SAFE TRAVEL SOLUTIONS

Please note that any details in blue apply to SPECIFICALLY to all study abroad students, missions teams, and instructors abroad.

Fort Sherman Academy Security Training

All ideas and information come directly from the DVD Safe Travel Solutions, produced by David Dose, at Fort Sherman Academy 2008

For all traveling abroad, the following information was created to aid short-term mission teams in the following ways. It can help

- To serve to make your life safer and more secure as you travel
- To support long-term personnel by knowing and following common security protocols while visiting countries to create a more unified response to contingencies
- To understand what information is confidential and how best to maintain confidentiality to reduce potential negative impact on volunteers, sending churches, regional personal and the nationals we are going to serve
- To increase survival of an act of crime or the act of an unfriendly foreign government through planning and preparing

Session 1

Contingency Covenant

This Contingency covenant has been written specifically for mission trips into sensitive areas. However, each study abroad student should know the code of conduct expected in the Tiger Handbook, and must agree to abide by the handbook guidelines for appropriate behavior, no matter where they are living.

(See http://tigernet.obu.edu/tigerhandbook/TigerHandbook12web.pdf)

“An important place to begin security training is to adhere to a covenant – a code of behavior that stipulates what is right and wrong (which can get confused in a stressful situation). Based upon biblical principles, this covenant has been established to help believers in captivity situation as respond with a good conscience and in a unified way that will glorify the Lord” (see handout – Session One: Contingency Covenant)...  

“This is an agreed-upon code of conduct, and it promotes good behavior (which certainly can yield positive results in a hostile situation; it’s harder, for example, to mistreat someone who behaves). Also, it represents a source of peace for captives and, by promoting unity, it helps people return home and get their lives back by minimizing the spiritual and psychological impact of going through an event like this.” (Ft. Sherman Academy Leader’s Guide 2008)
Session 2

Confidentiality

What kind of information is confidential?

- Find out from the folks you are going to work with what kind of things they don’t need to tell - for example, who the missionaries on the field are, the amount of money you/they earn, what your parents do, job details that might threaten the security of those we are going to.

How to keep those details when there is pressure?

- Put together an STS – SIMPLE TENABLE STATEMENT: A short description of what your team is doing on this trip as agreed upon by the team before going. Not the same 4 words together, but a simple childlike logical description.
- Must be TRUTHFUL, but basically truthful –
- SHORT AND BELIEVABLE
- Depending on the country, decide to come up with a description that is NOT INFLAMMATORY within the country, remembering the context and political situation
- BE CONSISTENT each time you tell the details
- Send your STS to the hosts you will be with too
- Don’t take your written STS with you – MEMORIZE IT

The limitations of your STS

(See handout: Session Two: the STS concept and the Box)

In the box: - the things you CAN talk about when the pressure is off, either on the street, (or in a hostage situation):

- Home and family (limited details) to create an image as a real person
- Health issues – if kidnapped/imprisoned/hostages - they want us alive, so ask for medicines, blankets, soap, reading materials
- Legal “rights” (if hostage)– treaties that give all countries citizen’s rights. If you ask for a govt. representative, you have the legal right to have that within x # hours. Check it out before going to the country. Persistently ask over and over again.
- Testimony – if you are living out your faith, explain why you are different
- Have a contact person who can be connected if there is a problem
- Talk about yourself in a sanitized way
Outside the box: things that should NOT be told:

If this is **not a pro-Christian situation**, and, for example you are using literacy as a platform for ministry, and you are asked how long will you be here.

