

Going Global @ WPI



A handbook developed by the Interdisciplinary and Global Studies Division at Worcester Polytechnic Institute for students going to the residential project site:

Bangkok C 2010

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Section 1 – WPI and IGSD Procedures

INTRODUCTION

Congratulations! You are beginning to prepare for one of the most meaningful experiences that you will encounter while at WPI. In order to insure that you have a successful experience, the *Going Global at WPI Handbook* has been compiled from a number of sources to provide as much practical information as possible that may be applicable to all project sites. The Handbook was prepared to inform the student who has been accepted to participate in the Global Perspective Program during the 2009/2010 academic year.

Worcester Polytechnic Institute has been practicing innovative, project-based technological education for over 30 years. WPI requires all undergraduates to complete a series of projects, including one in which they examine how science or technology interacts with societal structures and values - the Interactive Qualifying Project. Because of its commitment to a global perspective, the university offers its students opportunities to complete this unique degree requirement at locations around the world. WPI operates more than ten international project programs where students, with resident faculty advisors, live and work full time solving real-world problems for public and private agencies and organizations. WPI sends more engineering and science students overseas for experiential learning than any other U.S. college or university; during the 2009-2010 academic year, approximately 625 WPI students -- including over half of the junior class -- will travel to a global project site to complete one of these interdisciplinary projects.

A successful off-campus experience does not just occur; it requires careful consideration of things you will need to do before you leave, and while at your off-campus site. The Interdisciplinary and Global Studies Division (IGSD) has developed this document to outline these considerations.

For the mutual protection of WPI, the students, and their families, the obligation assumed by each must be carefully defined and understood. You should recognize the fact that you have entered into a contractual agreement with WPI that states the obligations and responsibilities of both the university and yourself. This Handbook was created as the document that should be read carefully and thoroughly to avoid misunderstandings.

The following text is taken from the NAFSA: Association of International Educators' website. NAFSA is the predominant professional association in the world dealing with international education, and the section of the Association that deals specifically with study abroad currently known as the Education Abroad Knowledge Community. A committee of study abroad professionals (the Interorganizational Task Force on Safety and Responsibility in Study Abroad) developed the following document and is included here for your reference. Please keep in mind that while WPI's off campus program is unique in its structure, the University is committed to uphold the standards of the profession.

Responsible Study Abroad: Good Practices for Health and Safety

Statement of Purpose

Because the health and safety of study abroad participants are primary concerns, these statements of good practice have been developed to provide guidance to institutions, participants (including faculty and staff), and parents/guardians/families. These statements are intended to be aspirational in nature. They address issues that merit attention and thoughtful consideration by everyone involved with study abroad. They are intentionally general; they are not intended to account for all the many variations in study abroad programs and actual health, safety and security cases that will inevitably occur. In dealing with any specific situation, those responsible must also rely upon their collective experience and judgment while considering their specific circumstances.

I. Responsibilities of Program Sponsors

The term "sponsors" refers to all the entities that together develop, offer, and administer study abroad programs. Sponsors include sending institutions, host institutions, program administrators, and placement organizations. To the extent reasonably possible, program sponsors should consider how these statements of good practice may apply. At the same time, it must be noted that the structure of study abroad programs varies widely. Study abroad is usually a cooperative venture that can involve multiple sponsors. Because the role of an organization in a study abroad program may vary considerably from case to case, it is not possible to specify a division of efforts that will be applicable to all cases. Each entity should apply these statements in ways consistent with its respective role.

In general, practices that relate to obtaining health, safety and security information apply to all parties consistent with their role and involvement in the study abroad program. Much of the basic information is readily available and can be conveyed to participants by distributing it and/or by referring them to, or utilizing materials from, recognized central sources. Statements of good practice that refer to the provision of information and the preparation of participants are intended for parties that advise, refer, nominate, admit, enroll, or place students. Statements of good practice that suggest operating procedures on site apply to entities that are directly involved in the operation of the overseas program.

It is understood that program sponsors that rely heavily on the collaboration of overseas institutions may exercise less direct control over specific program components. In such cases, sponsors are urged to work with their overseas partners to develop plans and procedures for implementing good practices.

The use of letters is provided for ease of reference only and does not imply priority.

Program sponsors should:

- A. Conduct periodic assessments of health and safety conditions for their programs, and develop and maintain emergency preparedness processes and a crisis response plan.
- B. Provide health and safety information for prospective participants so that they and their parents/guardians/families can make informed decisions concerning preparation, participation and behavior while on the program.
- C. Provide information concerning aspects of home campus services and conditions that cannot be replicated at overseas locations.

- D. Provide orientation to participants prior to the program and as needed on site, which includes information on safety, health, legal, environmental, political, cultural, and religious conditions in the host country. In addition to dealing with health and safety issues, the orientation should address potential health and safety risks, and appropriate emergency response measures.
- E. Consider health and safety issues in evaluating the appropriateness of an individual's participation in a study abroad program.
- F. Determining criteria for an individual's removal from an overseas program taking into account participant behavior, health, and safety factors.
- G. Require that participants be insured. Either provide health and travel accident (emergency evacuation, repatriation) insurance to participants, or provide information about how to obtain such coverage.
- H. Conduct inquiries regarding the potential health, safety and security risks of the local environment of the program, including program-sponsored accommodation, events, excursions and other activities, prior to the program. Monitor possible changes in country conditions. Provide information about changes and advise participants and their parents/guardians/families as needed.
- I. Hire vendors and contractors (e.g. travel and tour agents) that have provided reputable services in the country in which the program takes place. Advise such vendors and contractors of the program sponsor's expectations with respect to their role in the health and safety of participants.
- J. Conduct appropriate inquiry regarding available medical and professional services. Provide information about these services for participants and their parents/guardians/families, and help participants obtain the services they may need.
- K. Develop and provide health and safety training for program directors and staff, including guidelines with respect to intervention and referral that take into account the nature and location of the study abroad program.
- L. Develop codes of conduct for their programs; communicate codes of conduct and the consequences of noncompliance to participants. Take appropriate action when aware that participants are in violation.
- M. In cases of serious health problems, injury, or other significant health and safety circumstances, maintain good communication among all program sponsors and others who need to know.
- N. In the participant screening process, consider factors such as disciplinary history that may impact on the safety of the individual or the group.
- O. Provide information for participants and their parents/guardians/families regarding when and where the sponsor's responsibility ends and the range of aspects of participants' overseas experiences that are beyond the sponsor's control.

In particular, program sponsors generally:

- A. Cannot guarantee or assure the safety and/or security of participants or eliminate all risks from the study abroad environments.
- B. Cannot monitor or control all of the daily personal decisions, choices, and activities of participants.
- C. Cannot prevent participants from engaging in illegal, dangerous or unwise activities.

- D. Cannot assure that U.S. standards of due process apply in overseas legal proceedings or provide or pay for legal representation for participants.
- E. Cannot assume responsibility for actions or for events that are not part of the program, nor for those that are beyond the control of the sponsor and its subcontractors, or for situations that may arise due to the failure of a participant to disclose pertinent information.
- F. Cannot assure that home-country cultural values and norms will apply in the host country.

II. Responsibilities of Participants

In study abroad, as in other settings, participants can have a major impact on their own health and safety through the decisions they make before and during their program and by their day-to-day choices and behaviors.

Participants should:

- A. Assume responsibility for all the elements necessary for their personal preparation for the program and participate fully in orientations.
- B. Read and carefully consider all materials issued by the sponsor that relate to safety, health, legal, environmental, political, cultural, and religious conditions in the host country(ies).
- C. Conduct their own research on the country(ies) they plan to visit with particular emphasis on health and safety concerns, as well as the social, cultural, and political situations.
- D. Consider their physical and mental health, and other personal circumstances when applying for or accepting a place in a program, and make available to the sponsor accurate and complete physical and mental health information and any other personal data that is necessary in planning for a safe and healthy study abroad experience.
- E. Obtain and maintain appropriate insurance coverage and abide by any conditions imposed by the carriers.
- F. Inform parents/guardians/families and any others who may need to know about their participation in the study abroad program, provide them with emergency contact information, and keep them informed of their whereabouts and activities.
- G. Understand and comply with the terms of participation, codes of conduct, and emergency procedures of the program.
- H. Be aware of local conditions and customs that may present health or safety risks when making daily choices and decisions. Promptly express any health or safety concerns to the program staff or other appropriate individuals before and/or during the program.
- I. Accept responsibility for their own decisions and actions.
- J. Obey host-country laws.
- K. Behave in a manner that is respectful of the rights and well being of others, and encourage others to behave in a similar manner.
- L. Avoid illegal drugs and excessive or irresponsible consumption of alcohol.
- M. Follow the program policies for keeping program staff informed of their whereabouts and well being.

N. Become familiar with the procedures for obtaining emergency health and legal system services in the host country.

III. Recommendations to Parents/Guardians/Families

In study abroad, as in other settings, parents, guardians, and families can play an important role in the health and safety of participants by helping them make decisions and by influencing their behavior overseas.

Parents/guardians/families should:

- A. Be informed about and involved in the decision of the participant to enroll in a particular program.
- B. Obtain and carefully evaluate participant program materials, as well as related health, safety and security information.
- C. Discuss with the participant any of his/her travel plans and activities that may be independent of the study abroad program.
- D. Engage the participant in a thorough discussion of safety and behavior issues, insurance needs, and emergency procedures related to living abroad.
- E. Be responsive to requests from the program sponsor for information regarding the participant.
- F. Keep in touch with the participant.
- G. Be aware that the participant rather than the program may most appropriately provide some information.

NAFSA: Association of International Education
Responsible Study Abroad: Good Practice for Health and Safety
Guidelines, Revised November 8, 2002

http://www.nafsa.org/knowledge_community_network.sec/education_abroad_1/developing_and_managing/practice_resources_36/guidelines_for_health

MANDATORY PAPERWORK

The following documents must be submitted to the IGSD office by the stated deadline before you leave WPI for your off-campus project experience. If any forms are missing, you will be in jeopardy of not being allowed to participate at off-campus programs.

Paperwork Deadline:

All mandatory paperwork for Bangkok C10 must be turned in completed to the IGSD by **Friday, November 20, 2009, by 3:00 pm.**

Participant Statement of Agreement

Once accepted to the Global Perspective Program at WPI, every student is required to submit to the IGSD along with his or her housing deposit a signed and dated "Participant Statement of Agreement". The text of that document is included below for your convenient referral. Of course, you may request a photocopy of your signed "Participant Statement of Agreement" at any time.

I understand that my participation in the WPI Global Perspective Program is subject to my agreement to accept and abide by the following conditions of participation:

A. Financial Responsibility

- 1) I understand that my deposit of \$400 is used to secure my place in the program and will be credited toward my housing cost.
- 2) I understand that charges for any damages to housing, WPI property on site, the property of our host institutions, or project sponsors will be charged to my WPI account. When responsibility for damages to housing cannot be assigned to an individual student, all students in the housing unit will be charged an equal share of the cost. I also realize that an official hold will be placed on my records until all payment responsibilities are satisfied.
- 3) I agree to pay all housing charges as requested. The accounting office normally bills housing costs at program sites at the time of the usual billing for Spring, Fall, and Summer terms.

B. Withdrawal, Cancellation, or Dismissal

- 1) I understand that the \$400 acceptance deposit is fully refundable up to 120 business days before the beginning of the program. Notice of withdrawal must be made in writing to the Interdisciplinary and Global Studies Division. Withdrawals after this time are subject to forfeiture of the entire deposit, plus any unrecoverable portion of the housing costs or other program expenses advanced on my behalf.
- 2) WPI makes every effort to deliver every program offered. However, many circumstances beyond our control could affect the welfare and safety of our participants. WPI, therefore, reserves the right to cancel a program in the event of changes that adversely affect our ability to deliver a quality academic program in which we can reasonably safeguard the health, safety, and well-being of all participants. In the event of cancellation by WPI, all deposits, tuition, and housing costs will be fully refunded.
- 3) Students who are dismissed from a program for any reason will receive no refund of any costs involved and are subject to charges for any unrecoverable housing costs or program expenses advanced on their behalf.

C. Behavioral Responsibilities

- 1) I understand that all policies governing acceptable behavior as printed in The Policies section of *The Campus Planner & Resource Guide* apply to me during my participation at an off-campus program site. Failure to abide by these policies, either before or during my participation in an off-campus program, can result in disciplinary action, up to and including my immediate dismissal from the program. I recognize that the authority for adjudicating alleged violations of the WPI Code of Conduct while at an off-campus program site lies with the on-site WPI representative in accordance with basic due process.
- 2) I further understand that as a WPI student at an off-campus program site, I represent my institution and my country and will behave as an ambassador for both. I understand that grounds for dismissal may also be found in behavior disruptive to the group as a whole, or offensive within the host culture: disruptive sexual behavior, or behavior deemed offensive to the host culture; or disruptive, violent, or destructive behavior in student housing.
- 3) I understand that WPI must take steps to ensure that no offensive, disruptive or potentially dangerous conduct occurs while WPI students and faculty are abroad. Accordingly, WPI reserves the right to dismiss a student from the program on the basis of any observed conduct or behavior which causes WPI concern for the safety and well-being of students or others. The Dean of Interdisciplinary and Global Studies shall have the authority to make the final decision on dismissal from the program.

D. Academic Responsibilities

- 1) I understand that my participation in this program is subject to successful completion of all required preparation classes. I agree to attend all required orientation and re-entry meetings.
- 2) I understand that if I am placed on academic probation, I am no longer eligible to participate. The withdrawal refund policy stated above will apply.
- 3) WPI reserves the right to withdraw acceptance to students who are subsequently placed on academic warning. The withdrawal refund policy stated above will apply.

E. Medical Issues

- 1) I understand that there are certain risks inherent in travel to an off-campus program site and WPI cannot assume responsibility for all of my activities or medical needs. I understand that it is my responsibility to carry medical insurance that is valid at the off-campus site for the length of my stay.
- 2) I accept all financial responsibility for any medical treatment I receive while at the program site and understand that to obtain medical care abroad it is usually necessary to pay when the care is administered and seek reimbursement from my insurance company when I return home.

F. Legal Issues

- 1) I understand that as a non-citizen in a foreign country, I will be subject to the laws of that country. The use or possession of illegal drugs or other substances in violation of the laws of the host country or The Policies section of *The Campus Planner & Resource Guide*, before or during my participation in the program, can result in disciplinary action, up to and including my immediate dismissal from the program and legal action under the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and / or the laws of the host country.

G. Travel Issues

- 1) I understand that I am responsible for making my own travel arrangements and for arriving at the program site on the designated arrival date and remaining until the official departure date.
- 2) I understand that while WPI encourages students to travel during their free time, the university can take no responsibility for my safety during independent travel. I further understand that I must inform the faculty-in-residence of my travel plans.

H. Federal Compliance Issues

- 1) I understand there are Federal regulations regarding the export of information to foreign countries or foreign citizens, with which all of us at WPI must comply. WPI's emphasis on engineering programs makes us particularly sensitive to these regulations. If I take a laptop computer (or other type of computer digital storage device, I hereby assure WPI that I will not have any restricted information on that device as such action may be considered an export.

I have read, understand, and agree to abide by the above stated conditions of participation.

Participant Signature	date	site	term
Printed Name	student number	date of birth*	

**If participant is under 18 years of age, both parents and/ or legal guardian must also read and sign this form.*

I am the parent or legal guardian of the above Participant, have read the foregoing Participant Statement of Agreement Form (including such parts as may subject me to personal financial responsibility), and will be legally responsible for the obligations and acts of the Participant as described in this Participant Statement of Agreement Form, and agree, for myself and for the participant, to be bound by its terms.

X

Signature of Parent / Guardian Date

X

Signature of Parent / Guardian Date

Travel Information Form (Appendix A)

The IGSD must have completed Travel Form from each student on file before the student leaves for their site. The office keeps a copy of this itinerary and we send a copy with the faculty advisor. By doing this, the IGSD staff, the advisor and the local coordinator knows when and where every student will arrive and will alert them if a problem arises.

Any students traveling outside the United States to a WPI project site must supply the IGSD with a scanned copy of the information pages of their passport. Electronic copies will be sent with the faculty advisor and kept on file in the IGSD. If a passport is stolen or lost while outside the U.S., having copies of this document will greatly facilitate having a new one issued while overseas. Another thing that one can do to facilitate having to process a new passport while overseas is to carry duplicates of passport photos with the passport number written on the back. These photos must be carried securely, yet separate from your passport.

Students should understand that they are responsible for making their own travel arrangements and for arriving at the program site on the designated arrival date and remaining until the official departure date. If you are traveling by air, you must have confirmed reservations. Flying stand-by is not acceptable.

Students and their families should also understand that while WPI encourages students to travel during their free time, the university can take no responsibility for the student's safety during independent travel. The student must inform the faculty-in-residence of any travel plans.

Students may not take vacation days off from their project work, even if they have the permission of your project mentor. If they have an urgent family or academic or job related need to travel away from the project site on a project work day, they should consult with the faculty member in residence before making any travel plans.

Health Update and Records Release Form (Appendix B)

The IGSD must have a completed Health Update and Records Release Form on file for each student before the student leaves for her site. The IGSD keeps a copy and sends a copy with the faculty advisor in case of an emergency. The student should list any medical conditions that could affect the student while off-campus (i.e. epilepsy, diabetes, depressive episodes, etc.) Also, the student must list any changes in their health not noted on medical records on file with WPI Health Services. Medical allergies must be listed, as well as prescription medications.

The IGSD strongly recommends that every student who plans to travel outside of the United States should read closely all information put forward by the Center for Disease Control specific to the geographic area where they will be going. This information is included in this handbook.

When traveling abroad it is a good idea to take a supply of your prescription medications sufficient to last for the entire length of the trip. Prescription medicines should always be kept in the original containers with the prescription label intact to avoid problems with customs officials. It is also important to take along a copy of the prescription from your physician, clearly written, in generic terms, and with an indication of the condition being treated.

