

Essential Travel Tips for a Safe and Healthy Holiday Season

KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA, December 21, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- With the festive season fast approaching, organisations worldwide are preparing for increased employee travel and festive gatherings. Amidst the excitement, it remains crucial for employers to prioritise the safety and wellbeing of the global workforce. International SOS, the world's leading health and security risk services company, shares expert advice to help organisations effectively manage travel risks and safeguard their workforces during this festive period.



The holiday season often presents a unique set of travel considerations and challenges, particularly in terms of ensuring the safety and wellbeing of a diverse workforce. Perennial safety and security risks including extreme weather events and criminal activities could pose significant threats during travels.

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Risks including scams, pickpocketing and stolen passports are prevalent during a period of increased travels and crowded settings. These risks are particularly amplified during festive gatherings, Christmas markets and religious services. Recent studies have shown that serious crowd accidents, where mass gatherings have led to injuries or deaths, have risen significantly across the globe over the past 20 years.¹ Relevant to the festive period, one study demonstrated that religious festivals had overtaken sporting events as the most likely situation to result in a

crowd crush.¹ The escalation in the conflict between Israel and Hamas this year also raises the threat of isolated acts of violence at places of worship and other religious gatherings.

Furthermore, with the onset of winter in the northern hemisphere, there is an increased risk arising from airline and airport personnel calling in sick due to the seasonal surge in flu and other illnesses. This may cause travel disruptions during the holiday season.

Michael Rogers, Chief Security Analyst, at International SOS, said "The propensity for geo-political or socio-economic developments, natural hazards and other threats requires that travellers remain well informed and prepared for short-notice and sometimes high-impact disruptions. Organisations should emphasise the importance of pre-travel risk assessment as well as situational awareness for travelling employees to navigate travel risks effectively.

"It is also crucial for organisations to have clear communication protocols in place for reporting security incidents and ensuring that prompt assistance is readily available when needed. In the event of a significant incident, clear, wide-reaching proactive communication from security management covering the organisation's response goes a long way toward appeasing anxieties and elucidating the next steps. By implementing proactive measures and fostering a culture of risk awareness, employers can empower their workforce to make informed decisions and enjoy a safe and healthy holiday season."

Dr Kate O'Reilly, Regional Medical Director at International SOS, said "The health and wellbeing of workforces should remain top priorities for employers, especially during the holiday season when travel and festivities can impact overall wellbeing. Organisations should encourage employees to pack essential medications, stay hydrated and maintain adequate sleep to minimise the risk of illnesses. It is important for travellers to know if any vaccinations are needed and if antimalarials is required for their trip. Providing access to telemedicine services can offer employees convenient and timely access to medical advice and consultations, as well as ensuring that employees receive prompt and appropriate care if they feel unwell during their travels."

Top travel health and safety tips that organisations can encourage for seamless travel during the festive period:

1. Staying informed and prepared: Ensure that employees conduct pre-travel risk assessments and are provided with guidelines on travel safety and health precautions.
2. Promote health and wellness: Encourage employees to schedule a travel health consultation well in advance.
3. Navigating crowds safely: Encourage employees to exercise situational awareness and trust their instincts. Remind employees to be aware of their surroundings, stay vigilant and keep their valuables secure or out of sight, especially when in large crowds.
4. Ensure cultural sensitivity: Encourage employees to be respectful of local customs and traditions at their travel destination. They should dress appropriately and avoid engaging in

activities that could be considered offensive.

5. Maintain flexible itineraries: Contingency plans remain important. Employees should plan for the unexpected. It is good practice to keep departure and return dates/routes as flexible as possible. Travellers should allow additional travel time to reach their destination as it is likely to be more congested in airports, stations and on the roads due to the increased number of people travelling.

6. Eat, drink and be jolly informed: Remind employees to stay hydrated, well rested and pack essential medications. Ensure employees are aware of the weather conditions and are informed about the safest neighbourhoods, places to stay and incidences of crime at their destinations.

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