- Have a time in mind – 14 days
- Don’t use word “mission”
- Don’t mention “fellow missionaries”
- Vaguely tell who you are with
- Don’t tell where friends are
- No “um’s”
- Don’t discuss religion
- Politics
- Finances – yours or your parents
- Sport – favorite teams
- Don’t put things in writing
- Don’t discuss areas that escalate your value
- Don’t say “no comment” but just make benign comments
- Be repetitive, don’t say anything new
- Don’t be provocative (e.g. Why do you want to know that?)
- Don’t offer any more information than you need to
- Don’t tell everything you know
- Don’t give personal information that will connect my family
Session 3

**Bob, Information Security, Media**

(See Session 3 of DVD)

Study Abroad students will have a person on the campus that they will be on who will act as “Bob” in cases of emergency. Be sure to identify them and have their contact numbers with you at all times.

**Techniques to use if they won’t accept your reasons for being in a country:**

1. **CHOOSE A LIFELINE (“BOB”)**

Why have Bob?

- He’s a transition – buying time, should know where to go for help because decided ahead of time.
- He’s a solution
- Buys us time
- When you have lost your freedom and have run out of options
- Early accountability so that those know where to come looking for you
- If you can’t give what they are asking for, ask them to call Bob
- Persuade them Bob is the only person who can give them what they want
- After a long interrogation, we tend to give up (after 14 hours), so call Bob

Who should be Bob?

- So available while you are away – around
- Prepared – knows my Simple Tenable Statement (STS), my circumstances and restrictions in country (knows what I can say or not say in this given circumstance)
- A middle man
- Explain who this person is – think this through with Bob before leaving (coordinate ideas)
- Bob needs to know resources to contact (phone numbers, etc. on phone,)

Who should Bob NOT be?

- Family member – too emotionally involved
- Pastor or board member or leader of the organization

Don’t neglect to do this BEFORE you leave – not from the jail cell!

WHO WOULD BE A GOOD “BOB” FOR YOU or YOUR team?

“Bob” should have all of your contact details, schedule, should know your STS, should know your departure and arrival details, and should know who to contact to represent you if the media are involved- who your spokesperson is.
Interrogation Questions and answers:

Practice using these interrogation skills on the handout before leaving – simulate over and over again.

(Remember, this is not just for restricted countries – hostages can be taken anywhere for money, political reasons, religious reasons, or just to have something you have that they want).

Stay in the box!

2. PREVENT INFORMATION LEAKING OUT

Ways people are surprised at how information is leaked out and give you “value”:

- Laptops
  - Contact lists of friends, business connections, etc.
  - SOCIAL MEDIA!!
  - Mission strategy
  - Easy/no password entrance or encryption

- Jump drives
  - CD or flash drive

Preventing security leaks:

- Back up your data and leave important details like this at home.
- Leave “story” behind
- Leave game plans – STS details behind
- Leave notebooks and details of ministry on field or decide how much you want to keep
- Passwords should be 15 characters or more. It makes it tougher to get into. Encrypt your computer if necessary.
  
  Here is a list of some encryption software from Marla Rigsby. She hasn’t personally used them but has read reviews on them.
  

- Cell phone
  - Carry a cell phone with only critical numbers on – not family – perhaps a 2nd phone with only those critical numbers on it is all you need
  - Be careful of phone tapping, microphone messages
  - Be careful of talking to “Bob” and revealing details, especially if in a cell. Usually someone can also speak English
  - Calendars showing schedule may give away details – keep it vague
  - Pull the battery out of your phone if possible or have 2 interchangeable chips
Protecting your information from non-interrogators:

Medicines

Health issues

- Take them for who they say they are, but if you are being held, you can never verify the person interrogating is really that person (i.e., a nurse, reporter, etc.). May be another interrogation method.
- Take them for whatever you can get from them (if “ABC news”, can they tell you what is going on with this case; nurse – medicine, food)
- Never tell them anything you wouldn’t tell the bad guy. Even if they truth out to be legitimate.
- Don’t talk to them in your cell, just because you feel relieved to have a non-interrogator in your cell. Be on guard! Stick to your STS to avoid compromise.

How to deal with Information Security and the Media in a crisis:

Weather, earthquake, hostage crisis, accident – be sure the media will be involved.