Two people need be listed as emergency contacts. These contacts should be people empowered to make a medical or legal decision on behalf of the participant (i.e., parent, guardian, living adult relative). Contact information for each must also be provided to the IGSD on this form: name, relationship, address, phone (home and work), and email.

Participants and their families should understand that there are certain risks inherent in travel to an off-campus program site and WPI cannot assume responsibility for every activity or medical need. It is the student's responsibility to carry medical insurance that is valid at the off-campus site for the length of the stay. Students must accept all financial responsibility for any medical treatment received while at the program site. Students should understand that to obtain medical care abroad, it is usually necessary to pay when the care is administered and they will have to seek reimbursement from their insurance company when they return home.

All students traveling off-campus to participate in a WPI program are required to carry medical insurance that is valid at the program site for the entire length of the program. The IGSD must have the name of your insurance provider and your subscription number. It is the responsibility of the student to make sure that they are covered for the entire length of the program while they are off-campus.

Voluntary Acknowledgement Form

All participants are required to sign a Voluntary Acknowledgement Form that is kept on file in the IGSD. The text of the form is below for your convenient referral. We hope that by asking participants to read and sign such a form that we remind them of the nature of their participation and the responsibilities which are assumed by the individuals.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT and RELEASE

I acknowledge that I am voluntarily participating in the _____ (the "Program"), which is being offered by Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI). I further acknowledge that WPI has provided me with adequate information about the Program, both verbally and through written materials, and that I have read and understand such information. I agree to comply with any immunization or medical treatment necessary to participate in this program. I also acknowledge that any laptop computer (or other form of computer or digital storage device) that I may take abroad cannot contain any restricted information as such action may be considered an export subject to Federal control and regulation.

Assumption of Risk and Release of Claims. Knowing the risks described, and in consideration of being permitted to participate in the Program, I agree, on behalf of my family, heirs, and personal representative(s), to assume all the risks and responsibilities surrounding my participation in the Program. To the maximum extent permitted by law, I release and indemnify Worcester Polytechnic Institute, and its officers, employees and agents, from and against any present or future claim, loss or liability for injury to person or property which I may suffer, or for which I may be liable to any other person, during my participation in the Program (including periods in transit to or from any site in country where the Program is being conducted).

I HAVE CAREFULLY READ THIS AGREEMENT AND FULLY UNDERSTAND ITS CONTENTS.

Participant Signature

date

Printed Name

date of birth*

*If participant is under 18 years of age, both parents and/or legal guardians must also read and sign this form.

I am the parent or legal guardian of the above Participant, have read the foregoing Acknowledgement and Release Form (including such parts as may subject me to personal financial responsibility), and will be legally responsible for the obligations and acts of the Participant as described in this Acknowledgement and Release Form, and agree, for myself and for the Participant, to be bound by its terms.

X

Signature of Parent / Guardian

Date

X

Signature of Parent / Guardian

Scan of Passport

You are required to bring your passport to the IGSD office so that staff can scan a copy of the face and information pages. IGSD keeps this on file.

International Student Identity Cards (ISIC)

All WPI students completing course requirements abroad are required to get the ISIC. As you have been charged the \$24.00 cost of the card, it makes the most sense to get yours from the IGSD. If you choose to purchase a card elsewhere you will forfeit the \$24.00. In some countries, the student discount network is highly developed, and an ISIC will entitle students to reduced entrance fees at museums and theaters, special rail or bus passes, and even discounts at hotels and shops. While it cannot be guaranteed that you'll get discounts wherever you go, the ISIC is the most accepted card for international access to all student discounts that are available.

With the ISIC, you gain access to a 24-hour, toll free help line that can provide aid in the case of a medical, financial or legal emergency while abroad. You can call the ISIC Help Line from the United States at (877-370-4742). Outside of the United States, call collect 715-342-4104. The call is free, but be prepared to provide your card number to the ISIC Help Line.

The most important reason for the ISIC requirement is the additional insurance coverage that you get. The ISIC provides a basic sickness and accident insurance policy to students while traveling outside the United States. ISICs also provide students with emergency evacuation insurance, if due to injury or sickness, a legally licensed physician certifies the severity of your condition is such that you must be evacuated for medical treatment. In addition, cardholders are eligible to have expenses covered for the repatriation of remains in the unlikely event of death while abroad. (For more specific coverage information, contact American Home Assurance Company 70 Pine St. New York, New York 10270).

Again, the cost of this card is built into the expenses associated with going off-campus and does not require additional fees to be charged to the student. However, students must supply the IGSD with two photos in order to process the card. These photos can be taken at the IGSD Office.

You are required to come to the IGSD, located in the Project Center, to fill out an application form for the ISIC and turn in your photos (extra passport photos will suffice as well, but please keep in mind the need to carry two other passport photos with you when traveling). IGSD staff will process your card, which will be given to you when all mandatory paperwork mentioned previously has been completed and turned in to the IGSD. If you need the number from your ISIC to book your flight, a photocopy of your card can be provided to you at your request. For more specific information about discounts, go to www.isic.org.

ATC Laptop Form (Appendix C)

WPI will provide one laptop per team if you request it. You do not have to use a WPI laptop – you are welcome to take your own. If you do, however choose to sign out a WPI laptop, you will need to complete the form and turn it in to the IGSD with the rest of your mandatory paperwork.

WPI POLICIES AND SERVICES FOR STUDENTS AT OFF-CAMPUS SITES

Informal Hearing Procedure at Off-Campus Residential Program Sites

Students at off-campus residential program sites accused of violating the WPI code of conduct or any other WPI policy as outlined in the annual Campus Planner shall be accorded an informal on-site hearing before a WPI representative designated by the dean of Interdisciplinary and Global Studies Division. The following guidelines will be applicable.

(a) Students will be informed of the complaint pending and the time, date and location of the informal hearing, in writing, at least two (2) days prior to the hearing. This notice should include a full description of the incident, names of witnesses, if any, and a reference to the section(s) of the campus code allegedly violated.

(b) The informal hearing shall be conversational in nature and non adversarial.

(c) Before the hearing, the student shall be given the opportunity to consult with an on-site advisor of their choice or a member of the WPI community.

(d) During the hearing, the WPI representative shall elaborate on the nature of the complaint and present any evidence or witnesses in support of that complaint.

(e) The accused student shall have an opportunity to respond to the complaint and present any evidence or witnesses in response to the complaint.

(f) The WPI representative will make a determination of the student's responsibility for the complaint based on the outcome of the informal hearing.

(g) If the student is found responsible, the WPI representative must contact the dean of students or her/his designee to review the student's past record, if any, before a sanction is determined. The WPI representative must then consult with the Dean of Students Office and the Director of global operations in Interdisciplinary and Global Studies Division to determine an appropriate sanction for the offense.

(h) All decisions shall be final and not subject to appeal on site. The decision may be appealed to the Dean of Interdisciplinary Studies Division once the student has returned to the WPI campus. Appeals may be submitted in writing to the Dean of Interdisciplinary Studies Division within five (5) days of the start of classes of the term following the off campus project experience. The appeal must be specific and contain a full description of the basis for the appeal. A given case may be appealed only once. Grounds for an appeal must be based on one or more of the following criteria:

- a. Failure to follow the procedures outlined in the Campus Planner and Resource Guide;
- b. Inappropriate gravity of the sanction in relationship to the offense;
- c. That no reasonable person could conclude, on the basis of the evidence presented, that the accused was responsible.

The appeal will not be reviewed until after the start of the term following the off campus project experience when all parties involved have returned to the WPI campus.

(i) If the on-site WPI representative determines that continued presence at the project center by the student would constitute a danger to the safety of persons or property on the premises of the project center, a recommendation for interim suspension may be made to the vice president for student affairs.

Note: WPI's Academic Honesty Policy and the procedures described therein also apply to the off campus residential programs. The WPI representative must communicate with the dean of Interdisciplinary and Global Studies Division and Student Life Office before taking action.

WPI Housing

If you live in a WPI residence hall, it is your responsibility to notify Residential Services of your intended absence.

Mail Services

All students going off-campus must go to Central Mail to fill out the appropriate card to have their mailboxes closed and their mail forwarded. Failure to do so will result in mail staying in the student's mailbox for the entire term. All students must now be responsible for their own mailbox and mail by signing a forwarding card at Central Mail.

Protocol for PCs for Off-Campus Project Centers

Students who participate in the Global Perspective Program are offered the opportunity to borrow laptop personal computers from WPI. This is not an entitlement to students, but rather a privilege extended to students. It is expected that the following protocol will be followed and the proper responsibility will be assumed by the students taking advantage of this opportunity. WPI does not have an unlimited supply of laptop computers to loan to students. If student teams are unable or unwilling to comply with the dates specified by the Academic Technology Center (ATC), the ATC reserves the right to refuse to accommodate that request. One PC per project team for each site as available:

After you have turned in the completed ATC Team Form to the IGSD, at least one member of your group (although we suggest the entire group so that everyone takes equal responsibility for the equipment) is required to go to the ATC and reserve a laptop BEFORE pick-up on the specified date.

Procedure

1. Each team will fill out an ATC Team Form (Appendix C). Kelly Donahue (from the IGSD) will send approved names to ATC. Every team member must meet all IGSD paperwork deadlines before names are sent to the ATC.
2. Person(s) responsible for PC will be required to register at the ATC and sign a statement accepting responsibility for the PC.
3. Person(s) responsible for PC should have the tightest travel schedule. Arrangements can be made for one person to pick up the PC and another member of the team to return the PC but, BOTH people must register when the reservation is made with the ATC.
4. It is strongly recommended that everyone in the group sign the ATC's reservation form. The ATC will hold only signing parties financially responsible for damage beyond normal wear and tear and/or any fees incurred.

Reservations

1. Make your reservation early for your PC. You must go to the ATC to make your reservation with your WPI ID card. At the time of reservation you must be specific about the dates and times of pick-up and return of the equipment and about your hardware requirements. Be as specific as possible about what you will be using the PC for: (e.g. word processing, spreadsheets, data analysis, etc.) PCs are reserved on a first-come, first-served basis. Avoid last minute changes as they may not be able to be accommodated.
2. If two people are responsible (one for pick up, one for return) BOTH must go to the ATC to register before leaving campus. If arrangements have been made for a faculty member to return the PC, then the faculty member must send confirming email to Mary Beth Harrity (mharrity@wpi.edu) before the PC will be released.

3. Modems, ethernet cards and other miscellaneous hardware are in limited supply and must be requested at the time the reservation for the PC is made.
4. Upon request, the ATC can provide external drives that can be attached to the laptop.
5. Pick-up and return deadlines will be strictly enforced. If the laptop computer is not returned to the ATC on the agreed upon date, your group will be charged a \$50 per business day late fee.

Software

1. All PCs will be loaded with Windows, MS Office, Explorer and communications software. The ATC does not provide or load software other than this.
2. If students load their own software it must be removed prior to returning the PC to the ATC.
3. If you significantly alter the original configuration of the laptop (e.g. install a different operating system), your group will be charged a \$50 software re-installation fee.

Picking up the PC

1. You must have your WPI ID card in order to pick up the PC assigned to you.

Acceptable Use Policy Regarding Computers (WPI laptops, sponsor PC's, internet use)

At a minimum, you must adhere to the WPI Acceptable Use Policy (<http://www.WPI.EDU/Pubs/Policies/>) whether using WPI computer resources or your housing provider or sponsor's resources. Your housing provider or sponsor may have more restrictive computer and web use policies and those must be followed. It is your responsibility to determine what your housing provider or sponsor's policy is and to comply with it. Using a housing provider or sponsor's network(s) or computer(s) for recreational use (defined as non-project related use – on or off the web) is not permitted. Violators will be subject to disciplinary actions.

General Policies and Important Things to Remember

- There can be *no overnight guests* in any accommodations acquired and provided by WPI for use by the Project Center students.
- Charges for any damages to housing, WPI property on site, the property of our host institutions, or project sponsors will be charged to your WPI account. When responsibility for damages to housing cannot be assigned to an individual student, all students in the housing unit will be charged an equal share of the cost. An official hold will be placed on all records until all payment responsibilities are satisfied.
- If you are dismissed from a program for any reason, you will not receive a refund of any costs involved and will be subject to charges for any unrecoverable housing costs or program expenses advanced on your behalf.
- All policies governing acceptable behavior as printed in The Policies section of *The Campus Planner & Resource Guide* apply to participants at an off-campus program site. The authority for adjudicating alleged violations of the WPI Code of Conduct while at an off-campus program site lies with the on-site WPI representative in accordance with basic due process.
- You must always keep the resident faculty advisors informed of your whereabouts. If you plan to travel during the term, you must give your advisor a written itinerary.
- **The IGSD will notify your parents if you fail to return from a weekend excursion at the predetermined time. If you are delayed you MUST contact your resident faculty advisor to inform them that you are safe.**
- As a WPI student at an off-campus program site, you represent your institution and your country and will behave as an ambassador for both. Grounds for dismissal may also be found in behavior disruptive to the group as a whole, or offensive within the host culture: disruptive sexual behavior, or disruptive, violent, or destructive behavior in student housing.
- You may not take vacation days off from your project work, even if you have the permission of your project mentor. If you have an urgent family or academic or job related need to travel away from the project site on a project work day, consult with the faculty member in residence before making any travel plans.

Violations of any of these policies can result in disciplinary action up to and including immediate dismissal from the program.

What can you expect to pay “out of pocket” toward your IQP while off-campus?

Current WPI policy states that students are expected to contribute \$50 per person per 1/3 unit of IQP work toward any out of pocket expenses encountered. This means that each student is expected to pay \$150.00 towards the completion of the IQP before asking for reimbursement of any kind. If you have a project team of 4 students, then the total contribution before being reimbursed is \$300. If you anticipate that your expenses will exceed this expectation, then you must submit a budget for your project. The on-site faculty advisor and Center Director must approve this budget prior to submission of any expenses to the IGSD. (Commuting costs are not reimbursable.)

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS AND COMPETENCIES

Passports

Who needs a passport?

A U.S. citizen needs a passport to depart or enter the United States and to depart and enter most foreign countries. U.S. Immigration requires you to prove your U.S. citizenship and identity when you reenter the United States.

If you are not a U.S citizen, contact the embassy or consulate of the country you are planning to travel to, as well as the U.S. Embassy in order to receive specific entry instructions. International students should consult with Mr. Tom Thomsen, Director of the International Students and Scholars Office, about these issues. His contact information is listed under the heading WPI Offices.

Beware of a passport that is about to expire. Certain countries will not permit you to enter and will not place a visa in your passport if the passport is valid for less 6 months. If your passport is expiring in less than the 6 months, you will need to get a new one. If you return to the United States with an expired passport, you are subject to a passport waiver fee of \$100, payable to U.S. Immigration at the port of entry.

It is your responsibility to acquire your passport. The IGSD does not administer this process for students.

How to get your passport

1. Go to Prime Color Photo located at 1094 Pleasant Street to have your passport photos taken. Show your WPI ID to get the special rate. You can also get passport photos taken at the U.S. Post Office, or other local stores such as CVS.
2. Pick up a passport application form from the U.S. Post Office, Prime Color Photo or download from: http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html
3. Turn in all required documentation to the nearest federal post office with the appropriate fee.

For Immediate Release

April 2, 2002

STATEMENT BY PHILIP T. REEKER, DEPUTY SPOKESMAN U.S. Passports Will No Longer be Issued Abroad

All passports, except those required for urgent travel, will be issued in the United States using the new more secure photo-digitized imaging system.

Effective April 8, 2002, American citizens residing or traveling abroad, who require issuance of a U.S. passport, will be issued the latest, state-of-the-art passport. It incorporates a digitized image with other enhanced security features. Because this technology is not available at U.S. embassies and consulates, overseas passport issuance is being transferred to the National Passport Processing Center in Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

Travel documents in the post-September 11 world have become even more important. The new passport has many features that make it one of the most secure travel documents produced anywhere in the world. Getting these more secure passports into circulation will help minimize the misuse of American passports by criminals, terrorists, and others.

This new procedure will increase processing time at U.S. embassies and consulates, but the Department is committed to ensuring that American citizens receive secure documents in a timely manner. American citizens overseas are encouraged to apply early for renewal of expiring passports.

U.S. embassies and consulates will continue to issue passports that are needed for urgent travel. However, such passports will be limited in validity, and cannot be extended. Bearers will be required to exchange, at no additional cost, their limited-validity passport for a full-validity digitized passport upon completion of their urgent travel.

Information on applying for a U.S. passport, passport application forms and requirements, and other travel-related information can be accessed through the Department of State's web site at: <http://travel.state.gov>.

Visas

A visa is an endorsement or stamp placed in your passport by a foreign government that permits you to visit that country for a specified purpose and a limited time. You should obtain all necessary visas before you leave the United States, because you will not be able to obtain visas for some countries once you have departed. Apply directly to the embassy or nearest consulate of each country you plan to visit. Passport agencies *cannot* help you obtain visas.

If you are doing your project in Thailand or Namibia, your faculty advisors and the IGSD will help you obtain your non-immigrant visas. In order to take advantage of this, you must be prepared to give the IGSD your passport, a completed visa application (available in the IGSD office) and a passport picture, by the date that your advisors determine. The IGSD will send all documentation with one cover letter to the appropriate embassy to expedite the visa process for your group. The single entry visa fee of has been built into your housing charge.

If you are not a U.S. citizen, it is your responsibility to determine what other documentation you will need to file to obtain your visa.

How to Take Money

You should take a sufficient amount of living/spending money with you. The IGSD recommends the following modes of carrying money.

Travelers Checks

Rather than carrying large amounts of cash, it is always safer to take most of your money in travelers' checks. Remember to record the serial number, denomination, and the date and location of the issuing bank or agency. Keep this information in a safe and separate place. In case your checks are lost or stolen, you can get replacements quickly with this information.

Credit Cards

Some credit cards can be used worldwide, even for cash advances. However, be sure to monitor your charges carefully, so as not to exceed your limit -- do not forget to account for the exchange rate! Leave all unnecessary cards at home. Record the numbers and expiration dates for the cards you take in a separate place. Always report the loss or theft of your credit cards immediately to the issuing companies and notify the local police.

