

MIT ALUMNI TRAVEL PROGRAM  
EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

*For Distribution to and use by **MIT Hosts and Faculty traveling** with an MIT group in a formal capacity for the MIT Alumni Travel Program. This plan is also shared with the tour operator for the trip as well.*

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## Emergency Communications Plan

### **SECTION I: PURPOSE, DEFINITIONS, PROCEDURES**

#### INTRODUCTION

##### PURPOSE OF PLAN:

To provide the MIT Alumni Travel Program with a communication process including procedures and contact information for MIT offices and the tour operators in the event of a passenger death, or if a world/or local crisis takes place while travelers are on an MIT trip, whether the crisis is taking place near the group or anywhere in the world. Our goal is to provide a thoughtful, methodical, informed response to participants, their family members, and the media, under trying circumstances.

##### DEFINITIONS OF AN EMERGENCY:

- a.) Any serious incident or situation occurring during an MIT trip that significantly threatens the group as a whole or is an incident involving one or more participants which may have broader implications. **These emergencies include: acts of terrorism, war, police actions, civil unrest, acts of nature, major travel accidents, multiple deaths.**
- b.) Any serious incident or situation occurring during an MIT trip involving one or a few participants. **These emergencies include death of a participant, missing persons, and serious mental health issues.**

Note: Individual participant injuries (eg. participant falls and breaks a limb) are not considered triggers for this Emergency Crisis Plan. However, in these cases, staff/faculty should make sure that the tour director has notified the tour operator, and that proper, swift action is taken to resolve the situation.

##### PROCEDURE:

The U.S. tour operator receives word from their on-site travel staff (tour director, campus director, expedition leader) in the event an emergency occurs on the tour. Once the tour operator is notified by on-site travel staff, the operator is instructed to phone the first MIT staff member listed (for the MIT Staff Contact Information, see Section II, page 3). In turn, MIT staff will make the appropriate contact with the others listed. If the tour operator is unable to reach the first person they will contact other MIT staff members in the order they are listed.

MIT Alumni Association staff (Relations and Travel Program) will be in charge of informing appropriate staff on campus, setting up plans of action, assigning duties to appropriate staff with regard to communication, research/gathering facts, and other actions.

**At NO TIME should Association staff or faculty speak with the Media.** This task is solely for the President's office and the MIT News Office. We ask that Association members refer all media inquiries directly to the MIT News Office to ensure a coordinated response to reporters.

This plan is a guide and must remain flexible.

**SECTION II: MIT STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION**

**1. CONTACT**

*responsible for contacting Allison, or Judy if Allison cannot be reached. Will also contact Regina Dugan for initial contact with counsel.*

W:  
H:  
C: e:

**2. A CONTACT**

*Responsible for contacting #3; Back-up/first on list, in the event Melissa cannot be reached.*

W:  
H:  
C: e:

**3. CONTACT**

*Responsible for contacting other entities at MIT, below, as appropriate.*

W:  
H:  
C: e:

**4. CONTACT**

*Additional input and back-up for #3*

W:  
H:  
C: e:

**a. World Wide Issue/Terrorism/Acts of Nature/Large-scale issue: MITAA (Judy Cole) calls...**

- PRESIDENT
- EXEC V.P.
- NEWS OFFIER
- LEGAL
- LEGAL
- INTERNATIONAL SAFETY AND SECURITY
- MITAA COMMUNICATIONS
- Prospect managers if applicable (later in the process)

**b. Serious Medical or Mental Health Issue: MITAA (Melissa Gresh) calls...**

- c. LEGAL AND BACK-UP
- d. INTERNATIONAL SAFETY AND SECURITY AND BACK-UP

**ADDITIONAL TRAVEL PROGRAM STAFF**

- A.
- B.

