HARVARD GSS

Remote Road Travel: Tips and Planning Checklist

Road traffic accidents are the top risk for travelers abroad. Use this checklist to inform your planning for any extended land travel. Before your trip, you can also contact our International Safety & Security team to discuss your travel plans. Additional safety, security, and health resources are available at globalsupport.harvard.edu.

- Know your route.
- Map out a secondary route in case your primary route becomes impassable or unsafe.
- Vet any driver you hire. Use recommended and trusted sources.
- Research the types of vehicles in your area. Avoid using a vehicle commonly associated with dangerous or controversial groups.
- Make sure your vehicle is well maintained. Test safety equipment like seat belts and brakes.
- Determine your vehicle's estimated kilometers per liter. Identify gas stations along your primary and secondary routes. If you must carry fuel, don't store it inside the vehicle.
- Plan your travel time for daylight hours. Ensure you can make it to your destination or a stopover before sunset. Know your latest departure time and your turnaround time. Identify a new destination you can reach in the time that remains before sunset.
- Know the weather forecast for your routes and destination. Research problem spots that could be made worse by poor weather, including roads washed out by heavy rains or closed due to snow. Never drive when visibility is limited, such as when dense fog, smoke pollution, or sandstorms are expected.
- Identify safe havens on your primary and secondary routes. Safe havens are locations where you can seek assistance if necessary, such as hospitals, police stations, gas stations, and NGO or Peace Corps offices.
- Check in with a trusted local contact before and after your road travel. Appoint someone who can initiate an emergency response if you don't check in at prearranged times. If you don't have a local contact, our International Safety & Security team is available for check-ins. Contact us to request support as soon as your travel plans are confirmed, and provide us with your itinerary, vehicle information, and contact information.
- Download the International SOS mobile app before your trip. In an emergency, you can call or message for 24/7 medical and security assistance (if you have cellular or internet access). You can also check in to share your location for 48 hours.