ATM info:

Making withdrawals from an ATM is generally considered to be the easiest and least expensive way of accessing money while abroad. The biggest advantage is that regardless of the size of your withdrawal, you will receive the wholesale exchange rate which banks use. ATM networks like the Global ATM Alliance, Cirrus and PLUS are used widely around the globe, although you should be sure to verify that your network operates in the country to which you're going. The following websites provide links to ATM locator services for each network:

<http://www.mastercard.com/us/personal/en/cardholderservices/atmlocations/index.html>

<http://visa.via.infonow.net/locator/global/jsp/SearchPage.jsp>

http://www.scotiabank.com/cda/content/0,1608,CID8040_LIDen,00.html

Before you leave, you should contact your bank to let them know where you will be and for how long. Many banks view activity such as withdrawals in another country as an alert to possible fraudulent activity on your account. Telling them ahead of time, may prevent your accounts from being frozen -- a massive inconvenience when you're abroad.

Things to consider when using ATMS abroad include the following:

1. Be sure you know the numeric equivalent of your PIN if it contains letters as well as numbers. ATMs abroad may only provide numbers.
2. Some ATMs (especially in Europe) do not accept PINs longer than 4 numbers. You may wish to contact your bank to change your PIN if it is longer than four digits.

There are of course fees associated with using most ATMs, and some of these can be significantly higher than the fees you are used to paying in the U.S. You should check with your bank (be sure to ask if they assess extra fees for international ATM use), and plan for these extra expenses in your budget.

Finally, be sure to keep your ATM card and your money in a safe place. When withdrawing cash from an ATM be sure to do so in a well lighted, safe location so that you decrease your profile as a potential target for theft.

Source: www.independenttraveler.com

Foreign Currency

Before departing, it is recommended that you purchase some foreign currency to use for buses, taxis, food, phones or tips when you first arrive. You can purchase several currencies at the airport, but be advised that they only carry major currencies and that exchange windows may be closed depending upon your time of departure. You may be able to purchase foreign currency at one of your local banks. Do not change all of the money you plan to take while still in the U.S. The exchange rate is always better in the host country.

Section 2 - Health & Safety

Safety

When traveling to an off-campus project site, there are a number of precautions you should follow in order to travel safely:

- Do not leave your bags or belongings unattended at any time. Security in airports and train stations are instructed to remove or destroy any unattended baggage. Do not agree to carry or look after packages or suitcases for individuals you do not know well. If someone approaches you to make such a request, tell security immediately. Make sure that no one puts anything in your luggage without your knowledge. Take all questions from airport personnel seriously and do not make jokes in response to security questions.
- Safeguard your passport! Your passport is the most valuable document you will carry abroad. It is your best form of identification and confirms your citizenship. You must guard it carefully. Do not lend it to anyone or use it as collateral for a loan of any sort. You will need it when you check into hotels, embassies or consulates, or when cashing traveler's checks. Some countries require that you carry it with you at all times as a means of identification. When you carry your passport, hide it securely on your person. Do not leave it in a handbag, book-bag, backpack or in an exposed pocket.
- Never keep all of your documents and money in one place or suitcase. You should make a list of all of your important numbers - your passport information as well as credit cards, travelers' checks and airline ticket numbers. Leave a copy at home, and carry a copy with you, separate from your valuables.
- **Always keep the resident faculty advisors informed of your whereabouts. If you plan to travel during the term, you must give your advisor an itinerary in writing. All students need to be accounted for every weekend whether you are traveling or not, see Appendix D.**
- **The IGSD will notify the parents of students who fail to return from a weekend excursion at the predetermined time. If you are delayed you MUST contact your resident faculty advisor to inform them that you are safe.**
- Have sufficient funds or a credit card on hand to purchase emergency items such as train or airline tickets.
- Always be careful about traveling alone.
- **All WPI students who are participating in the Bangkok C10 Project Program are expected to behave in a manner so as to not put themselves at risk.**
- **All students have an obligation to look out for each other and themselves. This means that if one student observes another engaging in risky behavior, that student should report the behavior to either of the faculty advisors. The faculty advisor should then address the issue with the student at risk. Repeated behavior identified as risky can result in disciplinary action up to and including immediate dismissal from the program.**
- Be as inconspicuous in dress and demeanor as possible. If the host country nationals do not wear baseball caps and sneakers, you will stand out as a foreigner if you do.
- Do not flash money or documents in public places. Be discreet in displaying your passport.

AVOIDING TRAVEL RISKS

Prepared By:
William L. Granahan CIC,LIA,CMC, Senior Consultant
J.H. Albert International Insurance Advisors, Inc.
Two Chestnut Place
72 River Park
Needham Heights, MA 02494-2631

Planning and Preparing:

Do not display provocative luggage tags, overly patriotic displays or any other indications that you are from the United States;

Do not pack anything that could be construed as a weapon, including knives, nail files, razors or other sharp instruments;

Arrive at the airport at least three hours in advance of your flight.

Air and Ground Travel:

Dress casual and look like a traveler; do not dress like a “flamboyant” US patriot;

Spend little time in foreign airports or public transportation areas that carry a high risk of or invite terrorist attacks;

Avoid air, rail and local ground carriers from countries where terrorist groups are based or have grievances;

Avoid flights or trains with intermediate stops, especially stops in hostile countries, which would allow terrorists to board;

In the Country;

Avoid countries, areas of countries and regions, even for leisure travel on weekends, that are hostile or likely to be hostile to Americans;

Study and understand the customs and political environment of the country(s) you are visiting;

Be prudent in your choice of eating and drinking establishments;

Avoid political discussions, confrontation and arguments;

Do not reveal personal information to casual acquaintances;

Beware of overly friendly or flirtatious persons;

Always travel in groups of two or more people;

Should you find yourself present during a coup, uprising or riot, remain in a safe harbor, such as your hotel or residence, that is not apt to be a military target;

Carry the phone number and address of the American Embassy and local police – and a cell phone if possible;

Return to your apartment or living quarters at a reasonable, early hour every night.

Safety Tips from the U.S. Department of State

Crime in many parts of the world seems to be increasing.

Visitors should take common sense precautions:

- Safety begins when you pack. Leave expensive jewelry behind. Dress conservatively; a flashy wardrobe or one that is too casual can mark you as a tourist. Use travelers' checks, not cash. Leave photocopies of your passport personal information page and your airline tickets with someone at home and carry an extra set with you.
- Use a money belt or a concealed money pouch for passports, cash and other valuables.
- In a car, keep doors locked, windows rolled up and valuables out of sight. A common trick is for a thief to reach through a car window and grab a watch from a persons' wrist or a purse or package from the seat while you are driving slowly or stopped in traffic.
- When you leave your car, try to find a guarded parking lot. Lock the car and keep valuables out of sight.
- When walking, avoid marginal areas of cities, dark alleys and crowds. Do not stop if you are approached on the street by strangers, including street vendors and beggars. Be aware that women and small children, as well as men, can be pickpockets or purse-snatchers. Keep your billfold in an inner front pocket, carry your purse tucked securely under your arm, and wear the shoulder-strap of your camera or bag across your chest. To guard against thieves on motorcycles, walk away from the curb, carrying your purse away from the street.
- Use official taxi stands rather than cruising taxis. Illegal taxis can be decoys for robbers.
- Whenever possible, do not travel alone. If you travel in isolated areas, go with a group or a reputable guide.
- Avoid travel at night.
- Money exchangers on the street pass off counterfeit U.S. dollars and local currency. Credit card fraud is growing.
- Do not take valuables to the mountains or on excursions.

Any U.S. citizen who is criminally assaulted should report the incident to the local police and to the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.

The U.S. department of State has produced a website specifically for students going abroad. This site provides student specific travel tips and advice, and we strongly encourage you to visit it: www.studentsabroad.state.gov.

Drugs and the Legal System

When you are in a foreign country, you are subject to its laws. Learn about local laws and regulations, preferably before you arrive on site, and obey them. Deal only with authorized outlets when exchanging money or buying items such as airline tickets and travelers checks. Adhere strictly to the local laws because the penalties you risk are severe.

About 3,000 Americans are arrested overseas each year. Of these, approximately one-third are held on drug-related charges. Despite repeated warnings, drug arrests and convictions are still a common occurrence. Many countries have stiff penalties for drug violations and strictly enforce drug laws. You are subject to foreign, not U.S. laws while overseas, and you will find, if arrested, that:

- because you are subject to local laws abroad, there is very little that a U.S. consul can do for you if you encounter legal difficulties
- few countries provide jury trial
- most countries do not accept bail
- prisons may lack even minimal comforts: bed, toilet, wash basin
- officials may not speak English
- nutrition is often inadequate
- physical abuse, confiscation of personal property and inhumane treatment are possible

In other words, it is not worth imprisonment or extradition to break local laws. Be mature. Remember that laws are established for reasons (and you don't need to agree with those reasons), and that you are a guest, and should behave as such.

WPI Offices

Interdisciplinary and Global Studies Division
Project Center, 2nd Floor
T 508-831-5547
F 508-831-5485

- Prof. Rick Vaz, Dean
x 5344, vaz@wpi.edu
- Natalie A. Mello
Director of Global Operations
x 5852, nmello@wpi.edu

Academic Advising
Daniels Hall
T 508-831-5381
F 508-831-5486

- Dale Snyder, Director
X5281, dsnyder@wpi.edu

Accounting Office
Boynton Hall, 2nd Floor
T 508-831-5754
F 508-831-5064

- Constance LaBounty
Accounting Clerk
x 5203, labouty@wpi.edu

Central Mailing Services
Campus Center, 1st Floor
T 508-831-5523
F 508-831-5753

- Celia McLaren, Supervisor
x 5683, cmclaren@wpi.edu

Financial Aid
Boynton Hall, Lower Level
T 508-831-5469
F 508-831-5039

- Monica Blondin, Director
x 5469, mmlucey@wpi.edu

International Students and Scholars Office
28 Trowbridge Road
T 508-831-6030
F 508-831-6032

- Mr. Tom Thomsen, Director
x6030, hartvig@wpi.edu

Academic Technology Center
Fuller Labs, 1st Floor
T 508-831-5220
F 508-831-5881

- Mary Beth Harrity, Director
X5223, mharrity@wpi.edu

Registrar's Office
Boynton Hall, 1st Floor
T 508-831-5211
F 508-831-5931

- Alaina Wiehn,
Registrar
x 5211, awiehn@wpi.edu
- Marjorie Roncone
x 5457, mroncone@wpi.edu

Residential Services
Ellsworth Residence, Institute Road
T 508-831-5175
F 508-831-5870

- Naomi Carton, Director
x 5175, letendre@wpi.edu

Student Development and Counseling Center
157 West Street
T 508-831-5540
F 508-831-5139

- Charles Morse, Director
x 5540, cmorse@wpi.edu

Student Life Office
Campus Center, Main Level
T 508-831-5520
F 508-831-5581

- Philip Clay, Dean of Students
X 5507, pclay@wpi.edu

Internet Addresses

The following are web addresses that you may find helpful, particularly before you leave for your site.

Health & Safety Sites

Center for Disease Control (CDC)

<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/default.aspx>

American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene (ASTMH)

<http://www.astmh.org>

Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE)

<http://www.ciee.org>

Travel Safe: AIDS and International Travel

http://www.ciee.org/health_safety/health/AIDS_intl_travel.aspx

Lonely Planet

http://www.lonelyplanet.com/travel_services/flights/single_return.cfm

The Travel Clinic

<http://www.drwisetravel.com/index.html>

Travel Health Online

<https://www.tripprep.com/scripts/main/default.asp>

U.S. State Department

<http://travel.state.gov>

Association for Safe International Road Travel (ASIRT)

<http://www.asirt.org/>

StudyAbroad.com Handbook

<http://www.studyabroad.com/handbook/safety.html>

NAFSA: Association of International Educators

<http://www.nafsa.org/>

Travel Sites

U.S. State Department

http://www.state.gov/www/background_notes/index.html

Travel Warnings and Consular Information Sheets

<http://travel.state.gov/travel/warnings.html>

Links to U.S. Embassies and Consulates Worldwide

http://travel.state.gov/visa/questions_embassy.html

Services and Information for American Citizens Abroad

<http://travel.state.gov/travel/abroad.html>

Travel Warning on Drugs Abroad

http://travel.state.gov/travel/livingabroad_drugs.html

Women's Sites

Journeywoman

<http://www.journeywoman.com>

Disability Sites

Access-Able

<http://www.access-able.com/tips/>

Air Travel Tips and Resources

<http://www.miusa.org>

Health Information for Travelers to Thailand

- [Travel Notices in Effect](#)
- [Safety and Security Abroad](#)
- [Preparing for Your Trip to Thailand](#)
- [Other Diseases Found in Southeast Asia](#)
- [Staying Healthy During Your Trip](#)
- [After You Return Home](#)



Travel Notices in Effect

- [Update: Dengue, Tropical and Subtropical Regions](#) November 10, 2009
- [Chikungunya Fever in Asia and the Indian Ocean](#) October 28, 2009
- [2009 H1N1 Flu: Global Situation](#) October 15, 2009
- [New Article about Typhoid Fever Infection in U.S. Travelers Highlights Travel Risks in Certain Destinations](#) September 09, 2009
- [2009 Measles Update](#) July 17, 2009
- [Guidelines and Recommendations: Interim Guidance about Avian Influenza \(H5N1\) for U.S. Citizens Living Abroad](#) November 04, 2008
- [Human Infection with Avian Influenza A \(H5N1\) Virus: Advice for Travelers](#) November 04, 2008

Safety and Security Abroad

- [Registration of Traveler Emergency Contact and Itinerary Information](#) June 18, 2007
- [Transportation Security Administration](#)
- [U.S. Department of State](#)

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Preparing for Your Trip to Thailand

Before visiting Thailand, you may need to get the following vaccinations and medications for vaccine-preventable diseases and other diseases you might be at risk for at your destination: (Note: Your doctor or health-care provider will determine what you will need, depending on factors such as your health and immunization history, areas of the country you will be visiting, and planned activities.)

To have the most benefit, see a health-care provider at least 4–6 weeks before your trip to allow time for your vaccines to take effect and to start taking medicine to prevent malaria, if you need it.

Even if you have less than 4 weeks before you leave, you should still see a health-care provider for needed vaccines, anti-malaria drugs and other medications and information about how to protect yourself from illness and injury while traveling.

CDC recommends that you see a health-care provider who specializes in Travel Medicine. [Find a travel medicine clinic](#) near you. If you have a medical condition, you should also share your travel plans with any doctors you are currently seeing for other medical reasons.

If your travel plans will take you to more than one country during a single trip, be sure to let your health-care provider know so that you can receive the appropriate vaccinations and information for all of your destinations. Long-term travelers, such as those who plan to work or study abroad, may also need additional vaccinations as required by their employer or school.

Although yellow fever is not a disease risk in Thailand, the government requires travelers arriving from [countries where yellow fever is present](#) to present proof of yellow fever vaccination. If you will be traveling to one of these countries where yellow fever is present before arriving in Thailand, this requirement must be taken into consideration.

Be sure your routine vaccinations are up-to-date. Check the links below to see which vaccinations adults and children should get.

Routine vaccines, as they are often called, such as for influenza, chickenpox (or varicella), polio, measles/mumps/rubella (MMR), and diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (DPT) are given at all stages of life; see the [childhood and adolescent immunization schedule](#) and [routine adult immunization schedule](#).

Routine vaccines are recommended even if you do not travel. Although childhood diseases, such as measles, rarely occur in the United States, they are still common in many parts of the world. A traveler who is not vaccinated would be at risk for infection.

Vaccine-Preventable Diseases

Vaccine recommendations are based on the best available risk information. Please note that the level of risk for vaccine-preventable diseases can change at any time.

Vaccination or Disease	Recommendations or Requirements for Vaccine-Preventable Diseases
<u>Routine</u>	Recommended if you are not up-to-date with routine shots such as, measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (DPT) vaccine, poliovirus vaccine, etc.
<u>Hepatitis A</u> or immune globulin (IG)	Recommended for all unvaccinated people traveling to or working in countries with an intermediate or high level of hepatitis A virus infection (see map) where exposure might occur through food or water. Cases of travel-related hepatitis A can also occur in travelers to developing countries with "standard" tourist itineraries, accommodations, and food consumption behaviors.
<u>Hepatitis B</u>	Recommended for all unvaccinated persons traveling to or working in countries with intermediate to high levels of endemic HBV transmission (see map), especially those who might be exposed to blood or body fluids, have sexual contact with the local population, or be exposed through medical treatment (e.g., for an accident).
<u>Typhoid</u>	Recommended for all unvaccinated people traveling to or working in Southeast Asia, especially if visiting smaller cities, villages, or rural areas and staying with friends or relatives where exposure might occur through food or water.
<u>Japanese encephalitis</u>	Recommended if you plan to visit rural farming areas and under special circumstances, such as a known outbreak of Japanese encephalitis, see country-specific information .

Rabies vaccination is only recommended for certain travelers, including:

- travelers with high occupational risks, such as veterinarians
- long-term travelers and expatriates living in areas with a high risk of exposure
- travelers involved in any activities that might bring them into direct contact with bats, carnivores, and other mammals, such as wildlife professionals, researchers, veterinarians, or adventure travelers visiting areas where bats, carnivores, and other mammals are commonly found

Malaria

Areas of Thailand with Malaria: Rural, forested areas that border Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar (Burma). Rare local cases in Phang Nga and Phuket. None in cities and in major tourist resorts. None in cities of Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Pattaya, Koh Samui, and Koh Phangan.

If you will be visiting an area of Thailand with malaria, you will need to discuss with your doctor the best ways for you to avoid getting sick with malaria. Ways to prevent malaria include the following:

- Taking a prescription antimalarial drug
- Using insect repellent and wearing long pants and sleeves to prevent mosquito bites
- Sleeping in air-conditioned or well-screened rooms or using bednets

Some areas of Thailand have resistance to certain antimalarial drugs. See the [Malaria Risk Information and Prophylaxis, by Country](#) chart to find out which antimalarial drug is appropriate for the area you plan to visit in Thailand. For information that can help you and your doctor decide which of these drugs would be best for you, please see [Drugs to Prevent Malaria](#).