How should we deal with it?

Have a chain of command:

1. Have contact information for everyone on your team - “Bob"
2. Know who your immediate contact person is back home -

**On OBU’s campus:**

1. Ian Cosh - He will let the President know immediately.
2. If Ian is not in country, go directly to President Horne’s office. He knows who to go to next. His office is always manned!
3. Have a spokesman for the team for the media out of country.
4. Have a spokesman for the media in country too. (President – Dr. Horne will be OBU’s, and he will assign anyone else as necessary)

Make sure:

- They’re clear on the STS if necessary
- They might need to team with the host organization – someone who knows how to be careful with intent of the team
- Media doesn’t release information that hurts the situation by revealing too much
• Church teams have the leadership prepared to be the leader - one spokesperson, not senior leader if a crisis in hostile situation – (too much value)
  o Don’t send it out for prayer electronically Facebook, email, radio, etc
  o Don’t have family members be spokesperson – too emotionally invested
  o Remind media to give not details – assure media they are trying to deal with details
  o Stirring up the press may hold up the kidnapping. They captors may be just wanting media coverage
  o Gossip won’t help, but one person will be able to
ALL STUDY ABROAD TRAVELERS MUST TAKE NOTE OF THIS ADVICE FOLLOWING (from pages 8-18)

Three basic rules of thumb to keep you protected when on the ground:

1. **Stay alert** – keep up to date information, watch for surveillances, have a family plan and look for changes – be alert to change or patterns

2. **Be unpredictable** – change routes, times of departure, park at different times

3. **Keep a low profile** – that’s a cultural thing – a low profile American, even though taller, different skin tone. Try to blend in. Don’t put out information about where you are or what you’re doing. Don’t wear uniform clothing! Blend in!

Remember, as Christians, we are in spiritual warfare – stay alert! Trouble can happen no matter where you are.

- Avoid Western hangouts – don’t go where all tourists stay or go
- Ask for a new room when you get to a place where there is organized crime or you feel threatened
- Pay attention to God-given intuitions! He gives you the hibi-gibi’s for a reason!!
- If in same situation for several weeks, switch rooms periodically. Avoid first floor – easiest places for crime to take place. Above 7th floor, fire protection is not available in 3rd world countries. Floors 2-7 are better.
- Use different exit doors sometimes
- Know emergency phone numbers – 911 doesn’t work overseas
- Carrying phones indicates that you are not alone, but know how to use it in country
- Be alert to loiterers – watching too much, too long!
- Don’t let strangers in your room – vendors. You don’t know culture real well, so don’t allow strangers in.
- On the street, change route every day – no dark alleys. Walk facing traffic – safer!
- Walk on inside of sidewalk – harder to grab you (especially children and ladies)

**Car-jacking IS an issue in some countries!**

Here are a few tips for survival:

- Give up the car! Don’t die for it!
- Let them have anything in the car too!
- The weapons are usually real, so get out and be apparently obedient!
- Stay calm!
- Collect information
Look for a chance to take off running
Culturally, in some countries, the average carjacker wants to make sure there are not engine shut-off devices or anti-theft devices for the start up. Then they will let you out. Comply!
In America, if you have to get in the car, it is more serious!

Pick-pocketing is a problem in some countries:
- Carry a Mugger’s wallet. Carry a second wallet and keep a cheap one with little money in it.
- Give it to them

Lodging overseas:
Find a safe room if robberies are common in some countries – more locked doors and take your phone with you. Pretend to talk on the phone even if you can’t really call in order to give them signals.

Rally point:
All plan to meet in one point in case the building catches fire or there is another crisis. Have a rally point instead of running back into a burning building for someone.

Go Kit:
Keep the critical stuff in back pack and ready to go at a moment’s notice. Don’t spread it all around your room.

Don’t take time to pack in an emergency!

Ladies:
Don’t look at men in eyes. It gives a “come-on” signal in some countries but do if it is culturally appropriate. Look confident!

