

Procedure for Changes in Advisory Levels and Emergency Traveler Recall

A. Introduction

Global health and safety is dynamic, requiring constant monitoring and diligent updates to best support international travelers. The U.S. government provides support in assessing risk to international travelers through several regularly updated advisory systems, which may be adapted over time to better inform travelers of known risks. If advisories elevate to levels not permissible by Virginia Tech [Policy 1070: Global Travel Policy](#) while university-travelers are abroad, the travel is no longer supported by Virginia Tech. Moreover, catalyst events that may not cause U.S. government advisories to change may still result in an unsafe environment for university-supported travelers. In such situations, the university has the authority to recall travelers. The Global Travel Oversight Committee (GTOC) is responsible for making recommendations to the university president, who will make the final decision on the university's course of action; however, the president retains the authority to act prior to receiving a recommendation from the GTOC. The GTOC, in coordination with the Global Education Office (GEO), is responsible for coordinating global emergency and crisis responses.

B. Procedures

Policy 1070: Global Travel Policy identifies travel as high risk for students in locations assessed by the U.S. Department of State as a Travel Advisory Level 3 or Level 4, or in locations assessed by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as a Travel Health Notice Level 3 or 4. Policy 1070: Global Travel Policy identifies travel as high risk for faculty and staff in locations assessed by the CDC as a Travel Health Notice Level 3 or 4. Destinations can also be determined as high risk based on events not yet reflected by U.S. government advisories.

B.1 High Risk Advisories Prior to Departure

If an international destination on a traveler's itinerary is high risk based on these standards, university-supported travel is not authorized without an exception to Policy 1070 granted by the GTOC. If advisory levels for a destination elevate making the location high risk after the deadlines listed in the [Procedure to Request an Exception to Policy - International Travel](#), a traveler can file a petition for an exception to the GTOC at that time.

B.2 Changes in Advisory Levels While Travelers are Abroad

If U.S. Department of State or CDC advisory increases to cause a destination for current travelers to be high risk, or a catalyst event increases risk to travelers to a level deemed too high by the GTOC, the Assistant Director for Global Safety and Risk Management will notify travelers of the increased advisories and will provide guidance on the opportunity to submit an immediate petition to the GTOC for an exception to Policy 1070: Global Travel Policy. The Assistant Director for Global Safety and Risk Management will also notify the GTOC and the responsible Department (faculty/staff travelers) or College (student travelers) in affected locations and provide updates on the travelers' plans as they become available. Travelers with approved exceptions to Policy 1070: Global Travel Policy will be authorized to continue their university-supported travel, with the implementation of risk mitigations included in their petition for an exception. If an exception is not granted, the affected traveler(s) will be advised to return home as soon as possible.

Travelers that remain in high risk locations without an approved exception to Policy 1070: Global Travel Policy will no longer be on university-supported travel and will move to a personal travel status. Non-compliance could result in a reduction in final reimbursable travel expenses. Students who participate in education abroad programs (who plan to transfer academic credit back to Virginia Tech) are responsible for complying with the current application procedures established by the GEO. Students who fail to comply may face the following: (1) a hold may be placed on their student records, (2) they may be removed from the program and lose non-refundable deposits and payments, and (3) loss of eligibility of transfer credit may affect Virginia Tech financial aid for the semester or term abroad.

B.3 Structural Changes to Advisory Systems

In the event of a change to either the U.S. Department of State or CDC advisory systems, the Assistant Director for Global Safety and Risk Management will notify the GTOC of the change and any implications of the change related to Policy 1070: Global Travel Policy. If the advisory system changes and Policy 1070: Global Travel Policy still align, no policy changes will be necessary. If Policy 1070: Global Travel Policy no longer effectively addresses the U.S. Department of State or CDC advisory systems, the GTOC will convene to address immediate revisions to Policy 1070: Global Travel Policy.

If changes to the U.S. Department of State or CDC advisory system cause a destination for current travelers to be high risk, the Assistant Director for Global Safety and Risk Management will notify travelers of the increased advisories and will provide guidance on the opportunity to submit an immediate petition to the GTOC for an exception to Policy 1070: Global Travel Policy. The Assistant Director for Global Safety and Risk Management will also notify the GTOC and the responsible Department (faculty/staff travelers) or College (student travelers) in affected locations and provide updates on the travelers' plans as they become available. Travelers with approved exceptions to Policy 1070: Global Travel Policy will be authorized to continue their university-supported travel, with the implementation of risk mitigations included in their petition for an exception. If an exception is not granted, the affected traveler(s) will be advised to return home as soon as possible.

Travelers that remain in high risk locations without an approved exception to Policy 1070: Global Travel Policy will no longer be on university-supported travel and will move to a personal travel status. Non-compliance could result in a reduction in final reimbursable travel expenses.

B.4 Emergency Recall of Travelers

In the event of a high risk situation that the GTOC determines is not eligible for exception to Policy 1070: Global Travel Policy, travelers will be advised by the Assistant Director for Global Safety and Risk Management to depart the location, and either move to a safe location or return home as soon as possible. The responsible Department (faculty/staff travelers) or College (student travelers) will also be notified of the university's recommendation that the traveler depart and that the status of their travel has changed to non-university-supported.

Virginia Tech will coordinate support as needed for travelers recommended to depart. In the event that Virginia Tech's contracted international emergency medical and security assistance insurance does not cover evacuation costs, student travelers returning based on university guidance **may** be provided the opportunity for limited financial reimbursement for identified incremental increases to travel costs. If offered, impacted travelers requesting reimbursement will be required to submit receipts and an explanation of applicable expenses to the Office of Risk Management following completion of return travel.

Global Education Office Procedure

Notifications of recommendation to depart will first be made by e-mail to travelers from the Assistant Director for Global Safety and Risk Management, including Departments on the notification. A second notification e-mail will be sent to those that do not respond within 6 to 12 hours. Travelers who do not respond to these emails will then be contacted at the provided phone numbers after another 6 to 12 hours. If there is no response, then the traveler's provided on-site emergency contact will be called. If after 24 hours there is still no response, then the traveler's emergency contacts registered with the Global Education Office or the Office of Human Resources will be contacted. This timeline will be abbreviated if the situation is urgent enough to require a faster response.