

Logistics Before the Trip

There are several logistical things that you need to either take care of or think about before you leave on your mission trip.

1. Passport

Are you going to a foreign country that requires a passport?

Have you applied for your passport?

If you already have a passport, do you know where it is? Does it expire at least 6 months after the date of your trip? If not, you need to apply for a renewal.

2. Visa

Are you going to a country that requires a visa? You will need a passport before you can apply for a visa. The visa process can take several months, therefore don't delay in getting a passport and applying for the visa. Check with your team leader on this one.

3. Funds

Do you have all of your funds raised for your mission trip? Don't wait until the last minute to try and get funds raised. Appendix A of this training manual has a list of ideas for raising funds.

4. Packing

a. You don't have to pack a different outfit for every day.

You can wear the same outfit 2 or 3 times and no one will notice or care. You can pack a travel bottle of Febreze to spray down your clothes so that they won't smell. A bottle of Febreze will take up less space than 7 more outfits.

b. Know the weight limits for the airline you are traveling on.

You can find this information on the airline's website. Weigh your luggage before you get to the airport. If your bag is overweight, you will be charged an over-the-limit fee which can be very expensive or you will have to remove weight from your bag. You don't want to be in the middle of the airport at the check-in counter, opening your bags and repacking stuff in a lighter bag or having to decide what to throw away.

c. Pack in large sealable plastic bags (Ziploc type bags).

This will help if security searches your bags. It is easier to repack ziploc bags, than to try and refold and reorganize stuff. Also, if your luggage gets wet during travel, all of your stuff will still be dry because it was in plastic bags.

Large ziploc bags can be used as space saver bags. Pack your clothes in them, then use your body (by sitting on the bags) to squeeze out the air. You can get more stuff in your suitcase by using space saver bags. But keep in mind your weight limits for bags.

Do NOT use a space saver bag that requires you to use a vacuum to get the air out. You won't have a vacuum when you are packing to come home.

d. Prescription medication should be in carry-on.

Make sure you have the original bottle and that it has your name on it.

e. Know the restrictions for carry-on luggage!

The Transportation Security Administration website should be reviewed for the most current information.

f. Pack change of clothes in carry-on luggage.

Be prepared in case your luggage doesn't arrive at your destination. You can do this by packing at least one change of clothes in your backpack/carry-on luggage.

5. General

a. You will need to purchase a transformer and converter for electrical devices.

Devices such as hair dryers, digital cameras, cell phones, etc. use voltages that won't work in some foreign countries without a transformer. Check on this before leaving for your trip.

b. Do you plan on using your cell phone while out of the country?

Contact your provider and make sure you have an international plan or that you know what charges you will incur.

c. Pictures are a great way to connect and communicate with people in a foreign country.

Take a small photo album with you that you can keep in your backpack or if you have a smartphone that you can load pictures on. Take pictures of your family, your pets, your home, and your church. You can show these pictures to the children or adults that you meet on your mission trip as a way of connecting and communicating without very many words.

d. Learn basic words and phrases in the language of the country that you will be going to.

There is a website (www.byki.com) that has free software downloads for 46 different languages. The free software teaches you basic greetings, and conversational phrases. It is really easy to use and learn. You won't feel quite as lost if you can speak a little of the language.

e. Understand the Dos and Don'ts on a Mission Trip. (From Appendix D)