Use security locks
- on your bags
- and on your doors

Dump any traceable evidence that might make you valuable –

Be aware of internet presence!
- Use discretion electronically – blogs, emails, Facebook! Remember everything you put out there is accessible anywhere and is traceable.
- Avoid criticism! Remember you are a guest in a foreign land. They will do things differently!!!
• Google yourself and eliminate any evidence that might make you valuable
• Delete pre-trip emails giving details of sensitive issues
• Don’t take sensitive information with you

**YOU ARE PROBABLY BEING WATCHED!**

**Being watched?**

**Surveillance is the act of someone watching you from a distance for a given purpose.**

Most attacks happen after surveillance by perpetrator!

It’s a real threat!

How does surveillance work?

Why is surveillance employed?

Who are these people?

  o Those determining if you have the kinds of things you want.

  o Pickpockets— watching you to see what you’re spending or what kind of wallet you have, mannerisms or casual carrying of wallets and purses – banks, ATMs, how much money you are carrying

  o Unfriendly government observers – people assigned to you for whatever reasons

  o Those preparing a home invasion attack – perpetrator watches his victim before attacking

  o Terrorist kidnappers – trained group of criminals or political terrorists looking for live victims. Organized groups are trained to do this against Americans.

Surveillance happens in more than one way:

1. Cell phone – those following you may have their phones too, and can follow you front and back. Everyone has a cell phone even though looking at sites.
2. Stationary surveillance – just stands on corner and watches
3. Vehicle surveillance
4. Covert (undercover) and overt (open and observable) surveillance may take place in certain countries

5. Equipment is cheap and easy for people to do this now

Why do they want to follow you?

- To see if you’re an easy target
- Body language shows vulnerability
- If assault sexually, or physically, to watch your daily weak spots on your route
- Want to collect the timing
- Want to follow you to know who you are working with — to harass the associates we’re working with — get lists
- Because this the day they will execute their plan

If you are alert, most pickpockets will go away if you are paying attention to them.

How to Counter Surveillance:

Become a hard target!

Be alert to all of your surroundings.

THAT MEANS TAKE OUT YOUR EARPHONES WHEN OUTSIDE AND AVOIDING TEXTING ON THE MOVE – STAY ALERT!!

Be seen looking around politely and with curiosity.

Make eye contact unless that’s culturally inappropriate.

Look confident.

Look friendly rather than scared.

Use:

1. Passive mode: shopping mode/pull money into front pocket or small front purse

2. Active mode: do the opposite of what you usually do and observe what the person following you is doing.

Strategize subtly!
Here are some ways to figure out if someone is surveying you:

**SDR: Surveillance Detection Route:**

- Pause
- Speeding up
- Stepping into a store to see if they hag outside
- Step in front of a plate glass window to see if I can see someone
- Change of plan – pretend to go back and get something you have “forgotten”
- Locate the police station in advance, and go right there if there is a problem
  - Don’t draw attention to yourself
  - Find out what the person looks like – height, clothes hair color, ladies and children are also used
  - Make eye contact quickly – I see you! (not ladies – they should look at him, but not in the eyes as this might signal sexual advance)
  - Look past him and pick up a phone
  - Tell someone – tell rest of team if it is a fact

It happens a lot! It is not paranoia!! Just be alert!

It might prevent an issue from occurring.

Session 5:

**Surviving Hostage Situations and Minimizing Sexual Assault**

Despite what they tell us, this is not as common as Hollywood would like us to believe, but when it does happen, it is a traumatic event. This is just to prepare you incase this should happen. Strategize and be prepared.

Surviving Capture – loss of freedom or arrest – first few minutes up to the first hour are the roughest!

Being taken hostage is a very predictable scenario – there are certain things captor must do. Just so, captives are also predictable, and early on, one can tell who will/will not survive.

What should “survivors” do?

