersections when slowing down or stopping.

10. Be suspicious of distress signals, such as an auto breakdown and a motorist asking for assistance.

11. Get around any suspicious road block, using the road shoulder if necessary, or make a U-turn.

12. Do not pick up strangers, regardless of circumstances.

13. Use your rear-view mirror frequently to check for following automobiles.

14. Use your horn to attract help if you suspect you're being followed. Drive to a busy area of town, a local hospital, or a police/fire station.

15. Lock your car whenever you leave it unattended.

16. Separate the ignition key from other keys if leaving the key with a parking attendant or repairman.

17. Park your car off the street at night, preferably in a locked garage or attended lot.

18. Report immediately to the authorities any suspicious wires or packages in your car. Do not attempt to remove.

19. Avoid routines. Vary times and routes, as well as methods of travel.

20. Maintain a low profile with cab drivers. Do not display expensive jewelry or wealth.

Aircraft Travel

Travel on commercial airlines has become one of the most secure means of travel in the United States.

Airport security measures and anti-hijacking techniques have made the threat of terrorism far less likely than when traveling by other means.

However, keep in mind that in most overseas locations, airport security measures may not be as effective as those in this country.

1. **Fly U.S. carriers** whenever possible.

2. **If possible, do not make reservations by phone.** Instead, go to the airport early and purchase tickets.

3. **Leave early for the airport** to minimize exposure. A number of terrorist incidents have occurred while traveling to or from an airport.

4. **Once in the terminal, move as quickly as possible to secured areas, past screening points, and stay there.**

5. **Select a window seat** whenever you can. This will keep you a seat or two away from anyone causing a disturbance.

Hostage Information

The chance of your being taken hostage is highly unlikely. Yet, such incidents can happen anywhere.

If you are abducted by terrorists, your ability to act appropriately will be important for personal safety and will increase your chance of survival.

1. **Obey the terrorists' orders.**

2. **Be courteous and polite** to the terrorists and other hostages.

3. **Do not debate, argue or discuss political issues** with the terrorists or other hostages.

4. **Talk in a normal voice.** Avoid whispering when talking to other hostages and avoid raising your voice when talking to the terrorists.

5. **Avoid abrupt movements.**
6. Locate yourself away from windows and doors, and as far away from the terrorists as possible.

7. Do not hesitate to answer questions, but avoid revealing information about your place of work and occupation.

8. Inform the terrorists if you have any medical condition or special disabilities.

9. Do not discuss possible actions that may be taken by your family, friends, or company.


II. Personal Behavior

Such activities as illegal currency exchange, smuggling and black market dealings, alcohol and drug abuse, sexual indiscretions, and contacts with dissidents could attract foreign agents to you.

Attempts to compromise, then embarrass or blackmail the targeted American traveler, are common tactics.

1. Maintain responsible personal behavior at all times.

2. Be particularly conscious of your behavior when attending functions where foreign nationals are present.

3. Avoid incidents, such as civil unrest, demonstrations, crowds, fires, and accidents.

4. Be alert always to possible compromising situations.

5. Do not become involved in black market activities or illegal exchange of currency.

6. Do not accept letters, photographs, packages, or any item to be smuggled out of the country for any reason.

7. Be moderate in alcohol consumption.

8. Never carry illegal substances or medications without a doctor’s prescription.

9. Do not use, sell, or possess narcotics or pornography.
10. **Avoid moral vices and indiscretions** which could lead to embarrassment or blackmail.

11. **Obey all local laws.**

**III. Picture Taking**

American travelers who take photos in certain areas of some foreign countries run the risk of arrest and imprisonment.

1. **Find out in advance** where a camera may and may not be used.

2. **Do not photograph restricted military areas or equipment** (or any area where photographs are forbidden).

3. **Be alert to what may be in the background** of otherwise innocent scenes.

4. **Avoid attempts by unknown photographers to take pictures of you.**

**IV. Suspected Incidents**

Contact the U.S. Embassy or Consulate if you experience:

1. A suspected **subversion or espionage** attempt.

2. **Harassment or arrest.**

3. A foreign national (or anyone you do not know) who attempts to establish a continuing relationship.

4. A need for **medical or dental aid.**

We urge you to visit the US State Department website at [www.state.gov/travel](http://www.state.gov/travel), to obtain contact information for the US Embassy at your destination; as well as emergency contact information and locations such as law enforcement and medical facilities. You can also read the latest “Country Specific” travel warnings and the latest news regarding your country of destination. Remember that by adhering to these rules and security tips, you will be protecting not only yourself but also the reputation of Auburn University, and ensuring our national security.

Now; please go to the “Forms” link under the Export Control Tab on the Compliance web page, and download, print, and sign the “International Travel Briefing Acknowledgement” memo. Forward a signed copy to the RSO via fax at 334-844-5944, or via e-mail attachment to sld0030@auburn.edu and/or jrc0053@auburn.edu. You could also carry the signed copy personally to 2534 Advanced Engineering Research Building.