### **SECTION III: WORLD-WIDE EVENT**

#### **MIT STAFF OR FACULTY MEMBER TRAVELING WITH GROUP**

- MIT staff host or the faculty leader takes the role of communicator between the tour director and the tour members.
- The rapport among the tour members is the responsibility of the MIT staff or faculty host (if no MIT staff or faculty person with the group, the tour director will handle all aspects of communication and care of the group).
- MIT staff or faculty assists the tour director as appropriate. Verify that the tour director has called the U.S. Embassy or Consul.
- Ascertain whether travelers are covered by insurance for emergency medical evacuation, as appropriate. (do they appear on the list provided by the Travel Program? or tour director should have detail)
- Stays in touch with Alumni Travel Program Staff as able.
- Document what happened when and who took care of which task. The MIT staff or faculty member and the tour director must make a full report to the tour operator and to the Alumni Travel Program immediately after the incident.
- **At no time should faculty, staff, or alumni travelers speak directly with the media. Do not post to social media outlets.**

#### **➔ For consideration by MIT STAFF HOST/FACULTY LEADER**

- Ascertain the current physical and psychological condition of affected participants.
- Ensure that the lead on-site tour director is in close contact with all affected participants.
- Ensure that the tour director has been in contact with the US Embassy. Have they advised the group to take certain actions? Have all participants been made aware of these precautions, and in writing? Are all participants following these precautions? Please work to ensure that the participants are aware of precautions and the plan moving forward.
- Confirm that the tour director has contacted their office in the United States and that MIT has been notified about the situation.
- What is the proximity of the event(s) to all program participants?
- Ensure that the tour director has assessed whether there is an imminent risk to participant(s) if they remain where they are/or move to another location.
- Make sure that all trip participants, whether directly involved or not, are aware of the emergency.
- Discuss with the tour director what information should be given to alumni about steps to take in the event the situation worsens.
- Ask the tour director to have adequate food and water available and access to medical attention.
- Is adequate and secure housing available? Ask how long housing will be available? What other appropriate housing options are available as a back-up if needed?
- Has travel in or out of the country been restricted in any way?
- Ask whether the group is in danger. Should the alumni be evacuated? Is airlift a desirable and viable action?
- Understand who or what is the target of the unrest? Has any particular group or organization been threatened? Does this affect the plan moving forward?
- What kind of military or other security or public safety personnel are present? Are they unusually visible? How are they behaving with respect to the civilian population?
- **Document** what happened when and who took care of which task, to the extent possible. The MIT staff or faculty member and the tour director must make a full report to the tour operator and to the Alumni Travel Program immediately after the incident.

TOUR OPERATOR GROUND STAFF, IN-COUNTRY: eg. *Tour Director, Expedition Leader, Campus Director*

- This person, or their supervisor/tour company in country, is in charge of the group and actions taken.
- They are responsible for initial assessment of the situation.
- They provide clear, thorough information to the tour director and to the MIT travelers.
- They manage the field situation, including evacuation systems, taking care of travelers' needs, notifying appropriate embassies, and other logistics.
- They serve as the primary contact with US Embassy.
- They will notify tour operator and MIT of situation and communicates with operator throughout situation. Please make sure that information about the emergency has been communicated to MIT.
- **At no time should tour staff speak directly with the media. Do not post to social media outlets.**