The odds of this occurring on a trip are SLIM – the vast majority survives it. Christians are fortunate that have God with them.

Victims make millions of choices – we can make a difference that dramatically increases our chances of getting out of it alive.

Role play beforehand

Counter what you’ve seen in the movies – like going to a job interview
From the moment the car is hijacked or a person is captured, do the following:

- Remember what the person’s goal is – he wants live prisoners (we all do)
- To keep me alive, he needs to control me
- He will try to intimidate me – he’s the boss! If you resist, you’ll get hurt.
- This is a scary time for victims. Reactions – fear, paralysis, fight or flight.
- Learn to think and move in spite of fear

How?

- Understand how emotional this person is. He may be on drugs or drunk
- Try to deescalate him – always talk a notch lower and slower than him
- How fast I move, physical posture, makes him feel better. Keep hands open and in view
- Give him a posture – look small and humble – appear to want to follow instructions
- Without information, can’t do much, so slow things down.
- Look for a way to escape, but think carefully. Most success is in the first few minutes.
- Remember he can take away everything except your ability to think. Stay mentally strong.
- In a hijacking – in a bus or car, the small space makes it more intense.
- Be slow to identify yourself as American - odds of surviving after an hour are better
- Don’t display too much emotion – cry quietly, and reach out to the person next to you if you can – be a hero! Help someone close to you if necessary.
- Don’t look the captor in the eye in the first part of a capture
- Ladies, don’t go anywhere alone – never!

Physical abuse in hijacking:

- Be outwardly compliant and make the captor make him feel like he has control
- When information is wanted, torture increases. Try to help the interrogator to stop hitting so that you can think clearer. Try to slow down questioning and violence

Dealing with Sexual Abuse – assault, rape in captivity with no freedom.

How do I minimize sexual assault?

This is not as prevalent as the movies try to make out. But is does occur, and the rapist is usually a guard using a woman as a target of opportunity – usually on his own.

- Fake throwing up, change the mind of the man who hates throw-up or other bodily stuff! Become unattractive!
Ladies: Help yourself by immediately being culturally sensitive – i.e. wear a head-cover, ask for a skirt, keep your testimony strong, be strong with another lady with you as you go the bathroom etc.

Men: help to prevent any sort of sexual assault. Be likeable to others in the cell. Play the husband role and be close to your wife – go to restroom with her, look after the other ladies in the group too, play role of father, brother, son, husband. Beg for your “sister” – use “family” connection. Be passive in protection, not aggressive!

American “rights” don’t fly far in these situation

To stop an assault, don’t use physical threats! They don’t work!

As a matter of protocol; LADIES, DON’T WALK ANYWHERE BY YOURSELF IF YOU CAN AVOID IT!!

**How to Counter Surveillance:**

**Become a hard target!**

Be alert to all of your surroundings. THAT MEANS TAKE OUT YOUR EARPHONES WHEN OUTSIDE AND AVOIDING TEXTING ON THE MOVE – **STAY ALERT!!**

Be seen looking around politely and with curiosity.

Make eye contact unless that’s culturally inappropriate.

Look confident.

Look friendly rather than scared.

Ladies, don’t walk by yourself anywhere!

The chances of this happening are rare! But, think through these issues, and in a world becoming more and more volatile every day, and be prepared!

Remember YOU are not alone! God is with you!

**Dealing with Unfriendly Government and Unfriendly Customs**

Historically, this is the **most common problem** for folks traveling around the world.

You may be pulled aside at the airport and detained in a room alone or with a group for various reasons, the most common being visa violations. (England is the #1 country for this.)

**Detentions:**
Messing with the government means that you don’t get to go back, and may also be hurting those working in country.

Going to jail b/c you’re an American is not usually lethal and you will probably return home, - usually short times in jail.