To find out more information on malaria throughout the world, you can use the [interactive CDC malaria map](#). You can search or browse countries, cities, and place names for more specific malaria risk information and the recommended prevention medicines for that area.

Malaria Contact for Health-Care Providers

For assistance with the diagnosis or management of suspected cases of malaria, call the CDC Malaria Hotline: **770-488-7788** (M-F, 9 am-5 pm, Eastern time). For emergency consultation after hours, call **770-488-7100** and ask to speak with a CDC Malaria Branch clinician.

More Information About Malaria

Malaria is always a serious disease and may be a deadly illness. Humans get malaria from the bite of a mosquito infected with the parasite. Prevent this serious disease by seeing your health-care provider for a prescription antimalarial drug and by protecting yourself against mosquito bites ([see below](#)).

Travelers to malaria risk-areas in Thailand, including infants, children, and former residents of Thailand, should take one of the antimalarial drugs listed in the box above.

Symptoms

Malaria symptoms may include

- fever
- chills
- sweats
- headache
- body aches

- nausea and vomiting
- fatigue

Malaria symptoms will occur at least 7 to 9 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. Fever in the first week of travel in a malaria-risk area is unlikely to be malaria; however, you should see a doctor right away if you develop a fever during your trip.

Malaria may cause anemia and jaundice. Malaria infections with *Plasmodium falciparum*, if not promptly treated, may cause kidney failure, coma, and death. Despite using the protective measures outlined above, travelers may still develop malaria up to a year after returning from a malarious area. You should see a doctor immediately if you develop a fever anytime during the year following your return and tell the physician of your travel.

A Special Note about Antimalarial Drugs

You should purchase your antimalarial drugs before travel. Drugs purchased overseas may not be manufactured according to United States standards and may not be effective. They also may be dangerous, contain counterfeit medications or contaminants, or be combinations of drugs that are not safe to use.

Halofantrine (marketed as Halfan) is widely used overseas to treat malaria. CDC recommends that you do **NOT** use halofantrine because of serious heart-related side effects, including deaths. You should avoid using antimalarial drugs that are not recommended **unless** you have been diagnosed with life-threatening malaria and no other options are immediately available.

For detailed information about these antimalarial drugs, see [Information for the Public: Prescription Drugs for Malaria](#).

Items to Bring With You

Medicines you may need:

- **The prescription medicines you take every day.** Make sure you have enough to last during your trip. Keep them in their original prescription bottles and always in your carry-on luggage. Be sure to follow security guidelines, if the medicines are liquids.
- Antimalarial drugs, if traveling to a malaria-risk area in Thailand and prescribed by your doctor.
- **Medicine for diarrhea**, usually over-the-counter.

Note: Some drugs available by prescription in the US are illegal in other countries. Check the US Department of State [Consular Information Sheets](#) for the country(s) you intend to visit or the embassy or consulate for that country(s). If your medication is not allowed in the country you will be visiting, ask your health-care provider to write a letter on office stationery stating the medication has been prescribed for you.

Other items you may need:

- Iodine tablets and portable water filters to purify water if bottled water is not available. See [A Guide to Water Filters](#), [A Guide to Commercially-Bottled Water and Other Beverages](#), and [Safe Food and Water](#) for more detailed information.
- Sunblock and sunglasses for protection from harmful effects of UV sun rays. See [Basic Information about Skin Cancer](#) for more information.
- Antibacterial hand wipes or alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.
- To prevent insect/mosquito bites, bring:
 - Lightweight long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and a hat to wear outside, whenever possible.
 - Flying-insect spray to help clear rooms of mosquitoes. The product should contain a pyrethroid insecticide; these insecticides quickly kill flying insects, including mosquitoes.
 - Bed nets treated with permethrin, if you will not be sleeping in an air-conditioned or well-screened room and will be in malaria-risk areas. For use and purchasing information, see [Insecticide Treated Bed Nets](#) on the CDC malaria site. Overseas, permethrin or another insecticide, deltamethrin, may be purchased to treat bed nets and clothes.

See other suggested over-the-counter medications and first aid items for a [travelers' health kit](#).

Note: Check the [Air Travel section](#) of the [Transportation Security Administration](#) website for the latest information about airport screening procedures and prohibited items.

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Other Diseases Found in Southeast Asia

Risk can vary between countries within this region and also within a country; the quality of in-country surveillance also varies.

The following are disease risks that might affect travelers; this is not a complete list of diseases that can be present. Environmental conditions may also change, and up to date information about risk by regions within a country may also not always be available.

[Dengue](#), [chikungunya](#), [filariasis](#), [Japanese encephalitis](#), and [plague](#) are diseases carried by insects that also occur in this region. Protecting yourself against insect bites ([see below](#)) will help to prevent these diseases.

Highly pathogenic avian influenza (H5N1) continues to cause outbreaks in domestic and wild bird populations and has caused human cases in several countries in Southeast Asia. In 2006, the virus continued to spread in poultry populations in Indonesia. Avoid all direct contact with birds, including domestic poultry (such as chickens and ducks) and wild birds, and avoid places such as poultry farms and bird markets where live birds are raised or kept. For a

current list of countries reporting outbreaks of H5N1 among poultry and/or wild birds, view [updates from the World Organization for Animal Health \(OIE\)](#), and for total numbers of confirmed human cases of H5N1 virus by country see the [World Health Organization \(WHO\) Avian Influenza website](#).

Do not swim in fresh water (except in well-chlorinated swimming pools) to avoid infection with [schistosomiasis](#). [Leptospirosis](#), a bacterial infection often contracted through recreational water activities in contaminated water, such as kayaking, is common in tropical areas of Southeast Asia. An outbreak was reported in Borneo among expedition travelers in 2000.

[Measles](#) transmission persists in the region, although vaccination coverage is improving in some countries in Southeast Asia. Influenza infections can occur throughout the year in tropical areas.

[Polio](#) resurfaced in Indonesia in 2005. Imported cases in neighboring countries have occasionally occurred.

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Staying Healthy During Your Trip

Prevent Insect Bites

Many diseases, like [malaria](#) and [dengue](#), are spread through insect bites. One of the best protections is to prevent insect bites by:

- Using insect repellent (bug spray) with 30%-50% DEET. Picaridin, available in 7% and 15% concentrations, needs more frequent application. There is less information available on how effective picaridin is at protecting against all of the types of mosquitoes that transmit malaria.
- Wearing long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and a hat outdoors.
- Remaining indoors in a screened or air-conditioned area during the peak biting period for malaria (dusk and dawn).
- Sleeping in beds covered by nets treated with permethrin, if not sleeping in an air-conditioned or well-screened room.
- Spraying rooms with products effective against flying insects, such as those containing pyrethroid.

For detailed information about insect repellent use, see [Insect and Arthropod Protection](#).

Prevent Animal Bites and Scratches

Direct contact with animals can spread diseases like rabies or cause serious injury or illness. It is important to prevent animal bites and scratches.

- Be sure you are up to date with tetanus vaccination.
- Do not touch or feed any animals, including dogs and cats. Even animals that look like healthy pets can have rabies or other diseases.
- Help children stay safe by supervising them carefully around all animals.
- If you are bitten or scratched, wash the wound well with soap and water and **go to a doctor right away.**
- After your trip, be sure to tell your doctor or state health department if you were bitten or scratched during travel.

For more information about rabies and travel, see the [Rabies chapter](#) of the [Yellow Book](#) or [CDC's Rabies homepage](#). For more information about how to protect yourself from other risks related to animals, see [Animal-Associated Hazards](#).

Be Careful about Food and Water

Diseases from food and water are the leading cause of illness in travelers. Follow these tips for safe eating and drinking:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially before eating. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand gel (with at least 60% alcohol).
- Drink only bottled or boiled water, or carbonated (bubbly) drinks in cans or bottles. Avoid tap water, fountain drinks, and ice cubes. If this is not possible, learn how to [make water safer to drink](#).
- Do not eat food purchased from street vendors.
- Make sure food is fully cooked.
- Avoid dairy products, unless you know they have been pasteurized.

Diseases from food and water often cause vomiting and diarrhea. Make sure to bring diarrhea medicine with you so that you can treat mild cases yourself.

Avoid Injuries

Car crashes are a leading cause of [injury](#) among travelers. Protect yourself from these injuries by:

- Not drinking and driving.
- Wearing your seat belt and using car seats or booster seats in the backseat for children.
- Following local traffic laws.
- Wearing helmets when you ride bikes, motorcycles, and motor bikes.
- Not getting on an overloaded bus or mini-bus.
- Hiring a local driver, when possible.
- Avoiding night driving.

Other Health Tips

- To avoid infections such as HIV and viral hepatitis do not share needles for tattoos, body piercing, or injections.
- To reduce the risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases always use latex condoms.
- To prevent fungal and parasitic infections, keep feet clean and dry, and do not go barefoot, especially on beaches where animals may have defecated.

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After You Return Home

If you are not feeling well, you should see your doctor and mention that you have recently traveled. Also tell your doctor if you were bitten or scratched by an animal while traveling.

If you have visited a malaria-risk area, continue taking your antimalarial drug for 4 weeks (doxycycline or mefloquine) or seven days (atovaquone/proguanil) after leaving the risk area.

Malaria is always a serious disease and may be a deadly illness. If you become ill with a fever or flu-like illness either while traveling in a malaria-risk area or after you return home (for up to 1 year), you should seek **immediate** medical attention and should tell the physician your travel history.

Important Note: This document is not a complete medical guide for travelers to this region. Consult with your doctor for specific information related to your needs and your medical history; recommendations may differ for pregnant women, young children, and persons who have chronic medical conditions.

Advice from the CDC: General Travel Precautions

The following web address should be accessed for health information specific to where you will be traveling: <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/default.aspx>. The IGSD strongly recommends that you review all health recommendations and discuss these with your health care provider. The preventive measures you need to take while traveling depend on the areas you visit and the length of time you stay.

All travelers should take the following precautions, no matter the destination:

- Wash hands often with soap and water.
- Because motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of injury among travelers, walk and drive defensively.
- Avoid travel at night if possible and always use seat belts.
- Always use latex condoms to reduce the risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases.
- Don't eat or drink dairy products unless you know they have been pasteurized.
- Don't share needles with anyone.
- Never eat undercooked ground beef and poultry, raw eggs, and un-pasteurized dairy products. Raw shellfish is particularly dangerous to persons who have liver disease or compromised immune systems.
- Drink only bottled or boiled water, or carbonated (bubbly) drinks in cans or bottles. Avoid tap water, fountain drinks, and ice cubes. If this is not possible, make water safer by BOTH filtering through an "absolute 1-micron or less" filter AND adding iodine tablets to the filtered water. "Absolute 1-micron filters" are found in camping/outdoor supply stores.
- Eat only thoroughly cooked food or fruits and vegetables you have peeled yourself. Remember: boil it, cook it, peel it, or forget it.
- If you visit an area where there is risk for malaria, take your malaria prevention medication before, during, and after travel, as directed. (See your doctor for a prescription.)
- Protect yourself from insects by remaining in well-screened areas, using repellents (applied sparingly at 4-hour intervals), and wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants from dusk through dawn.
- To prevent fungal and parasitic infections, keep feet clean and dry, and do not go barefoot.

To Avoid Getting Sick

- Don't eat food purchased from street vendors.
- Don't drink beverages with ice.
- Don't eat dairy products unless you know they have been pasteurized.
- Don't share needles with anyone.
- Don't handle animals (especially monkeys, dogs, and cats), to avoid bites and serious diseases (including rabies and plague).
- Don't swim in fresh water. Salt water is usually safer.

What You Need To Bring with You

- Long-sleeved shirt and long pants to wear while outside whenever possible, to prevent illnesses carried by insects (e.g., malaria, dengue, filariasis, and Japanese encephalitis).
- Insect repellent containing DEET (diethylmethyltoluamide), in 30%–35% strength for adults and 6%–10% for children.
- Over-the-counter antidiarrheal medicine to take if you have diarrhea.
- Iodine tablets and water filters to purify water if bottled water is not available. See Do's above for more detailed information about water filters.

- Sunblock, sunglasses, hat.
- Prescription medications: make sure you have enough to last during your trip, as well as a copy of the prescription(s).

After You Return Home

- If you have visited an area where there is risk for malaria, continue taking your malaria medication weekly for 4 weeks after you leave the area.
- If you become ill after travel—even as long as a year after your trip—tell your doctor the areas you have visited.

216-0040) with the student's room number to the dormitory and/or to leave a message with WPI local coordinator **Ms. Ruth Gerson** at +(662) 252-7209 (home) or +(66-89)-164-6405.

Telephone Tips

Calling home from a foreign country can be a challenging experience; phones may not be familiar and the costs of calling overseas using the local phone system can be very high. For these reasons, it is highly recommended that students carry some sort of calling card. Calling cards that allow inexpensive calls to the US are widely available in Bangkok.

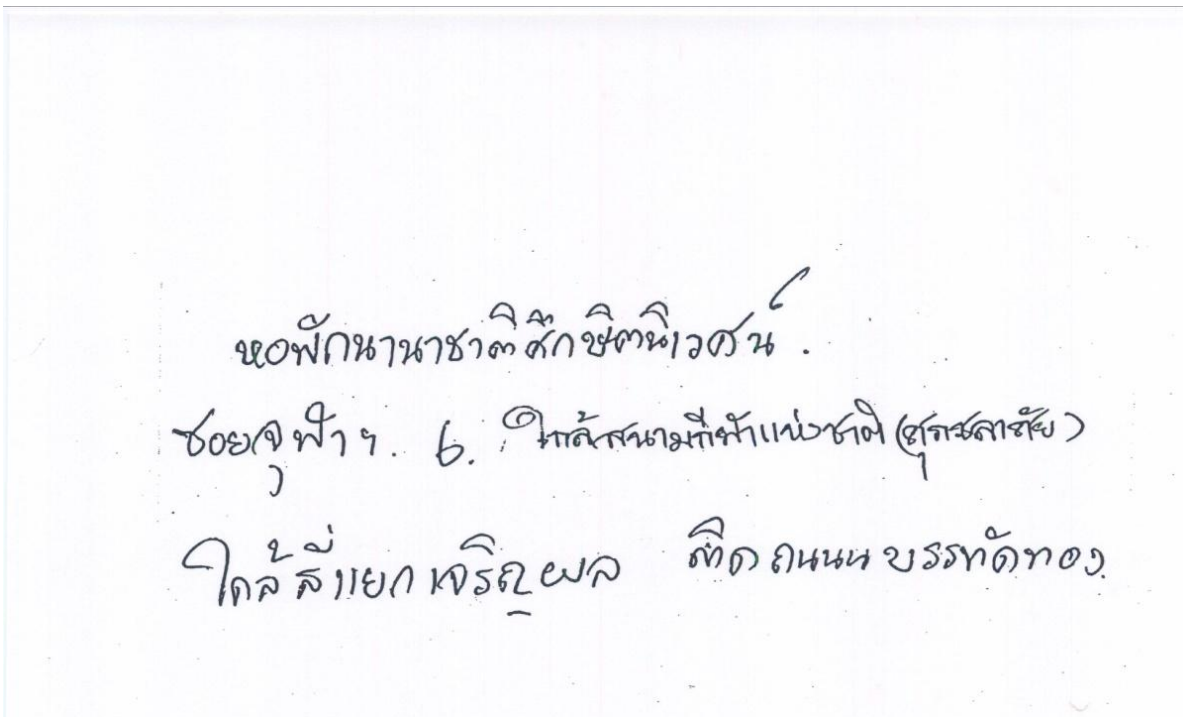
To call the US from Thailand: Dial 001, then the entire 11-digit US number, starting with 1.

To call Thailand from the US: Dial 011, then the entire 10 or 11-digit Thai number, starting with 66.

To call Thailand from Thailand: Dial 0, then the Thai number, omitting the 66 country code.

To call Thailand from elsewhere: Dial the international access code, then the entire 10 or 11-digit Thai number, starting with 66.

Directions in Thai for the Taxi Driver



Money Issues

Purchasing Thai Baht in the U.S. is very expensive; we don't recommend it. Traveler's checks are always a safe bet, although you usually have to go to a bank with your passport to exchange them. An ATM card that works on the Cirrus or other common networks will work in most Thai ATMs, and is the simplest way to access money on a regular basis. **(Be sure you're aware of any fees that your bank may charge for international ATM transactions, however.)** Credit cards are widely accepted, and can give you a very good rate, although many U.S. credit cards now add a 3% fee for charges in foreign currency.

Arrival in Bangkok

Note that this information will not do you any good if stored away in your checked luggage—bring it with you in your carry-on bag! You may want to visit the airport web pages below and print out some of that information to have with you as well.

