

Receiving

short term teams



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[Introduction]

Churches sending people on overseas missions frequently report the enormous benefit to the local church. When churches are inwardly focussed they can find growth stifled over a period of time, but when an individual or team gets involved in missions the whole church is able to participate in the work through training, giving and praying for the people going. When the whole church is focused on being a witness to others, faith is put in action and the whole body grows together.

Equally, the individual benefits from an overseas mission experience. They have the opportunity to experience God at work in a totally new environment and as a result their faith develops and they grow spiritually.

But it is certainly not only the church and the individuals going that benefit from overseas mission trips because the visit can be rewarding to the mission field itself. Although teams and individual visitors can create work for the mission team, the visits are also an encouragement and can move the work forward if planned strategically. The work also benefits from such visits as the profile of the missionary and the work is raised back in the home church and consequently prayer and financial support may also increase.

For the most value to be gained from the mission visit for all parties, it is essential that good preparation takes place both in the UK and by those receiving the visitors. This document endeavours to assist missionaries in planning and preparing for visitors.

[Pre-Arrival]

When a missionary is approached by a local church or individual regarding a mission trip, the International Missions Department must be notified before any commitment to receive a visit is made. This enables the Missions Department to establish that the individual or team has completed the requirements of the NLT for any visit including application forms, waivers, references, insurance, police checks and other paperwork as appropriate.

If these requirements are not followed, any legal responsibility for anything that may go wrong will lie with the sending Elim church and with the receiving organisation or individual. The matter will also be brought to the attention of the National Leadership Team who will be required to respond in accordance with legal advice in order to protect the name and reputation of the Elim charity.

As soon as the visit has the go-ahead the missionary and visitor/team leader will be put in contact with each other by Elim International Missions. Discussion should then take place as to the expectations of the visitor/team and the missionary for the trip. Also, at this stage the missionary will be provided with information regarding the giftings/abilities of visitors. The missionary can also pass on any important information that the visitors may need to know.

One month before the arrival of the visitor/team an itinerary for the visit should be e-mailed to the visitor/team leader. This plan will be subject to change due to local circumstances and conditions, but it will give the team an idea of what to expect and also give the sending church the opportunity to pray intelligently for the individual/team.

A simple risk assessment for the activities should be carried out by the missionary or their delegated representative a copy of which should be sent to the visitor/team leader. (Please see appendix 1 for a sample risk assessment and a blank form.)

A copy of the itinerary and the risk assessment should also be copied to missionsteams@elimhq.net.

[During the visit]

All visitors should be met at the airport either by an Elim Missionary or by another person designated by the Elim Missionary with details notified to the visitors in advance. If this person is unknown to the visitors then they should carry some form of identification.

Transport while on overseas mission must be in vehicles adequate for the task. The vehicle should have one seat per person and where available seat belts should be worn. In hot climates, if there is a drive of more than one hour bottled water should be provided for the team. Where motorcycles are used helmets should be worn at all times.

[On-site orientation]

As soon as practically possible an orientation session should take place. The purpose of the orientation is two-fold:

- (i) To review what the team has learned from their pre-departure preparations.
- (ii) To allow the missionary to provide the team with current information and perspectives about their new surroundings which may not be possible at a distance.

The orientation session should include such issues as:

Introduction to mission team and staff. Included in this introduction should be a clear explanation of the lines of authority for the trip. Who will have the final say in any given situation? Who should the team members request permission from to do various activities? Who should they approach for new tasks etc? Who will be responsible for communicating plans to visitors? Equally visitors need to know how and to whom they should communicate successes, failures and unmet expectations.

Current itinerary for the visit. Although an itinerary will have been provided prior to the trip, it is recognised that in a mission situation plans can change and so the itinerary should be reviewed with the team at the orientation session. This applies even if there have been no changes, so that the missionary can expand and explain the itinerary and visitors have the opportunity to ask questions.

Local customs and dress. Although visitors should have been made aware of these issues prior to the trip, it is worth reiterating them to ensure that no offence is caused and the visitors are culturally sensitive.

Health information. Inform visitors whether local water is safe to drink. If not, remind them to only drink bottled water and to avoid salads, non-peeling fruit, ice in drinks and ice cream. In hot climates remind visitors of the importance of drinking sufficient quantities of water, of using sun cream and wearing hats. Advise visitors of any other special health precautions to take in the local environment.

Relationships. Remind visitors that they have agreed in their visit covenant to refrain from 'exclusive relationships' with other team members. Also, reinforce the fact that romantic involvement with a national is not permitted while on a short term mission.

Child Protection Issues. All visitors will have a current satisfactory CRB if they are going to be working with children. A brief reminder of good practice when working with children should be given.

Security. Inform team members how to remain safe in your environment including whether they should stay on site unless accompanied by a staff member. If visitors are allowed off-site without a staff member make sure they have a name and telephone number to contact in emergency. The missionary needs to make visitors aware as to what action should be taken in the case of any emergency. Advise them how best to protect their belongings, money and important documents. Please see appendix 2 for information on what to do if important documents are lost or stolen.