**SECTION IV: DEATH AND OTHER INDIVIDUAL CRISIS**

MIT STAFF OR FACULTY MEMBER TRAVELING WITH GROUP

*Death*

- MIT staff host or the faculty leader takes the role of communicator between the tour director and the tour members.
- The rapport among the tour members is the responsibility of the MIT staff or faculty host (if no MIT staff or faculty person with the group, the tour director will handle all aspects of communication and care of the group).
- Ensure that the spouse or traveling companion is not left unattended.
- Ascertain whether the traveler(s) is covered by insurance for emergency medical evacuation and repatriation of remains. (do they appear on the list provided by the Travel Program? the tour director should have full detail)
- Confirm that the tour director has contacted their office in the United States and that MIT has been notified about the situation.
- Verify that the tour director is making arrangements for repatriation of remains and verify that the tour director has called the U.S. Embassy or Consul. The Embassy or Consulate will advise as to how to deal with police.
- Ask for a certified copy (in English) of the autopsy report and the Death Certificate.
- If the spouse or family member is not present, the MIT staff or faculty member makes an inventory of possessions: purse, wallet, luggage, pockets, jewelry, passport, etc., with the mortician, the police, or, if the body is taken to the hospital, the administrator. The inventory should be made by two persons as witness to each other. Pack personal effects and help to make arrangements for their return to the U.S.
- **Document** what happened when and who took care of which task. The MIT staff or faculty member and the tour director must make a full report to the tour operator and to the Alumni Travel Program immediately after the incident.

➔ **Questions for consideration (may be helpful to MIT STAFF/FACULTY)**

- Is the MIT traveler with a spouse, family member, or friend? If so, keep them company throughout aftermath.
- Advise the travelers of the incident ASAP and work to manage the group, along with the tour director.
- Ascertain whether the traveler has medical evacuation insurance. Who has the policy number, and the contact phone number to activate it? (spouse, traveling companion, tour director, Travel Program staff, tour operator)
- Make sure the tour director has contacted the US Embassy as well as the the U.S. tour operator.

- Determine who is handling the repatriation of remains and obtain all documentation including death certificate and autopsy reports.
- Along with the tour director, examine the status of the group tour: what is next in the itinerary? Discuss with the tour director who the next few days will run; communicate all news to the other participants clearly.
- Is next of kin back at home? Ensure that the tour director is making arrangements for any emergency contacts to be contacted by the traveling companion, the Travel Program staff, or the Embassy.
- Will the police be involved? (if on-site MIT staff or faculty are questioned, please keep responses clear, factual, and if the answer is unknown first hand, refrain from answering)
- Where are the travelers' belongings? Who will make an inventory of them? (two people need to handle this together)

#### TOUR OPERATOR GROUND STAFF, IN-COUNTRY

##### *Death*

- Tour director handles all legal and logistical details in conjunction with the US Embassy and other local officials.
- Interacts with local police if necessary.
- Makes tentative arrangements for the body, pending word from spouse or next of kin.
- The tour director contacts the U.S. tour operator with details and updates on situation. The tour director has information regarding emergency contacts/next of kin on all traveler personal information forms. Next of kin in the U.S. will be contacted by the traveling companion on the tour or by the Travel Program.
- Tour director or traveling companion is responsible for activating the insurance.
- Document what happened when and who took care of which task. The MIT staff or faculty member and the tour director must make a full report to the tour operator and to the Alumni Travel Program immediately after the incident.

#### **➔ Questions for Consideration in Other Individual Cases**

#### MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

- When did the behavioral issues begin to appear and what transpired? **Document** and date all occurrences. Contact the Travel Program staff/ask the tour director to contact the U.S. operator as soon as possible to advise of situation.
- The tour director should be involved and help to solve issues and discuss directly with the participant and you, together.
- Considerations may include a.) offering extra help and attention to participant; b.) bringing on an additional local guide to assist participant through the trip (likely at the participant's expense); c.) calling next of kin to get assistance and guidance and engage them in conversation with the traveler; d.) removing the participant from the program. For points b., c., and d. assistance and support will be provided by the Travel Program and the tour operator.
- Not that all terms and conditions for each trip allow for traveler removal if the participant's behavior is very disruptive or dangerous to the group, and in some cases where the behavior involves sexual harassment.
- Many travel insurance policies have **exclusions** for mental health issues and even if they have travel insurance, not all people will be covered.

#### MISSING PARTICIPANTS

- Are search and rescue operations available on site? Are these reliable? Should they be initiated? Have the local missing persons officials been notified? If so, what is the case number? Has the US Embassy been notified?
- When was the traveler last seen? Does anyone have any idea where the traveler might have gone? If the traveler left and was expected back at a certain time, what was the time and date of the expected return? Did the participant tell anyone of his plans to be absent?