- 1. Get some Thai baht.** After clearing immigration, getting your luggage, and proceeding through customs, you will come into the arrival hall of Suvarnabhumi Airport: <http://www.bangkokairportonline.com/node/85>. You can get Thai baht at an ATM or at one of several currency exchange booths. If you will be arriving very late at night, currency exchange booths may be closed, so it might be best to purchase some Baht at whatever Asian airport you proceed through (e.g., Tokyo, Seoul).
- 2. Find a public (metered) taxi.** Public taxis can be found outside the arrival hall. They are typically brightly colored, have meters, and have a sign on the roof saying "Taxi Meter." There may be a modest to lengthy waiting line, but it usually moves quickly. On your way there and in the line you will almost always be approached by other people offering you a ride; these are typically private operations that cost more. If you want the lowest price, just politely and persistently decline (*may ao kha/khrap*: I do not want) and stay in the line for the public taxis. At the end of the line there will be a dispatcher at a desk who asks your destination.
- 3. Communicate your destination.** Tell the dispatcher that you are going to "Chula Soi Hok." The dispatchers usually understand and speak some English, but to be safe, also show the address written out in Thai or the map, both of which can be found in this manual. The dispatcher will fill out a form that you will give to the taxi driver. By accepting it, the driver agrees to charge what is on the meter. If he does not turn on the meter, point to it and politely say the word "meter." The taxis are relatively small and with luggage can usually not accommodate more than two people. The ride is not very expensive; expect to pay about 200 Baht. The taxi driver may ask if you want to take the expressway (or signal upward with his hand); it costs a little more (you are expected to pay the toll, about 30-40 Baht) but is faster if there is lots of traffic. Although Thais do not tip taxis, you as a relatively rich farang should consider rounding up the fare (on the order of 5%- should do nicely).
- 4. Arrive at Suksitnives.** When you arrive at Suksitnives you'll find one or more guards on duty. Someone is on duty 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, so there is no need to worry if you are arriving late at night. If you don't see someone in the office near the entry gate, check the floor since he may be sleeping. Give the guard your name; he'll be expecting you. (You might have to point out your name on a list.) If they show you up to the room, give them a 20 Baht tip – it's a worthwhile investment. If you want to stock up on food, toiletries, or other necessities, you can head over to the nearby Tesco superstore (at the corner of Buntudthong Road and Charoen Phol; see map), or for a more Thai experience, the Mahboonkrong Mall (labeled MBK Mall on the map). Both locations feature western-style supermarkets and pharmacies. There are also plenty of little pharmacies scattered about. There are ATMs and banks in both locations, as well.

The faculty are staying at Sasa International House on the main part of the campus south of the National Stadium, just below the Sasin Business School (see map).

Sasa International House
Phyathai Road,
Bangkok 10330, Thailand
Tel: (66.2) 216.8844
Fax: (66.2) 215.3880
E-mail: SasaHouse@sasin.edu

Map of the Area around Suksitnives Dormitory

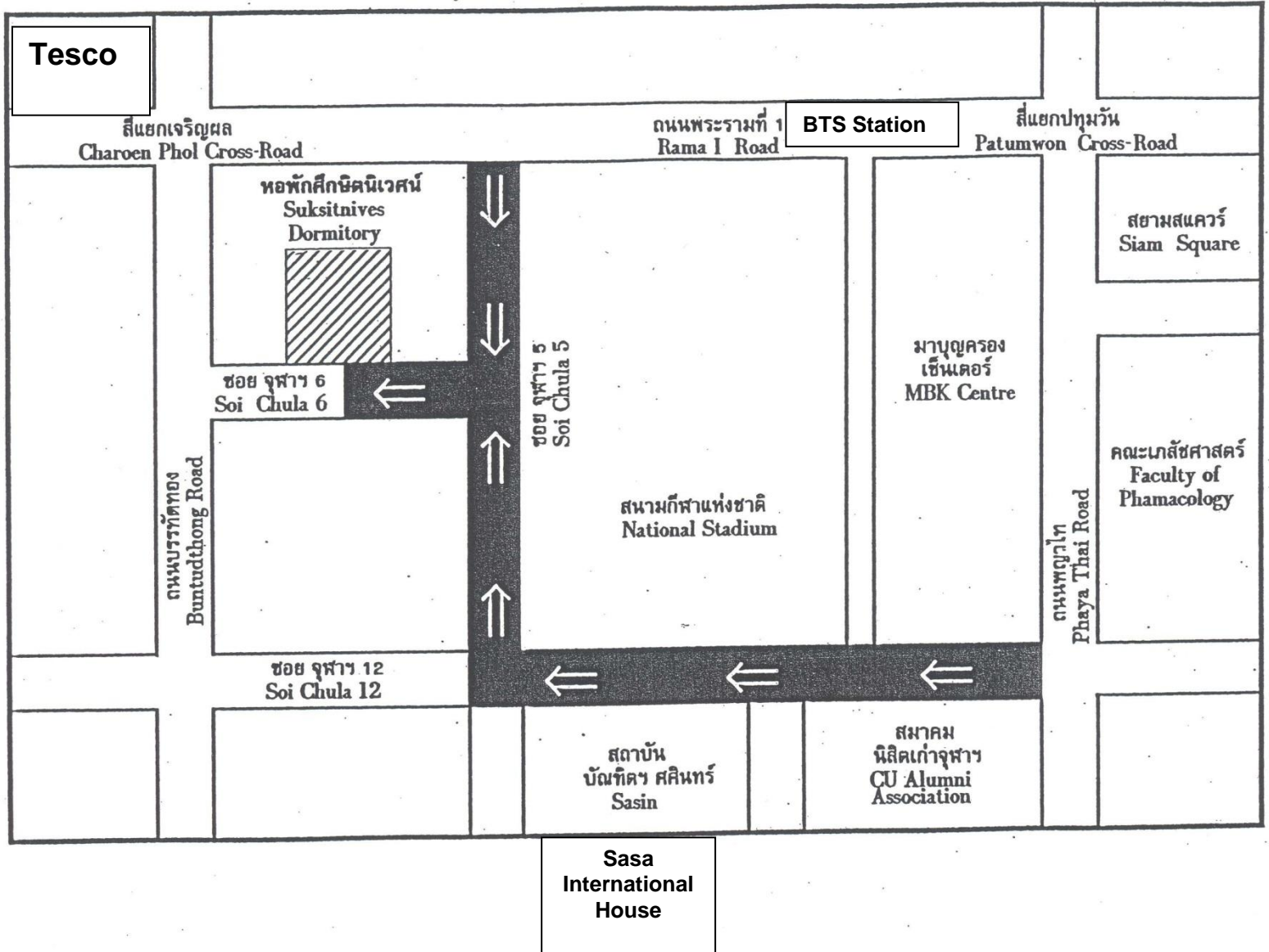
You are living in **Suksitnives Dormitory** on Chula Soi 6 ("Chula Soi Hok" when giving directions.)

The advisors will be living in **Sasa International House**, located on the Chula campus.

Tesco is a large shopping center with supermarket, department store, etc.

MBK Centre is a huge shopping mall with banks, pharmacies, and just about everything else.

The **BTS Station** is where you can catch the Skytrain.



This map is not drawn to scale, and only shows roads of interest. It will take you about 10 minutes to walk to MBK from Suksitnives. Even-numbered sois run east-west in the Chula area, and odd-numbered sois run north-south.

November 04, 2009

Thailand is a constitutional monarchy. Thailand adopted its current constitution following an August 19, 2007, referendum. Multi-party elections held on December 23, 2007, under the provisions of the new constitution resulted in the People's Power Party (PPP) winning a plurality of the seats in the lower house of Parliament and the formation of a coalition government. In December 2008, a revised coalition led by the previous opposition party, the Democrat Party, came to power. Most of the population is Buddhist and ethnically Thai. Standard Thai is the official language of Thailand and is spoken in every province, though many areas also have a local dialect, and in the deep south, a variant of Malay is widely spoken. Most Thais working in the tourist industry and in businesses dealing with foreigners can speak at least rudimentary English. Thailand is a popular travel destination, and tourist facilities and services are available throughout the country. At many tourist attractions, including national parks, foreigners are charged admission fees up to ten times higher than those charged to Thais. Read the Department of State's [Background Notes on Thailand](#) for additional information.

REGISTRATION / EMBASSY LOCATION: U.S. citizens living or traveling in Thailand are encouraged to register with the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate at the [Department of State's travel registration page](#) in order to obtain updated information on local travel and security. U.S. citizens without Internet access may register directly with the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate. Registration is important; it allows the State Department to assist U.S. citizens in an emergency.

Local embassy information is available below and at the [Department of State's list of embassies and consulates](#).

[U.S. Embassy Bangkok](#)

95 Wireless Road, Bangkok 10330, Thailand

Telephone: 66-2-205-4049, 02-205-4049 (within Thailand)

Emergency after-hours telephone: 66-2-205-4000, 02-205-4000 (within Thailand)

Facsimile: 66-2-205-4103, 02-205-4103 (within Thailand)

[U.S. Consulate Chiang Mai](#)

387 Wichayanond Road, Chiang Mai 50300, Thailand

Telephone: 66-53-107-700, 053-107-700 (within Thailand)

Emergency after-hours telephone: 66-81-881-1878, 081-881-1878 (within Thailand)

Facsimile: 66-53-252-633, 053-252-633 (within Thailand)

ENTRY/EXIT REQUIREMENTS: U.S. citizen tourists staying for fewer than 30 days do not require a visa but must possess a passport that has at least six months validity remaining and may be asked to show an onward/return ticket. Persons entering Thailand by air without a visa are allowed to stay in Thailand for 30 days per visit. Persons entering Thailand by land without a visa are allowed to stay in Thailand for 15 days per visit. The duration of stay in Thailand for persons who enter Thailand without a visa cannot exceed 90 days during any six-month period, counting from the date of first entry. After 90 days, travelers must apply for a new visa at a Thai embassy outside of the country. Travelers must pay a Passenger Service Charge in Thai baht when departing from any of Thailand's international airports. This charge is now included in airline ticket prices at Bangkok's main airport, Suvarnabhumi International Airport.

When a traveler enters the country, Thai Immigration stamps in his or her passport the date on which the traveler's authorized stay in Thailand will expire. Any traveler remaining in Thailand beyond this date without having received an official extension will be assessed an immediate cash fine of 500 Baht per day, up to a maximum of 20,000 Baht, when departing Thailand. Any foreigner found by police to be out of legal status prior to departure (during a Thai Immigration "sweep" through a guesthouse, for example) will be jailed, fined, deported at his or her own expense, and may be barred from re-entering Thailand.

In this regard, U.S. citizens should be aware that private "visa extension services," even those advertising in major periodicals or located close to Immigration offices or police stations, are

illegal. A number of U.S. citizens are arrested at border crossings each year when the visas and entry stamps they have obtained through these illegal services are discovered to be counterfeit.

Some HIV/AIDS entry restrictions exist for visitors to and foreign residents of Thailand; however, these restrictions are generally not enforced. Please verify this information with the [Royal Thai Embassy](#) before you travel.

Thailand's entry/exit information is subject to change without notice. For further information on Thailand's entry/exit requirements, contact the Royal Thai Embassy, 1024 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20007, telephone (202) 944-3600, or contact the Thai consulates in Chicago, Los Angeles, or New York City. [Visit the Royal Thai Embassy](#) website for the most current visa information.

Information about [dual nationality](#) or the [prevention of international child abduction](#) can be found on our website. For further information about customs regulations, please read our [Customs Information page](#).

SAFETY AND SECURITY: The State Department is concerned that there is a continued risk of terrorism in Southeast Asia, including in Thailand. U.S. citizens traveling to Thailand should therefore exercise caution, especially in locations where Westerners congregate, such as clubs, discos, bars, restaurants, hotels, places of worship, schools, outdoor recreation venues, tourist areas, beach resorts, and other places frequented by foreigners. They should remain vigilant with regard to their personal security and avoid crowds and demonstrations. For more information on terrorist threats against U.S. citizens worldwide and steps to take as a result of these threats, please see the [Worldwide Caution](#).

From May 2008 - April 2009, political protests on the streets of Bangkok involving anti-government and pro-government demonstrators led to the death of eight Thai citizens and injuries to over 700, including a U.S. citizen who was injured by an exploding tear gas canister, and an additional death in Chiang Mai. Most of the casualties occurred around the Government House compound and the two Bangkok airports, Suvarnabhumi International Airport and Don Muang Airport, which were temporarily occupied by the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD). Thailand experienced similar demonstrations, primarily in Bangkok and Chiang Mai, during the political unrest that led to a military coup in September 2006.

The Department of State advises all U.S. citizens residing in or traveling to Bangkok to monitor events closely, to avoid any large public gatherings, and to exercise discretion when moving about Bangkok. All demonstrations are unpredictable, and any demonstration can turn violent without warning. For this reason, the Embassy encourages all U.S. citizens to monitor local media for announcements of possible demonstrations and to avoid the areas where demonstrations might occur. If a demonstration is expected to pass near U.S. Embassy facilities, Embassy entrances and functions may be restricted, depending on circumstances.

The far south of Thailand has been experiencing almost daily incidents of criminally and politically motivated violence, including incidents attributed to armed local separatist groups. On March 15, 2008, two bombs exploded at the CS Pattani Hotel in Pattani Province in southern Thailand. Two people died and thirteen were injured. A car bomb exploded in Yala Province on the same day, killing the driver. Although the separatist groups have continued to focus primarily on Thai government interests in the southern provinces, some of the recent violence in the area has targeted public places, including areas where tourists may congregate. On September 17, 2006, a series of bombs detonated in a commercial district of Hat Yai, killing one U.S. citizen and injuring another. In 2005 two U.S. citizens were injured when a bomb detonated in the Hat Yai airport. Attacks in the area have increasingly been targeted against commercial areas where foreigners congregate. The U.S. Embassy prohibits U.S. Embassy personnel from traveling to the far south of Thailand - Narathiwat, Pattani, Yala, and Songkhla provinces, including the town of Hat Yai - without prior mission approval, and Embassy personnel may travel there only on mission-essential travel. The Department of State urges U.S. citizens to defer non-emergency travel to these areas. If U.S. citizens must travel to these areas, they should exercise special caution and

remain vigilant with regard to their personal security. Travelers should be aware that Thai authorities have on occasion instituted special security measures in affected areas, such as curfews, military patrols, or random searches of train passengers.

The U.S. Embassy recommends that U.S. citizens defer travel along the Thai-Cambodian border in the area of the Preah Vihear temple because of a border dispute between the two countries. Thai and Cambodian soldiers have been stationed along the border in this area since July 2008 and have exchanged gunfire on several occasions. Until the situation has been resolved, U.S. citizens should exercise extreme caution if they must travel to areas along the Thai-Cambodian border where troop activities are reported.

From 2004 to 2006, seven Lao-American and Hmong-American citizens were murdered in northern and northeastern Thailand near the border with Laos. During the same period, a number of non-U.S. citizens with ties to Laos were also murdered in this region of Thailand. In addition, in March 2006 a Hmong-American disappeared from his residence in Chiang Mai along with seven other individuals. In most of these cases, no arrests have been made. If U.S. citizens, particularly Lao-Americans or Hmong-Americans, travel to these areas, they should exercise caution and remain vigilant with regard to their personal security. It is also recommended that persons wishing to travel to border areas check first with the Thai Police and the U.S. Consulate General in Chiang Mai, the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok, or the U.S. Embassy in Vientiane as appropriate.

The Thai/Burma border is the site of on-going conflicts between the Burmese Army and armed opposition groups as well as clashes between Thai security forces and armed drug traffickers. Pirates, bandits, and drug traffickers operate in these border areas. There remains a possibility of significant flare-ups of military activity on the Burmese side of the border that could spill over into immediately adjacent areas of northern Thailand. Visitors should travel off-road in undeveloped areas only with local guides who are familiar with the area. Border closings and re-openings occur frequently, and U.S. citizens considering traveling into Burma from Thailand should be aware that in the event of a border closure they may not be able to re-enter Thailand. In light of the continuing unsettled situation along the Thai border with Burma and the possibility of frequent closings to all traffic, the Department of State recommends that all U.S. citizens exercise caution when traveling in remote or rural areas immediately adjacent to the Burma border.

Tourists should obtain information from Thai authorities about whether official border crossing points are open, and should cross into neighboring countries only at designated crossing points. Licensed guides can help ensure that trekkers do not cross inadvertently into a neighboring country.

For the latest security information, U.S. citizens traveling abroad should regularly monitor the Department of State's [Bureau of Consular Affairs' website](#), which contains current [Travel Warnings and Travel Alerts](#) as well as the [Worldwide Caution](#).

Up-to-date information on safety and security can also be obtained by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll-free within the U.S. and Canada, or by calling a regular toll line, 1-202-501-4444, from other countries. These numbers are available from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays).

The Department of State urges U.S. citizens to take responsibility for their own personal security while traveling overseas. For general information about appropriate measures travelers can take to protect themselves in an overseas environment, see the Department of State's extensive tips and advice on [traveling safely abroad](#).

CRIME: Although the crime threat in Bangkok remains lower than that in many U.S. cities, crimes of opportunity such as pick-pocketing, purse-snatching, and burglary have become more common in recent years. Travelers should be especially wary when walking in crowded markets, tourist sites, and bus or train stations. Many U.S. citizens have reported having passports, wallets, and other valuables stolen in Bangkok's Chatuchak Weekend Market, usually by thieves who cut into purses or bags with a razor and remove items surreptitiously. Police at the Market usually refuse to issue police reports for foreign victims of theft, requiring them instead to travel several miles to

the central Tourist Police office. Violent crimes against foreigners are relatively rare. However, there has been a recent upsurge in violent crime against tourists, including the murder of several independent travelers, on the southern islands of Phuket and Koh Samui. Independent travelers should exercise caution and stay in the vicinity of other travelers, especially in the beach areas of these islands.

Reports of serious crimes involving taxis or "tuk-tuks" (three-wheeled taxis) are also relatively rare, although attempts to charge excessive fares occur regularly. Several taxi-related incidents involving foreign passengers occur in Bangkok each year. U.S. citizens should not hesitate to ask to be let out of a taxi immediately if the driver is acting suspiciously or driving erratically. (See also the Safety and Road Conditions section.)

When arriving at Bangkok's airport, travelers should use only taxis from the airport's official taxi stand, cars from the airport limousine counters, or airport buses. All major hotels in Bangkok can also arrange to have a car and driver meet incoming flights. It is uncommon for Thai taxis to pick up additional passengers. Travelers should be wary of drivers seeking to do so and should never enter a cab that has someone besides the driver in it.

U.S. citizens frequently encounter taxi drivers and others who tout gem stores or entertainment venues. These touts receive kickbacks or commissions that drive up the prices of the goods or services, and travelers should not accept tours or other offers from them. Scams involving gems, city tours, entertainment venues, and credit cards are common, especially in areas heavily visited by tourists. Credit cards should be used only in reputable, established businesses, and the amount charged should be checked for accuracy.