Currency exchange. Advise the visitors how, when and where money can be exchanged.

[Incidents and accidents]

Adequate provision should be made for the safety and security of the team. While on visits away from the main centre there should always be enough staff with the group to cover an emergency should one arise. Please see appendix 3 for emergency procedures in the case of incident or accident.

All security incidents or accidents must be reported immediately to Elim International Missions. As soon after the incident as possible, a post-incident report needs to be completed by all those involved in or affected by the incident. This allows for analysis of the incident to be undertaken, so that Elim International Missions may determine why the incident happened, whether it could have been prevented and how such events could be managed more effectively in the future.

[Post-Departure]

After the team have left the country to return home, if you have contact details of their church leader an e-mail should be sent advising the team's departure and giving a brief update on how the visit has gone.

Elim International Missions will send you an evaluation form after the visitors have departed. Although this can be time consuming please do complete this as it assists with planning future trips for specific individuals and for new teams to the area.

[Appendix 1]

Activity	What are the hazards to health & safety?	What risks do they pose and to whom?	Risk level H/M/L	What precautions have been taken to reduce the risk?	Risk level achieved H/M/L	What further action is needed to reduce the risk?
Travel by car/ bus/train	Minor to serious injury or death caused by accident. Increased risk of HIV/AIDS if medical treatment required	Risks to driver and vehicle occupants	M	Ensure missions vehicles are roadworthy and appropriate maintenance checks have been carried out Goods and equipment secured properly Local driving laws understood by drivers. Extra training given if necessary Safety belts/ head rests in good working order and worn if fitted Adverse weather conditions taken into account		
Possible stopping or detaining by police for traffic offences	Possible susceptibility to bribery &/or imprisonment	Risks to driver and vehicle occupants	M	Correct documentation carried Driving license appropriate for vehicle Vehicle maintained		

Activity	What are the hazards to health & safety?	What risks do they pose and to whom?	Risk level H/M/L	What precautions have been taken to reduce the risk?	Risk level achieved H/M/L	What further action is needed to reduce the risk?
Climate	Sunstroke, sunburn, heat exhaustion	All visitors and staff	H	Advice given regarding how to cope in hot climates and about application of appropriate creams, hats, glasses, etc.		
Crime/security	Theft/personal harm	All visitors and staff	M	<p>Passport/flight tickets and other important documents photocopied and then kept safely – if possible in a locked safe.</p> <p>Money divided and kept in different places or in a locked safe where possible.</p> <p>Credit card kept in safe place</p> <p>Avoid high crime areas. Stay in groups.</p> <p>Comply with local safety arrangements</p>		Access to details of nearest police station and/or British Embassy

Activity	What are the hazards to health & safety?	What risks do they pose and to whom?	Risk level H/M/L	What precautions have been taken to reduce the risk?	Risk level achieved H/M/L	What further action is needed to reduce the risk?

[Appendix 2]

What to do if a team member loses important documents

Passports:

Contact the nearest police station and get a police report

Visit the nearest British Consulate or Embassy (see www.embassyworld.com or www.fco.gov.uk)

Two recent passport photos, the police report, some proof of identity and money for the fee will be required.

Plane tickets:

Contact the nearest police station and get a police report

Contact the airline concerned as soon as possible.

New tickets may have to be paid for and money reclaimed at a later date

If any insurance claim is to be made, notify the insurance company as soon as possible and keep all documentation and receipts

Credit Cards/Travellers Cheques:

Notify the police as soon as possible and obtain a crime or report number or other evidence that you have reported this.

Contact the 'lost or stolen' number given by the provider of the card/cheques

[Appendix 3]

Emergency procedures in the case of an incident or accident

The priorities are to:

1. Assess the situation
2. Ensure that uninjured members of the group are moved to a safe place
3. Establish the names of any casualties, attend to them and where necessary get medical attention for them. If they require hospital treatment a UK missionary or staff member must attend hospital with them.
4. Inform any emergency services that may be available
5. Inform Elim International Missions. Do not contact the home church or family members. This will be done by Elim International Missions. Details of the incident to pass on to the home church/family will be required including names of those involved, details of any injuries, action taken so far and action still to be taken and by whom.
6. Inform other group members who are not with the group at the time of the incident. Instruct them not to contact church or family members of those involved.
7. Depending on the severity of the incident/accident notify the British Embassy/ Consulate (this to be done in consultation with Elim International Missions).
8. As soon as possible write down accurately the details of the incident, the relevant facts and witness details. Keep a written account of all events, times and contacts after the incident. If appropriate discretely take photographs of the accident/ incident. These may prove extremely useful at a later date.
9. If the incident is a particularly serious one and the media become involved under no circumstances should anyone in the group speak to the media or give a statement. Media enquiries should be referred to Elim's International Offices. Names of those involved in the incident should not be given to the media as this could cause distress to friends and family who are waiting for information.
10. Under no circumstances discuss legal liability with other parties.



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