Even though this is the shortest threat, it is the area where most people cave in quicker b/c interrogators are trained to mess with your mind

It is a treaty right to ask for an Ambassador – there are always allied Embassy personnel if US doesn’t have an embassy in country. Find any other English-speaking ambassador as your advocate if you can.

May get someone who is older and better trained as interrogator

Less threat and more bluff in detention, but most often a short time in captivity

May be arresting you for things his govt has decided is illegal – may not really be a “normal” crime

May have anti sentiment towards US, Christian, or mistaken identity

If goes past an hour or two, then motivation may change from inquisition to trying to come up with propaganda or media attention getting

If held beyond a few hours, motivation is usually to justify what they have done in arresting you

Don’t get frustrated or belligerent or you will give reason for accusation

Have an STS down pat

Keep repeating your answers to your interrogations

May be more sophisticated and willing to exploit you – may want you to sign for something you didn’t do. He’s after something to justify his actions.

Average hostage time is 12 months/jail time – usually about 1-3 days

High percentage hostage victims hurt /far more likely not to be hurt in government detention

Hostage – may say more /Say less to the govt. official

Hostage – torture/ Govt. detention less likely to torture b/c of world-wide media

Try to escape from hostage/ don’t try to run or resist arrest in detention unless life or death

Go for polite and courteous in all situations – it’s hard to rough up a courteous prisoner

Ask to speak to govt. rep

This may be time to ask for “Bob” to vouch for you

When in jail, it will be good for Bob to know that you’re in jail – will try to come and get you

Don’t ask for US rep in first few minutes – only if they are not listening. Remain polite and courteous
In Customs:

Polite

Courteous

Don’t’ say “missionary”

Give STS – be ready to be questioned

Make certain your stories of your purpose match, time of visit match, coordinate your plans and STS

Anticipate questions and decide which part of the story you want to share

This is by far the most survivable situation to be in

Know when to ask for help – Bob / govt representative

Dealing with Demands for Information:

Techniques of interrogation:

Accusation
  
  o  They will ask for proof of denial of accusation
  
  o  Counter the interrogation by not getting angry and not adding any information to the accusation
  
  o  Come back to your STS all the time
  
Friendly approach

  o  Get such a nice friendly interrogator that you relax and say things that should not have been told
  
  o  Christians are vulnerable to this, and want to talk too much
  
  o  Counter this by talking and being friendly and get into “the box”
  
  o  Say that “he’s playing the friend role” – just repeat yourself and don’t feel like it’s impolite to not talk about everything

Good cop/Bad cop – don’t tell good cop everything

Information shock (usually found some info on internet through web search)

Adapt knowable information into your story and go back to your STS

Technical methods – lie detectors, screening. These are just tools, but not as accurate as they want you to believe. Go back to STS without emotion.
Forced statements:

Sometimes you might be asked to sign a written statement or report admitting guilt or political statements which will be given to media.

How to avoid signing a statement:

- Can’t read it so can’t sign it
- Stall
- Delay
- Offer other suggestions
- Under threat of death, negotiate and get them to change some of the document if possible
- Change the English to make it sound different
- Don’t act excited on media
- Say, “they want me to tell you that …”

What is whole team is not arrested:

Try to find out who has been held

Pass information along to faith based group

Should we leave or stay in country if someone is missing

May need to go in with the folks in prison in order to support them

May help to negotiate/apply pressure

Talk about it as a team before we go – who is going to pass information before going

Unlikely to happen, but has happened!

Contact protocol in case of problems:

1. Contact your designated school official in the country you are studying first. They can probably help you best.
2. Ask them to call OBU in an emergency to call:
   a. Ian Cosh (870-245-5320-office hours) (870-464-7192 cell)
      He will let the President know immediately.
   b. If Ian is not in country, go directly to President Horne’s office (870-245-5401).
      He knows who to go to next.
      His office is always manned!
Don’t focus on the dangers,
but have a proactive response
to possible scenarios.

You are going to face risks, even if you stay at home.

But, we do know

that God

is in control!