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) receives over a thousand complaints each year from visitors who have been cheated on gem purchases. Gem scams usually follow a predictable pattern. Someone approaches a tourist outside of a well-known tourist attraction such as the Grand Palace or the Jim Thompson House and says that the attraction is closed. The friendly stranger quickly gains the tourist's confidence and suggests a visit to a temple that is supposedly open only one day per year; the stranger then mentions in passing that a special once-a-year government-sponsored gem sale is going on and directs the tourist to a waiting tuk-tuk. At the temple, another stranger - sometimes a foreigner - engages the tourist in conversation and, by seeming coincidence, also mentions the "special" gem sale. The tourist agrees to go look at the gem shop and is soon convinced to buy thousands of dollars worth of jewels that can supposedly be sold in the U.S. for a 100% profit. When the tourist actually has the goods appraised, they turn out to be of minimal value, and the shop's money-back guarantee is not honored. No matter what a tout may say, no jewelry stores are owned, operated, or sponsored by the Thai Government or by the Thai royal family. Lists of gem dealers who have promised to abide by TAT guidelines are available online from the [Buying Gems & Jewellery in Thailand section of the Tourism Authority of Thailand's website](#) and detailed information on gem scams can be found on numerous web sites. A traveler who has fallen victim to a gem scam should contact the local branch of the Tourist Police or call their country-wide toll-free number: 1155.

Although most bars and entertainment venues operate honestly, some, especially in tourist areas such as Patpong, at times try to charge exorbitant amounts for drinks or unadvertised cover charges and threaten violence if the charges are not paid. If victimized in this fashion, travelers should not attempt to resolve the problem themselves but should instead pay the price demanded and then seek out a nearby Tourist Police officer for help in getting restitution. (If no officer is nearby, the Tourist Police may be contacted toll-free by dialing 1155.)

There have been occasional reports of scopolamine drugging perpetrated by prostitutes or unscrupulous bar workers for the purpose of robbery. (Scopolamine is a powerful sedative.) Tourists have also been victimized by drugged food and drink, usually offered by a friendly stranger, sometimes posing as a fellow traveler on an overnight bus or train. In addition, casual acquaintances met in a bar or on the street may pose a threat. Travelers are advised to avoid leaving drinks or food unattended and should avoid going alone to unfamiliar venues. Some trekking tour companies, particularly in Northern Thailand, have been known to make drugs

available to trekkers. Travelers should not accept drugs of any kind, as the drugs may be altered or harmful, and the use or sale of narcotic drugs is illegal in Thailand.

Pirated Merchandise: Counterfeit and pirated goods are widely available in Thailand. The manufacture and sale of pirated goods, including music, movies, software, and counterfeit luxury goods and apparel, is a crime in Thailand and is frequently controlled by organized crime networks. In addition, bringing these goods back to the United States may result in forfeitures and/or fines. More information on this serious problem is available in the [intellectual property section of the U.S. Department of Justice website](#).

INFORMATION FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME: If you are the victim of a crime abroad, you should contact the local police and the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate (see end of this sheet or see the [Department of State's list of embassies and consulates](#)). This includes the loss or theft of a U.S. passport. The embassy/consulate staff can, for example, help you find appropriate medical care, contact family members or friends and explain how funds may be transferred. Although the investigation and prosecution of the crime are solely the responsibility of local authorities, consular officers can help you to understand the local criminal justice process and to find an attorney if needed.

The local equivalent to the "911" emergency line in Thailand is 191.

Please see our [information on victims of crime](#), including possible victim compensation programs in the United States.

CRIMINAL PENALTIES: While in a foreign country, a U.S. citizen is subject to that country's laws and regulations, which sometimes differ significantly from those in the United States and may not afford the protections available to the individual under U.S. law. Penalties for breaking the law can be more severe than in the United States for similar offenses. Engaging in sexual conduct with children or using or disseminating child pornography in a foreign country is a crime, [prosecutable in the United States](#).

Persons violating Thai laws, even unknowingly, may be expelled, arrested, or imprisoned. For example, it is a criminal offense to make negative comments about the King or other members of the royal family. Thais hold the King in the highest regard, and it is a serious crime to make critical or defamatory comments about him. This particular crime, called "lese majeste," is punishable by a prison sentence of three to fifteen years. Purposely tearing or destroying Thai bank notes, which carry an image of the King, may be considered such an offense, as can spitting on or otherwise defiling an official uniform bearing royal insignia.

The Thai Government has publicly stated that it will not tolerate the use of Thai territory as a base by groups trying to overthrow or destabilize the governments of nearby countries. Numerous U.S. citizens have been arrested or detained under suspicion of carrying out such activities; sometimes these detentions are carried out by military authorities, and the Embassy does not learn of them until many days after the fact. Many other U.S. citizens suspected of advocating the armed overthrow of other governments have been "blacklisted" from entering the country. U.S. citizens should be aware that attempts to overthrow foreign governments by force may violate U.S. law as well as Thai law.

Penalties for possessing, using, or trafficking in illegal drugs in Thailand are severe, and convicted offenders can expect long jail sentences under harsh conditions and often heavy fines as well. Thailand also has a death penalty for serious drug offenses and has executed convicted traffickers. The U.S. Embassy frequently does not learn of the arrest of U.S. citizens for minor drug offenses, particularly in southern Thailand, until several days after the incident.

Thai police occasionally raid discos, bars, or nightclubs looking for underage patrons and drug users. During the raids, they typically check the IDs of all customers in the establishment and then make each person provide a urine sample to be checked for narcotics. Foreigners are not excused from these checks, and anyone whose urine tests positive for drugs is arrested and charged. Although some Thai civil libertarians have questioned the constitutionality of these

forced urine tests, the Embassy is unaware of any successful challenge to the practice, and customers can be jailed if they do not cooperate.

Shoplifting is strictly prosecuted. Arrests for shoplifting even low-value items can result in large fines and lengthy detention. This includes shoplifting at the airport, especially in duty free stores. Foreigners who are accused of shoplifting at the airport will be detained and may miss their flights at their own expense.

Recently the news reported the possibility that duty free store employees were in league with police at the airport, adding unpurchased items to check out bags or not charging for all items purchased; purportedly police then stopped the foreigners as they exited the stores and charged them with shoplifting. The Embassy strongly recommends that shoppers carefully check all receipts to make certain the receipts list all items purchased and carefully check the items in their bag to ensure that only the items they purchased are in the bag.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES: Thai customs authorities may enforce strict regulations concerning temporary importation into or export from Thailand of items such as firearms, explosives, narcotics and drugs, radio equipment, books or other printed material, and video or audio recordings, which might be considered subversive to national security, obscene, or in any way harmful to the public interest and cultural property. It is advisable to contact the Embassy of Thailand in Washington, DC, or one of the Thai consulates in the United States for specific information regarding customs requirements. You can also find more customs and permit information on the [Thailand Customs website](#), the [Thailand Food and Drug Administration website](#), or the [Thai Drug Control Division website](#). For information regarding U.S. customs, please see our [Customs Information](#).

Strong seasonal undercurrents at popular beach resorts pose a sometimes fatal threat to surfers and swimmers. During the monsoon season from May through October, drowning is the leading cause of death for tourists visiting the resort island of Phuket. Some, but not all, beaches have warning flags to indicate the degree of risk (red flag: sea condition dangerous for swimming; yellow flag: sea condition rough, swim with caution; green flag: sea condition stable).

Boat safety has become an increasing concern in Thailand. Ferries and speedboats used to transport tourists and local nationals to and from the many islands off the Thai mainland are often overcrowded and carry insufficient safety equipment. In January 2005, three U.S. citizen tourists died when the over-crowded speedboat they were in capsized and sank off the coast of Koh Samui. Three months later, two U.S. citizens narrowly escaped death when their dive boat sank off the coast near Phuket. The Department of State encourages U.S. citizens to avoid travel on overcrowded boats and to ensure that proper safety equipment (including life preservers) is available before boarding any boat or ferry.

The rental of cars, motorbikes, and jet skis is common in the tourist areas. Many rental companies ask to hold the renter's passport as a deposit. If there is damage to the vehicle, the company often holds the passport until the renter pays for the damage. For this reason, a passport should not be used as a deposit or collateral. There have been reports that some companies charge the renter for damage that they did not cause. Renters should be certain to examine the vehicle and note any pre-existing damage before operating the vehicle.

MEDICAL FACILITIES AND HEALTH INFORMATION: Medical treatment is generally adequate throughout Thailand. In Bangkok, good facilities exist for routine, long-term, and emergency health care.

Alcoholic beverages, medications, and drugs may be more potent or of a different composition than similar ones in the United States. Several U.S. citizen tourists die in Thailand each year of apparent premature heart attacks after drinking alcohol or using drugs.

HIV and AIDS - Thailand has been experiencing an epidemic of HIV infection and AIDS. Heterosexual transmission accounts for most HIV infections, and HIV is common among

prostitutes of both sexes, as well as among injection drug users. HIV infections among men who have sex with other men appear to be on the rise.

Pandemic Influenza - The CDC, WHO, and Thai authorities have confirmed human cases of the H1N1 (commonly known as "swine flu") and the H5N1 (commonly known as the "bird flu") strains of influenza. For the most current information and links on influenza in Thailand, see the [Center for Disease Control website](#) regarding [H1N1 influenza](#) and [Avian Influenza](#). [Center for Disease Control web site regarding Avian Influenza and Travel](#). You may also refer to the Department of State's [fact sheet on H1N1, Pandemic Influenza, and H5N1 \(Avian Influenza\)](#).

Information on vaccinations and other health precautions, such as safe food and water precautions and insect bite protection, may be obtained from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) hotline for international travelers at 1-877-FYI-TRIP (1-877-394-8747) or via the [CDC website](#). For information about outbreaks of infectious diseases abroad, consult the infectious diseases section of the [World Health Organization \(WHO\) website](#). The WHO website also contains additional health information for travelers, including [detailed country-specific health information](#).

Tuberculosis is an increasingly serious health concern in Thailand. For further information, please [consult the CDC's information on TB](#).

MEDICAL INSURANCE: The Department of State strongly urges U.S. citizens to consult their medical insurance company prior to traveling abroad to determine whether the policy applies overseas and whether it covers emergency expenses such as a medical evacuation. For more information, please see our [medical insurance overseas page](#).

TRAFFIC SAFETY AND ROAD CONDITIONS: While in a foreign country, U.S. citizens may encounter road conditions that differ significantly from those in the United States. The information below concerning Thailand is provided for general reference only, and may not be totally accurate in a particular location or circumstance.

Traffic moves on the left in Thailand, although motorcycles and motorized carts often drive (illegally) against the traffic flow. The city of Bangkok has heavy traffic composed of motorcycles, cars, trucks, buses, and three-wheeled tuk-tuks. For safety, pedestrians should use overhead walkways whenever possible and should look carefully in both directions before crossing streets, even when using a marked crosswalk with a green "walk" light illuminated. This is particularly true in front of the U.S. Embassy on Bangkok's Wireless Road, where many pedestrians have died crossing the street, and where several U.S. citizens have been seriously injured. The Embassy has instructed its employees to use the pedestrian bridge to cross the road at all times, and other U.S. citizens are advised to do the same.

Traffic accidents are common in Thailand, and those involving motorcycles can be particularly deadly. The Embassy has sent a notice to Embassy staff and family members strongly recommending that they refrain from using motorcycles (especially motorcycle taxis), mopeds, and tuk-tuks in Bangkok, and the Embassy advises U.S. citizen visitors and residents to follow this recommendation as well. Use of motorcycle helmets is mandatory, but this law is seldom enforced. The accident rate in Thailand is particularly high during long holidays, when alcohol use and traffic are both heavier than normal. During the Songkran (Thai New Year) holiday in April, the problem is further exacerbated by people throwing water at passing vehicles as part of the traditional celebration.

Paved roads, many of them four lanes wide, connect Thailand's major cities. On the country's numerous two-lane roads, however, slow-moving trucks limit speed and visibility. Speeding, reckless passing, and failure to obey traffic laws is common in all regions of Thailand, as is the consumption by commercial drivers of alcohol, amphetamines, and other stimulants. Serious bus crashes occur frequently, especially on overnight trips, and sometimes result in fatalities.

Congested roads and a scarcity of ambulances can make it difficult for accident victims to receive timely medical attention. Thailand requires that all vehicles be covered by third-party liability

insurance for death or injury, but there is no mandatory coverage for property damage. The Embassy strongly encourages its employees to obtain liability insurance coverage over and above the minimum third party liability insurance required by the Thai Government. U.S. citizen motorists should consider this as well, as the more affluent driver, even if not at fault, is frequently compelled to cover the expenses of the other party in an accident in Thailand.

Travelers in Bangkok may wish to travel about the city using the BTS "Skytrain" elevated mass transit system or the underground Metro system, which operate daily from 6 a.m. to midnight. Bangkok also has an extensive bus system, but buses can be overcrowded, and are often driven with little or no regard for passenger safety. Cities elsewhere in Thailand typically have only rudimentary public transportation, and usually do not have metered taxis. In many cases, motorcycle taxis, tuk-tuks, bicycle-powered rickshaws, and pick-up trucks will be the only options available for travelers without their own transport. U.S. citizens should be cautious when using these services, as all can be dangerous in fast or heavy traffic.

Please refer to our [Road Safety page](#) for more information. Also, we suggest that you visit the website of the country's [national tourist office](#) and [national authority responsible for road safety](#)

AVIATION SAFETY OVERSIGHT: The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has assessed the government of Thailand's Civil Aviation Authority as being in compliance with International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) aviation safety standards for oversight of Thailand's air carrier operations. Further information may be found on the [FAA's safety assessment page](#).

Background Notes: Thailand



PROFILE

OFFICIAL NAME:

[Kingdom of Thailand](#)

Geography

Area: 513,115 sq. km. (198,114 sq. mi.); equivalent to the size of France, or slightly smaller than Texas.

Cities: *Capital*--Bangkok (population 9,668,854); Nakhon Ratchasima (pop. 437,386 for Muang district and 2,565,685 for the whole province), Chiang Mai (pop. 247,672 for Muang district and 1,595,855 for the whole province).

Terrain: Densely populated central plain; northeastern plateau; mountain range in the west; southern isthmus joins the land mass with Malaysia.

Climate: Tropical monsoon.

People

Nationality: *Noun and adjective*--Thai.

Population (2008): 66.32 million. (Data based on the Bank of Thailand.)

Labor force (2008): 37.70 million.

Annual population growth rate (2008 est.): 0.9%.

Ethnic groups: Thai 89%, other 11%.

Religions: Buddhist 93-94%, Muslim 5-6%, Christian 1%, Hindu, Brahmin, other.

Languages: Thai (official language); English is the second language of the elite; Malay and regional dialects.

Education: *Years compulsory*--12. *Literacy*--94.9% male, 90.5% female.

Health (2008 est.): *Infant mortality rate*--18.23/1,000. *Life expectancy*--70.51 years male, 75.27 years female.

Government

Type: Constitutional monarchy.

Constitution: Thailand adopted its current constitution following an August 19, 2007 referendum.

Independence: Never colonized; traditional founding date 1238.

Branches: *Executive*--King (chief of state), Prime Minister (head of government). *Legislative*--bicameral, with a fully-elected House of Representatives and a partially-elected Senate. *Judicial*--composed of the Constitutional Tribunal, the Courts of Justice, and the Administrative Courts.

Administrative subdivisions: 76 provinces, including Bangkok municipality, subdivided into 877 districts, 7,255 tambon administration, and 74,944 villages.

Political parties: Multi-party system; Communist Party is prohibited.

Suffrage: Universal and compulsory at 18 years of age.

Economy

GDP (2008): \$274 billion.

Annual GDP growth rate (2008): 2.6%.

Per capita income (2008): \$4,125.

Unemployment rate (2008): 1.4% of total labor force.

Natural resources: Tin, rubber, natural gas, tungsten, tantalum, timber, lead, fish, gypsum, lignite, fluorite.

Agriculture (8.9% of GDP): Products--rice, tapioca, rubber, corn, sugarcane, coconuts, soybeans.

Industry: Types--tourism, textiles, garments, agricultural processing, cement, integrated circuits, jewelry, electronics, petrochemical, and auto assembly.

Trade (2008): Merchandise *exports*--\$175.3 billion. *Products*--automatic data processing machines and parts, automobiles and parts, precious stones and jewelry, refined fuels, rubber, electronic integrated circuits, polymers of ethylene and propylene, rice, iron and steel and their products, rubber products, chemical products. *Major markets*--ASEAN, EU, U.S., Japan, China, and Singapore. *Merchandise imports*--\$175.1 billion. *Products*--crude oil, machinery and parts, electrical machinery and parts, chemicals, iron and steel and their products, electrical circuits panels, computers and parts, other metal ores and metal waste scrap, ships and boats and floating structure, jewelry including silver and gold. *Major suppliers*--Japan, ASEAN, China, EU, U.S., and Malaysia.

PEOPLE

Thailand's population is relatively homogeneous. More than 85% speak a dialect of Thai and share a common culture. This core population includes the central Thai (33.7% of the population, including Bangkok), Northeastern Thai (34.2%), northern Thai (18.8%), and southern Thai (13.3%). Ethnic Malay Muslims comprise a majority in the southernmost provinces.

The language of the central Thai population is the language taught in schools and used in government. Lao, or "Isaan dialect" is spoken extensively in northeastern Thailand; several other Thai dialects are spoken among smaller groups, such as the Shan, Lue, and Phutai.

Up to 12% of Thai are of significant Chinese heritage, but the Sino-Thai community is the best integrated in Southeast Asia. Other groups include the Khmer in border provinces with Cambodia; the Mon, who are substantially assimilated with the Thai; and the Vietnamese. Smaller mountain-dwelling tribes, such as the Hmong, Mein, and the Karen, number about 788,024.

The population is mostly rural, concentrated in the rice-growing areas of the central, northeastern, and northern regions. However, as Thailand continues to industrialize, its urban population--31.6% of total population, principally in the Bangkok area--is growing.

Thailand's highly successful government-sponsored family planning program has resulted in a dramatic decline in population growth from 3.1% in 1960 to less than 1% today. Life expectancy also has risen, a positive reflection of Thailand's efforts at public health education. Thailand's model intervention programs in the 1990s also averted what could have been a major AIDS epidemic. Even so, today, approximately 1.4% of the adult population lives with HIV/AIDS.

The constitution mandates at least 12 years of free education; however, the Abhisit administration in early 2009 started to provide 15 years of free education (3 years in preschool and grades 1-12). Education accounts for 18.0% of total government expenditures.

Theravada Buddhism is the major religion of Thailand and is the religion of about 90% of its people. The government permits religious diversity, and other major religions are represented, with Muslim communities scattered throughout Thailand. Spirit worship/animism and Hindu-Brahmic rituals are widely practiced.

HISTORY

Southeast Asia has been inhabited for more than half a million years. Archaeological studies suggest that by 4000 BC, communities in what is now Thailand had emerged as centers of early bronze metallurgy. This development, along with the cultivation of wet rice, provided the impetus for social and political organization. Research suggests that these innovations may actually have been transmitted from there to the rest of Asia, including to China.

The Thai are related linguistically to Tai groups originating in southern China. Migrations from southern China to Southeast Asia may have occurred in the 6th and 7th centuries. Malay, Mon, and Khmer civilizations flourished in the region prior to the arrival of the ethnic Tai.

Thais date the founding of their nation to the 13th century. According to tradition, in 1238, Thai chieftains overthrew their Khmer overlords at Sukhothai and established a Thai kingdom. After its decline, a new Thai kingdom emerged in 1350 on the Chao Praya River at Ayutthaya. At the

same time, there was an equally important Tai kingdom of Lanna, centered in Chiang Mai, which rivaled Sukhothai and Ayutthaya for centuries, and which defines northern Thai identity to this day.

The first ruler of the Kingdom of Ayutthaya, King Rama Thibodi, made two important contributions to Thai history: the establishment and promotion of Theravada Buddhism as the official religion--to differentiate his kingdom from the neighboring Hindu kingdom of Angkor--and the compilation of the Dharmashastra, a legal code based on Hindu sources and traditional Thai custom. The Dharmashastra remained a tool of Thai law until late in the 19th century. Beginning with the Portuguese in the 16th century, Ayutthaya had some contact with the West, but until the 1800s, its relations with neighboring kingdoms and principalities, as well as with China, were of primary importance.

After more than 400 years of power, in 1767, the Kingdom of Ayutthaya was brought down by invading Burmese armies and its capital burned. After a single-reign capital established at Thonburi by Taksin, a new capital city was founded in 1782, across the Chao Phraya at the site of present-day Bangkok, by the founder of the current Chakri dynasty. The first Chakri king was crowned Rama I. Rama I's heirs became increasingly concerned with the threat of European colonialism after British victories in neighboring Burma in 1826.

The first Thai recognition of Western power in the region was the Treaty of Amity and Commerce with the United Kingdom in 1826. In 1833, the United States began diplomatic exchanges with Siam, as Thailand was called until 1938. However, it was during the later reigns of Rama IV (or King Mongkut, 1851-68), and his son Rama V (King Chulalongkorn (1868-1910), that Thailand established firm rapprochement with Western powers. The Thais believe that the diplomatic skills of these monarchs, combined with the modernizing reforms of the Thai Government, made Siam the only country in South and Southeast Asia to avoid European colonization.

In 1932, a bloodless coup transformed the Government of Thailand from an absolute to a constitutional monarchy. King Prajadhipok (Rama VII) initially accepted this change but later surrendered the kingship to his 10-year-old nephew. Upon his abdication, King Prajadhipok said that the obligation of a ruler was to reign for the good of the whole people, not for a select few.

Although nominally a democracy with a constitutional monarchy after 1932, Thailand was ruled by a series of military governments interspersed with brief periods of democracy. Following the 1932 revolution that imposed constitutional limits on the monarchy, Thai politics was dominated for a half-century by a military and bureaucratic elite. Changes of government were effected primarily by means of a long series of mostly bloodless coups. Thailand was occupied by the Japanese during the Second World War until Japan's defeat in 1945.

Beginning with a brief experiment in democracy during the mid-1970s, civilian democratic political institutions slowly gained greater authority, culminating in 1988 when Chatichai Choonhavan-- leader of the Thai Nation Party--assumed office as the country's first democratically elected Prime Minister in more than a decade. In 1991, yet another bloodless coup ended his term. After a year-long largely civilian interim government and inconclusive elections, former army commander Suchinda Kraprayoon was appointed Prime Minister. Demonstrations were violently suppressed by the military in May 1992, with at least 50 protesters killed. Reaction to the violence, including by King Bhumibol, forced Suchinda to resign, leading to new elections in September 1992.

Political parties that had opposed the military in May 1992 won by a narrow majority, and Democrat Party leader Chuan Leekpai served as Prime Minister until May 1995. The Thai Nation Party won the largest number of parliamentary seats in subsequent elections, with party leader Banharn Silpa-Archa serving as Prime Minister for little more than a year. New Aspiration Party leader Chavalit Youngchaiyudh formed a coalition government after November 1996 elections. The onset of the Asian financial crisis caused a loss of confidence in the Chavalit government, led to a new constitution, and returned Chuan Leekpai to power in November 1997.

In January 2001, telecommunications multimillionaire Thaksin Shinawatra and his new Thai Rak Thai (TRT) party won a decisive plurality victory on a populist platform of economic growth and

development. Thaksin's premiership was marked by a confident foreign policy, implementation of his populist policies, and accusations of anti-democratic actions, including undermining independent bodies, limiting freedom of the press, and a 2003 war on drugs which led to 1,300 unsolved murders. In the February 2005 elections, Thaksin was re-elected by an even greater majority, sweeping 377 out of 500 parliamentary seats for Thailand's first-ever single-party outright electoral victory. Soon after Prime Minister Thaksin's second term began, allegations of corruption emerged against his government. Peaceful anti-government mass demonstrations grew, and hundreds of thousands marched in the streets to demand Thaksin's resignation. Prime Minister Thaksin dissolved the parliament in February 2006 and declared snap elections in April. The main opposition parties boycotted the polls, and the judiciary subsequently annulled the elections.

Before new elections could be held, on September 19, 2006 a group of top military officers overthrew the caretaker Thaksin administration in a non-violent coup d'état, repealed the 1997 constitution, and abolished both houses of parliament. Soon thereafter, the coup leaders promulgated an interim constitution and appointed Surayud Chulanont as interim Prime Minister. In a national referendum on August 19, 2007, a majority of Thai voters approved a new constitution drafted by an assembly appointed by the coup leaders. The interim government held multi-party elections under provisions of the new constitution on December 23, 2007, which resulted in the pro-Thaksin People's Power Party (PPP) winning a plurality of 233 of the 480 seats in the lower house of parliament. PPP leader Samak Sundaravej formed a coalition government and formally took office as Prime Minister on February 6, 2008.

Samak was forced from office in September by a Constitutional Court ruling that he had violated the constitution's conflict of interest provisions by hosting a televised cooking show. His successor, Somchai Wongsawat, PPP leader and brother-in-law of former Prime Minister Thaksin, also was forced from office by the Constitutional Court when it dissolved the PPP and two other coalition parties on December 2 for election law violations in the December 2007 elections. A split among ex-PPP members of parliament paved the way for parliament's election of Democrat Party leader Abhisit Vejjajiva as Prime Minister on December 15, 2008.

Efforts by the two PPP leaders to amend the 2007 constitution and provide amnesty to banned politicians, including ex-Prime Minister Thaksin, led to a renewal of street protests in mid-2008, some of which resulted in violence between security forces and protesters and between pro- and anti-government demonstrators. Anti-government "yellow-shirt" protesters occupied Government House from late August until early December; blockaded parliament in October; and occupied and forced the closure of Bangkok's airports for several days in late November through early December. "Red shirt" protests against the Abhisit government commenced in early 2009, leading to the disruption of a major Asian summit in Pattaya and riots in Bangkok in April.

Thailand's southern border provinces have long been host to an ethno-nationalist Malay Muslim secessionist movement rallying around a regional "Patani" identity. Since 2004, separatists have conducted an increasingly violent insurgency in the provinces of Narathiwat, Yala, Pattani, and Songkhla against symbols and representatives of central government authority, as well as against civilians, both Buddhist and Muslim, which has resulted in thousands of deaths.

Since the end of the Second World War in 1945, Thailand has had very close relations with the United States. Threatened by communist revolutions in neighboring countries such as Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos during the Cold War, Thailand actively sought U.S. assistance to contain communist expansion in the region. Thailand also has been an active member in multilateral organizations like the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum.

GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL CONDITIONS

Thailand is a constitutional monarchy. From 1992 and until the 2006 coup, the country was considered a functioning democracy with constitutional changes of government. Generally free and fair multi-party elections held in December 2007 subsequently restored democratic governance. The King has little direct power under Thailand's constitutions but is a symbol of

national identity and unity. King Bhumibol (Rama IX)--who has been on the throne since 1946--commands enormous popular respect and moral authority, which he has used on occasion to resolve political crises that have threatened national stability.

Under the 2007 constitution, the National Assembly consists of two chambers--the Senate and the House of Representatives. The Senate is a non-partisan body with 150 members, 76 of whom are directly elected (one per province). The remaining 74 are appointed by a panel comprised of judges and senior independent officials from a list of candidates compiled by the Election Commission. The House has 480 members, 400 of whom are directly elected from constituent districts and the remainder drawn proportionally from party lists.

Thailand's legal system blends principles of traditional Thai and Western laws. Under the constitution, the Constitutional Court is the highest court of appeals, though its jurisdiction is limited to clearly defined constitutional issues. Its members are nominated by a committee of judges, leaders in parliament, and senior independent officials, whose nominees are confirmed by the Senate and appointed by the King. The Courts of Justice have jurisdiction over criminal and civil cases and are organized in three tiers: Courts of First Instance, the Court of Appeals, and the Supreme Court of Justice. Administrative courts have jurisdiction over suits between private parties and the government, and cases in which one government entity is suing another. In Thailand's southern border provinces, where Muslims constitute the majority of the population, Provincial Islamic Committees have limited jurisdiction over probate, family, marriage, and divorce cases.

Thailand's 76 provinces include the metropolis of greater Bangkok. Bangkok's governor is popularly elected, but those of the remaining provinces are career civil servants appointed by the Ministry of Interior.

Principal Government Officials

Chief of State--King Bhumibol Adulyadej

Prime Minister--Abhisit Vejjajiva

Minister of Foreign Affairs--Kasit Piromya

Ambassador to the U.S.--Don Pramudwinai

Ambassador to the UN--Norachit Sinhaseni

Thailand maintains an [embassy](#) in the United States at 1024 Wisconsin Ave. NW, Washington DC 20007 (tel. 202-944-3600). Consulates are located in New York City, Chicago, and Los Angeles.

ECONOMY

The Thai economy is export-dependent, with exports of goods and services equivalent to over 70% of GDP in 2008. Thailand's recovery from the 1997-1998 Asian financial crisis (which brought a double-digit drop in GDP) relied largely on external demand from the United States and other foreign markets. From 2001-2006, the administration of former Prime Minister Thaksin embraced a "dual track" economic policy that combined domestic stimulus programs with Thailand's traditional promotion of open markets and foreign investment. Real GDP growth strengthened sharply from 2.2% in 2001 to 7.1% in 2003 and 6.3% in 2004. In 2005-2007, economic expansion moderated, averaging 4.5% to 5.0% real GDP growth, due to domestic political uncertainty, rising violence in Thailand's four southernmost provinces, and repercussions from the devastating Indian Ocean tsunami of 2004. Thailand's economy in 2007 relied heavily on resilient export growth (at a 17.3% annual rate), particularly in the automobile, petrochemicals, and electronics sectors. Persistent political uncertainty and the global financial crisis in 2008 weakened Thailand's economic growth by reducing domestic and international demand for both its goods and services (including tourism). Due to minimum exposure to toxic assets, Thai banks have limited direct impact from the global financial crisis. Nonetheless, Thai economic growth slowed to 2.6% in 2008, with fourth quarter growth dropping below zero. In 2009, the contraction continued. First quarter GDP was down by 7.1% year-on-year. To offset weak external demand and to shore up confidence, the Abhisit administration introduced two stimulus packages worth \$43.4 billion. The government projected that the Thai economy would be down 3.5% for the year but would see positive growth of 2.5% in 2010.

The Royal Thai Government welcomes foreign investment, and investors who are willing to meet certain requirements can apply for special investment privileges through the Board of Investment. To attract additional foreign investment, the government of Prime Minister Abhisit has promised to look for ways to expand investment opportunities, focusing more on green technology/manufacturers.

The organized labor movement remains weak and divided in Thailand; less than 2% of the work force is unionized. In 2000, an amended State Enterprise Labor Relations Act (SELRA) was passed, giving public sector employees similar rights to those of private sector workers, including the right to unionize. In 2009, efforts to streamline the State Railway authority met resistance from the powerful railways union, including a short strike which halted trains nationwide, showing that organized labor still has some potential political clout.

Roughly 40% of Thailand's labor force is employed in agriculture (data based on Bank of Thailand.) Rice is the country's most important crop; Thailand is the largest exporter in the world rice market. Other agricultural commodities produced in significant amounts include fish and fishery products, tapioca, rubber, corn, and sugar. Exports of processed foods such as canned tuna, canned pineapples, and frozen shrimp are also significant.

Thailand's increasingly diversified manufacturing sector is the largest contributor to growth. Industries registering rapid increases in production included computers and electronics, furniture, wood products, canned food, toys, plastic products, gems, and jewelry. High-technology products such as integrated circuits and parts, hard disc drives, electrical appliances, vehicles, and vehicle parts are now leading Thailand's growth in exports. Nonetheless, with export growth weakened in 2008 and inflationary pressure becoming less of a concern, the Bank of Thailand loosened monetary policy, allowing the baht to depreciate relative to the dollar to stimulate exports. Machinery and parts, vehicles, electronic integrated circuits, chemicals, crude oil and fuels, and iron and steel are among Thailand's principal imports.

The United States is Thailand's largest export market and third-largest supplier after Japan and China. While Thailand's traditional major markets have been North America, Japan, and Europe, economic recovery among Thailand's regional trading partners has further boosted Thai export growth (21.6% in 2004, 15.0% in 2005, 17.2% in 2006, 17.3% in 2007, and 16.8% in 2008). Export growth has also been high in some of Thailand's non-traditional export markets including India, China, and the Middle East.

Thailand is a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the Cairns Group of agricultural exporters. Tourism contributes significantly to the Thai economy (about 6%). As a result of political protests that closed Bangkok's airports from late November to early December 2008, tourism figures declined significantly at the end of December, a time when tourism is normally at its peak in Thailand.

Bangkok and its environs are the most prosperous part of Thailand, and the seasonally barren northeast is the poorest. An overriding concern of successive Thai governments has been to reduce these regional income differentials, which have been exacerbated by rapid economic growth in and around Bangkok. The government has tried to stimulate provincial economic growth with programs such as the Eastern Seaboard project and the development of an alternate deep-sea port on Thailand's southern peninsula. It also is conducting discussions with Malaysia to focus on economic development along the Thai-Malaysian border.

Although the economy has demonstrated moderate positive growth in recent years, future performance depends on continued reform of the financial sector, attracting foreign investment, and improving domestic investment and consumption to balance past reliance on exports. Telecommunications, transportation networks, and electricity generation showed increasing strain during the period of sustained economic growth (the projected energy needs of the country exceed current capacity) and may pose a future challenge. Thailand's growing shortage of engineers and skilled technical personnel may limit its future technological creativity and productivity.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

Thailand's foreign policy emphasizes a close and longstanding security relationship with the United States. It also strongly supports ASEAN's efforts to promote economic development, social integration, and stability throughout the region. Thailand assumed the chairmanship of ASEAN in July 2008 and served as host to the ASEAN Summit (heads of government meeting) in February 2009, as well as the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting, Post Ministerial Conference, and Regional Forum in July 2009.

Thailand participates fully in international and regional organizations. It has developed increasingly close ties with other ASEAN members--Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Brunei, Laos, Cambodia, Burma, and Vietnam--whose foreign and economic ministers hold annual meetings. Regional cooperation is progressing in economic, trade, banking, political, and cultural matters.

Thailand continues to take an active role on the international stage. When East Timor gained independence from Indonesia, Thailand contributed troops and UN force commanders to the international peacekeeping effort. As part of its effort to increase international ties, Thailand has reached out to such regional organizations as the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Thailand has contributed troops to reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq.

U.S.-THAI RELATIONS

On March 20, 1833, the United States and Thailand, then Siam, signed the Treaty of Amity and Commerce, the United States' first treaty with a country in Asia.

Since World War II, the United States and Thailand have developed close relations, as reflected in several bilateral treaties and by both countries' participation in UN multilateral activities and agreements. Thailand and the U.S. became treaty allies in 1954 (Manila Pact). The principal bilateral arrangement is the 1966 Treaty of Amity and Economic Relations, which facilitates U.S. and Thai companies' economic access to one another's markets. Other important agreements address civil uses of atomic energy, sales of agricultural commodities, investment guarantees, and military and economic assistance. In June 2004, the United States and Thailand initiated negotiations on a free trade agreement which, when concluded, would reduce and eliminate barriers to trade and investment between the two countries. These negotiations were placed on hold following the dissolution of the Thai parliament in February 2006 and the subsequent coup in September.

The United States and Thailand are among the signatories of the 1954 Manila Pact of the former Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO). Article IV(1) of this treaty provides that, in the event of armed attack in the treaty area (which includes Thailand), each member would "act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes." Despite the dissolution of the SEATO in 1977, the Manila Pact remains in force and, together with the Thanat-Rusk communiqué of 1962, constitutes the basis of U.S. security commitments to Thailand. Thailand continues to be a key security ally in Asia, along with Australia, Japan, the Philippines, and South Korea. In December 2003, Thailand was designated a Major Non-NATO Ally.

Thailand's stability and independence are important to the maintenance of peace in the region. Economic assistance has been extended in various fields, including rural development, health, family planning, education, and science and technology. The formal U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) bilateral program ended in 1995. However, there are a number of targeted assistance programs which continue in areas of mutually defined importance, including: health and HIV/AIDS programming; refugee assistance; and trafficking in persons. The [U.S. Peace Corps](#) in Thailand has approximately 100 volunteers, focused on primary education, with an integrated program involving teacher training, health education, and environmental education. The United States and Thailand, through programs with USAID, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Armed Forces Research Institute of Medical Sciences (AFRIMS), cooperate closely on a range of public health initiatives, including efforts to fight malaria, tuberculosis, dengue, HIV/AIDS, and avian/pandemic influenza.

Thailand has received U.S. military equipment, essential supplies, training, and assistance in the construction and improvement of facilities and installations for much of the period since 1950; since then more Thai have been trained under the International Military Education and Training (IMET) program than any other country. Over recent decades, U.S. security assistance included military training programs carried out in the United States and elsewhere. A small U.S. military advisory group in Thailand oversaw the delivery of equipment to the Thai Armed Forces and the training of Thai military personnel in its use and maintenance. As part of the mutual defense cooperation over the last three decades, Thailand and the United States have developed a vigorous joint military exercise program, which engages all the services of each nation and averages 40 joint exercises per year.

Thailand remains a trafficking route for narcotics from the Golden Triangle--the intersection of Burma, Laos, and Thailand--to both the domestic Thai and international markets. The large-scale production and shipment of opium and heroin shipments from Burma of previous years have largely been replaced by widespread smuggling of methamphetamine tablets, although heroin seizures along the border continue to take place with some frequency. The United States and Thailand work closely together and with the United Nations on a broad range of programs to halt illicit drug trafficking and other criminal activity, such as trafficking in persons. The U.S. supports the International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) in Bangkok, which provides counter-narcotics and anti-crime capacity-building programs to law enforcement and judicial officials from a number of regional countries.

Trade and Investment

For a single country, the United States is Thailand's third-largest trading partner after Japan and China; in 2008 merchandise imports from Thailand totaled \$23.5 billion, and merchandise exports totaled \$9.1 billion. The U.S., Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and the European Union are among Thailand's largest foreign investors. U.S. investment, concentrated in the petroleum and chemicals, finance, consumer products, and automobile production sectors, is estimated at \$24 billion.

Many U.S. businesses enjoy investment benefits through the U.S.-Thailand Treaty of Amity and Economic Relations (AER), originally signed in 1833. The 1966 iteration of the treaty allows U.S. citizens and businesses incorporated in the U.S., or in Thailand that are majority-owned by U.S. citizens, to engage in business on the same basis as Thai companies, exempting them from most of the restrictions on foreign investment imposed by the Foreign Business Act. Under the treaty, Thailand restricts American investment only in the fields of communications, transport, fiduciary functions, banking involving depository functions, the exploitation of land or other natural resources, and domestic trade in agricultural products. Notwithstanding their treaty rights, many Americans choose to form joint ventures with Thai partners, allowing the Thai side to hold the majority stake because of the advantages that come from familiarity with the Thai economy and local regulations. In recent decades, Thailand has been a major destination for foreign direct investment, and hundreds of U.S. companies have operated here successfully.

Principal U.S. Embassy Officials

Ambassador--[Eric G. John](#)

Deputy Chief of Mission--James F. Entwistle

Management Counselor--Gregory Stanford

Political Affairs Counselor--George Kent

Economic Affairs Counselor--Robert Griffiths

Public Affairs Counselor--Kenneth Foster

Consul General--Ronald Robinson

The [U.S. Embassy](#) in Thailand is located at 120/22 Wireless Road, Bangkok (tel. 66-2-205-4000). There is a [Consulate General in Chiang Mai](#), 387 Wichayanond Road (tel. 66-53-252-629).

TRAVEL AND BUSINESS INFORMATION

The U.S. Department of State's Consular Information Program advises Americans traveling and Going Global at WPI Handbook Use and adaptation welcome, but please acknowledge WPI and Natalie Mello and tell us of your use (nmello@wpi.edu)
12/3/2009

residing abroad through Country Specific Information, Travel Alerts, and Travel Warnings.

Country Specific Information exists for all countries and includes information on entry and exit requirements, currency regulations, health conditions, safety and security, crime, political disturbances, and the addresses of the U.S. embassies and consulates abroad. **Travel Alerts** are issued to disseminate information quickly about terrorist threats and other relatively short-term conditions overseas that pose significant risks to the security of American travelers. **Travel Warnings** are issued when the State Department recommends that Americans avoid travel to a certain country because the situation is dangerous or unstable.

For the latest security information, Americans living and traveling abroad should regularly monitor the Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs Internet web site at <http://www.travel.state.gov>, where the current [Worldwide Caution](#), [Travel Alerts](#), and [Travel Warnings](#) can be found. [Consular Affairs Publications](#), which contain information on obtaining passports and planning a safe trip abroad, are also available at <http://www.travel.state.gov>. For additional information on international travel, see <http://www.usa.gov/Citizen/Topics/Travel/International.shtml>.

The Department of State encourages all U.S. citizens traveling or residing abroad to register via the [State Department's travel registration](#) website or at the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate abroad. Registration will make your presence and whereabouts known in case it is necessary to contact you in an emergency and will enable you to receive up-to-date information on security conditions.

Emergency information concerning Americans traveling abroad may be obtained by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll free in the U.S. and Canada or the regular toll line 1-202-501-4444 for callers outside the U.S. and Canada.

The [National Passport Information Center](#) (NPIC) is the U.S. Department of State's single, centralized public contact center for U.S. passport information. Telephone: 1-877-4-USA-PPT (1-877-487-2778); TDD/TTY: 1-888-874-7793. Passport information is available 24 hours, 7 days a week. You may speak with a representative Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., Eastern Time, excluding federal holidays.

Travelers can check the latest health information with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Georgia. A hotline at 800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636) and a web site at <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/default.aspx> give the most recent health advisories, immunization recommendations or requirements, and advice on food and drinking water safety for regions and countries. The CDC publication "Health Information for International Travel" can be found at <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/contentYellowBook.aspx>.

Further Electronic Information

Department of State Web Site. Available on the Internet at <http://www.state.gov>, the Department of State web site provides timely, global access to official U.S. foreign policy information, including [Background Notes](#) and [daily press briefings](#) along with the directory of [key officers](#) of Foreign Service posts and more. The Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) provides security information and regional news that impact U.S. companies working abroad through its website <http://www.osac.gov>

Section 4 – Transition Issues

Experiences in Transition

adapted from an article by Janet Bennett, Intercultural Communication Institute, Portland OR

Culture Surprise

Culture surprise are the reactions which occur shortly after arrival in a different culture when we see things that are different than we are used to. It usually occurs within the first few days after arrival as we become aware of superficial differences: modes of dress, signs in a different language, nonverbal behaviors.

Culture Stress

Culture stress manifests itself in the fatigue that occurs when we practice new behaviors in a different culture. This occurs as we respond to the behavior of the new culture and try to fit in by doing our own shopping, understanding comments made about us in the local language, learning to navigate public transportation and other attempts to adjust to the new culture.

Culture Shock

Culture shock is a state of loss and disorientation precipitated by a change in our environment that requires adjustment. It results from confronting values different from our own and from the loss of a familiar network and environment. It is a normal healthy reaction to the stress of living in a different culture. Everyone who has spent time living in another culture experiences some form of culture shock.

Symptoms of Culture Shock

Symptoms can be both physical and psychological, and can include: headaches, stomach aches, dizziness, rashes, nausea, irritability, insomnia or excessive sleepiness, depression, loneliness, withdrawal paranoia, anger, aggression, hatred, fear, crying, complaining, self-doubt, boredom, helplessness, confusion, and feelings of inadequacy. This list is not exhaustive.

Prescription for Culture Shock

adapted from an article by Bruce LaBrack, Summer Institute for Intercultural Communication

1. Understand the symptoms and recognize the signs of culture stress.
2. Realize that some degree of discomfort and stress is natural in a cross-cultural experience.
3. Recognize that your reactions are largely emotional and not easily subject to rational management.
4. Gather information *before* you go so at least the differences will be anticipated. Knowledge is power.
5. Look for the logical reasons behind host culture patterns. Discover why things are done the way they are.
6. Relax your grip on your normal culture and try to cheerfully adapt to new rules and roles.
7. Don't give in to the temptation to disparage what you do not like or understand. It probably won't change.
8. Identify a support network among peers, team members, other students and faculty advisor. Use this network, but do not rely on it exclusively.
9. Understand that this is a passing phase of what will be, in retrospect, a time of great learning and personal growth.
10. Give yourself quiet time, some private space, and don't be too hard on yourself.

In preparation to return home

“In a sense, it is the coming back, the return, which gives meaning to the going forth. We really don't know where we've been until we come back to where we were - only where we were may not be as it was because of who we've become, which, after all is why we left.” - Bernard, *Northern Exposure*

Reentry Challenges and Suggestions

adapted from articles by Dr. Bruce LaBrack, School of International Studies, University of the Pacific

There are lots of reasons to look forward to going home, but there are also a number of psychological, social and cultural aspects that prove difficult - often because they are unanticipated. Re-entry into your home culture can be both as challenging and frustrating as living overseas, mostly because our attitude toward going home is that it should be a simple matter of getting resettled, resuming earlier routines, and reestablishing your relationships. Research has shown that re-entry has its own set of special social and psychological adjustments which can be facilitated by being aware of the process and following some advice from those who have already returned.

Interviewing students who have been through the experience of off-campus study generated the following list of issues and suggestions. Their advice is to take the process seriously by being realistic and thinking about it and your possible reactions.

Prepare for the adjustment process and allow enough time

The more you think about what is to come, and know how returning home is both similar to and different from going away, the easier the transition will be. Anticipating is useful. The process of re-entry will take time, just like adjusting to the new culture did. Give yourself time to relax and reflect on what is going on around you, how you are reacting to it, and what you might like to change.

Overcoming boredom

After all the newness and stimulation of your time away, a return to family, friends, and old routines (however nice and comforting) can seem very dull. It is natural to miss the excitement and challenges which characterize project work off-campus, but it is up to you to find ways to overcome such negative reactions - remember a bored person is also boring.

“No one wants to hear”

One thing you can count on upon your return: no one will be as interested in hearing about your adventures as you will be in sharing those experiences. This is not a rejection of you or your achievements, but simply the fact that once others have heard the highlights, any further interest on their part is probably unlikely because they have no frame of reference for your experiences. Be realistic in your expectations of how fascinating your journey is going to be for everyone else. Be brief.

Cultivate sensitivity and interest

Showing an interest in what others have been doing while you have been gone is the surest way to reestablish your rapport. Much frustration can be avoided if you become as good a listener as a talker.

You can't explain

Even when given a chance to explain all the things you saw, felt and experienced while off-campus, it is likely to be at least a bit frustrating to relay them coherently. It is very difficult to convey this kind of experience to people who do not have similar frames of reference, no matter how sympathetic they are as listeners. You can tell people about your trip, but you may fail to make them understand exactly how or why you felt a particular way. It's okay.

Reverse homesickness

Just as you probably missed home for a time after leaving campus, it is just as natural to experience some “reverse” homesickness for the people, places and things that you grew accustomed to while away from WPI. Feelings of loss are an integral part of returning from an off-campus sojourn and must be anticipated and accepted as a natural result of study away.

Beware of comparisons

Making comparisons between cultures is natural, particularly after residence abroad; however, the tendency to be an “instant expert” is to be avoided at all costs.

Relationships have changed

It is inevitable that when you return you will notice that some relationships with friends and family will have changed. Just as you have altered some of your ideas and attitudes while away, the people at home are likely to have experienced some changes as well. These changes may be positive or negative, and may seem even trivial to you, but expecting no change is unrealistic. The best preparation is flexibility, openness, minimal preconceptions, and tempered optimism.

Feelings of alienation

Sometimes the reality of being back home is not as natural or enjoyable as the place you had imagined. When real daily life is more demanding than you remembered, it is natural to feel some alienation, see faults you never noticed before, or even become quite critical of everyone and everything for a time. Mental comparisons are fine, but keep them to yourself until you regain both your cultural balance and a balanced perspective.

Remain flexible

Keeping as many options open as possible is an essential aspect of a successful return home. Attempting to re-socialize totally into old patterns and networks can be difficult, but remaining isolated and aloof is counterproductive.

Loss/compartmentalization of experience

Being home, along with the pressures of schoolwork, family and friends, often combine to make returnees worried that somehow that will “lose” the experience; somehow becoming compartmentalized like souvenirs only occasionally taken out and looked at. You do not have to let that happen. Maintain your contacts. Talk to people who have experiences similar to yours. Practice your skills. Remember your hard work and the fun you had while off-campus. There are lots of people on campus who have gone through their own re-entry and have had experiences similar to yours. Seek out other returned students from other sites, and look into becoming involved with the Global Ambassadors.

APPENDIX A - WPI OFF-CAMPUS STUDY TRAVEL INFORMATION FORM

WPI Off-Campus Study Travel Information Form

You must attach a copy of your travel itinerary provided by your travel agent or airline, in addition to completing this form. No handwritten itineraries will be accepted.

All students intending to complete a project at a WPI project site are asked to provide the IGSD with information about their travel arrangements. This will notify the faculty advisor, on-site coordinator and IGSD staff of your expected arrival date and time and alert them if a problem arises. *For some sites* this information is needed in order to arrange to have students met at the airport.

You must bring your passport into the IGSD to be scanned, unless you are participating in a project program within the U.S.

Name:	Site:	Term:
Arrival Date on site:	Arriving from (city):	
Mode of travel (air, train, bus, car):		
If traveling by air:		
Airline:	Flight Number:	Airport Destination:
Departure time:	Arrival time:	
Scheduled return date:		
Airline:	Flight Number:	Airport Destination:
Departure time:	Arrival time:	
If you plan to travel independently either before or after the program, please tell us your tentative plans:		

London Project Center Only
Bus Transportation: _____ **Yes** _____ **No**

(PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU CHECK ONE OF THESE OPTIONS FOR TRANSPORTATION FROM HEATHROW AIRPORT TO IES)

APPENDIX B - OFF-CAMPUS STUDENTS' HEALTH UPDATE AND RECORDS RELEASE FORM

Name _____ Project Site _____ Term _____

All students traveling off-campus to participate in a WPI program are required to carry medical insurance that is valid at the program site for the entire length of the program. Please verify this with your insurance company and list the name of your carrier and your policy number.

Carrier _____ Policy Number: _____

Do you have any medical conditions that could affect you while off-campus of which you would like to make the IGSD aware? (i.e. epilepsy, diabetes, depressive episodes, etc.) Also, please list any changes in your health not noted on your medical records on file with WPI Health Services.

Are you allergic to any medications? If so, please list them.

List any prescription medicines you are currently taking.

When traveling off-campus it is a good idea to take a supply of your prescription medications sufficient to last for the length of the trip. Prescription medicines should always be kept in the original containers with the prescription label to avoid problems with customs. It is also important to take along a copy of the prescription from your physician, clearly written, in generic terms, and with an indication of the condition being treated.

In the event of an emergency, please contact:

1. Name _____ Relationship to Student _____

Address _____

email _____

Cell Phone #: _____

Home Telephone: _____ Work Telephone: _____

2. Name _____ Relationship to Student _____

Address _____

email _____

Cell Phone #: _____

Home Telephone: _____ Work Telephone: _____

I hereby authorize WPI health services to release my medical records to the Interdisciplinary and Global Studies Division in the event of a medical emergency while studying off-campus. *I hereby acknowledge that it is my responsibility to contact my health insurance provider to determine that I am covered while at an off-campus project site.*

Signature _____ Date _____

APPENDIX C - ATC TEAM FORM
(One Per Team)

After you have turned in this completed form to the IGSD, at least one member of your group (although we suggest the entire group come so that the entire group takes equal responsibility for the equipment) is required to go to the ATC and reserve a laptop BEFORE pick-up on the specified date.

Project Site: _____

Pickup person: _____

Return person: _____

names of
team members: _____

If you can not pick up and return this PC within the specified dates, then you will need to make alternative arrangements: the ATC can *not* accommodate you.

Dates: **Pick up on or after:** **12/18/2009**
 Return on or before: **3/9/2010**

Pick-up Person

Return Person

Student Name: _____

Student Name: _____

Student Address: _____

Student Address: _____

Phone #: _____

Phone #: _____

Student ID#: _____

Student ID#: _____

Student Email: _____

Student Email: _____

APPENDIX D - ONSITE TRAVEL FORM

Name	Cell phone number
Destination	
Date & time of departure	Date & time of return

Mode of Transportation – Roundtrip

Train Bus Air Car

Departing from the Site Information			
Time of Departure			
Number of flight/train/bus		Airline/train/bus carrier	
Departing from (name of airport, station, terminal)			
<i>* Connection Information if applicable:</i>			
Number of flight/train/bus		Airline/train/bus carrier	
Departing from	time	Arriving to	time
Number of flight/train/bus		Airline/train/bus carrier	
Departing from	time	Arriving to	time

Returning to the Site Information			
Returning from:			
Time of Departure			
Number of flight/train/bus		Airline/train/bus carrier	
Departing from (name of airport, station, terminal)			
<i>* Connection Information if applicable:</i>			
Number of flight/train/bus		Airline/train/bus carrier	
Departing from	time	Arriving to	time
Number of flight/train/bus		Airline/train/bus carrier	
Departing from	time	Arriving to	time

Lodging (please call advisor with any changes to your reservations)			
Name of hotel	Name of hotel		
Address	Address		
City and country	City and country		
Phone number	Phone number		

List other students who are traveling with you on this exact itinerary:

Check this box if you are staying on site in WPI provided housing for the entire weekend.

Student Signature	Date
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Every student or group of students must turn this form into an advisor before 12:00 noon every Friday – in other words, every student must be accounted for,