

**MIT TRAVEL RISK POLICY**  
**(Published April 23, 2003---last updated March 7, 2005)**

**I. Introduction**

All members of the MIT community should be able to make well-informed travel decisions, and no one should be coerced or required to travel to locales where there are significantly heightened health or safety risks.

The following guidelines describe the various levels of travel warnings, definitions of MIT Travel, and the policies that apply to MIT Travel. Under these policies, student travel may be restricted under certain circumstances.

MIT will use the best available sources for assessing risk: Travel Advisories from the Department of State (DoS), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the World Health Organization (WHO).

**II. Defining MIT Travel**

- A. MIT Travel is defined as travel by any member of the MIT community on MIT business. MIT business is defined as any program or activity that is required or run by MIT or financially supported through any MIT account.
- B. Any member of the MIT community (faculty, staff and students) who is traveling wholly for personal reasons and without financial support by MIT (i.e., without funding through *any* MIT account) is not subject to MIT's travel policy. Individual discretion governs decisions regarding such personal travel.
- C. Faculty, staff and students who combine travel on MIT business with travel to their home country for personal reasons must sign MIT's travel form, but may use their individual discretion regarding decisions to travel to areas on the travel warning lists.

**III. Travel Warnings**

The following Travel Risk Categorizations were last updated on **March 7, 2005** and appear on MIT's emergency and travel web pages.

Two asterisks (\*\*) indicate that MIT's normal business travel accident and emergency medical evacuation insurance ("Travel Insurance") is not automatically available in these countries. MIT Travel Insurance may be made available for travel to these countries only if pre-approved before departure by MIT's Insurance Office.

One asterisk (\*) indicates that a country is listed because of the prevalence of Severe Acute Respiratory Disease (SARS), and in High Warning locales because of the prevalence of SARS and the lack of adequate medical care.

**A. Highest Travel Warning**

This applies to countries or areas where any of the following conditions apply:

- DoS personnel and/or their families have been ordered to leave and/or services are not available at US Embassies or consulates.
- The DoS, CDC and/or WHO have determined that there is a very serious health risk and therefore prohibit travel and/or require quarantine before or upon re-entry to the U.S.

**Countries currently given the highest travel warning are:**

Afghanistan\*\* - Burundi – Colombia (greatest kidnapping risk in the world) – Haiti<sup>1</sup> (parts of Port au Prince where Embassy staff are prohibited to travel) – Iran\*\* – Iraq\*\* – Israel\*\* (West Bank, Gaza and throughout Israel on public transportation of any kind) – Pakistan\*\* – Saudi Arabia\*\* - Somalia – Sudan

**B. High Travel Warning**

This applies to countries or areas where any of the following conditions apply:

- DoS personnel and/or their family are authorized to leave
- US citizens are urged to delay all but essential travel
- Only emergency or intermittent services are available at U.S. embassies or consulates, and even they may not be available.
- DoS, CDC and/or WHO find there is a serious health risk and inadequate medical care, and urge a delay of all but essential travel.

**Countries currently given a high travel warning are:**

Algeria\*\* – Central African Republic – Haiti<sup>1</sup> – Indonesia – Ivory Coast - Lebanon - Liberia (outside of Monrovia) – Libya\*\* – Nepal (outside Kathmandu Valley) – Yemen

**C. Moderate Travel Warning**

This applies to countries or areas where either of the following conditions apply:

- Full services are available at US embassies or consulates but US citizens are urged to delay all but essential travel based on specific events/risks.
- DoS, CDC and/or WHO find there is a serious health risk and urge delay in all but essential travel but do not find inadequate health care.

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<sup>1</sup> Travelers should contact the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Port au Prince on a daily basis for possible changes in status. The phone number for the Consular Section is (509) 223-7011.

**Countries currently given a moderate travel warning are:**

Bosnia – Congo – Guyana<sup>2</sup> – Israel\*\* (outside West Bank, Gaza and not on public transportation)<sup>3</sup> – Kenya – Liberia (within Monrovia) – Nepal (inside Kathmandu Valley) - Nigeria – Zimbabwe

**D. Travel Embargoes**

The following countries are subject to travel and other restrictions imposed by the U.S. Treasury Department’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) or other U.S. authorities:

Balkans – Burma (Myanmar) – Cuba – Iran – Iraq – Liberia – Libya – North Korea – Sudan – Syria – Zimbabwe

MIT Travel and Emergency web sites will update the list of countries by Travel Risk Category on approximately a weekly basis. Members of the MIT community are urged to check the DoS, CDC, WHO, and OFAC web pages for more current information.

**IV. Travel Policies for Travel on MIT Business**

**A. DoS Public Announcements and/or General CDC/WHO Advice (without advice to not travel):**

No restrictions apply to these locales. MIT makes available links to DoS, CDC and WHO travel advisories and posts guidance on travel and emergency web sites. MIT may offer 24/7 emergency travel service for individuals who register with the MIT Travel Office before departing.

**B. Moderate Travel Warning:**

1. MIT urges all members of the MIT community to heed DoS/ CDC/ WHO Travel Warnings and not to travel to these locales, but faculty, staff and students are free to make their own informed decisions.
2. No one may be required or coerced to travel (e.g., by a faculty member, supervisor or advisor).
3. All members of the MIT community who decide to travel anyway must sign MIT’s travel form before departure, acknowledging the risk and personal responsibility for their decision to travel.

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<sup>2</sup> Guyana has been placed under the Moderate Travel Warning category due to health and security risks associated with flooding conditions within the country.

<sup>3</sup> Travelers should heed warnings by the Department of State and U.S. Embassy regarding locations and activities of particular risk. If traveling to Israel, please contact MIT Senior Counsel’s Office for specific travel form for Israel due to particular risks.

4. All students must also agree not to travel to or through any areas where DoS personnel are required or authorized to leave. They must also agree not to travel to or through areas where MIT Travel Insurance coverage or adequate medical care is not available and to not use modes of transportation that DoS personnel or their families are prohibited to use.
5. Undergraduate students' parents or guardians must also sign the MIT travel form (to confirm discussion of risks; and if the student is under 18, parents or guardians sign to provide consent).
6. MIT may offer 24/7 emergency travel services to those who register with the MIT travel office before departure.

**C. High or Highest Travel Warning:**

1. MIT strongly urges MIT faculty, staff and students to fully understand the risks and to not travel to High and Highest Travel Warning locales. This includes places where there is a serious health risk and inadequate medical care and places where MIT's Travel Insurance coverage is unavailable.
2. No one may be required or coerced (e.g., by a faculty member, supervisor, or advisor) to travel to these areas.
3. Unless a waiver is granted in a specific case (as described in IV.E below) MIT will not approve or financially support (through any MIT account) travel by any student to High and Highest Travel Warning locales.
4. If faculty or staff members travel despite MIT's urging not to do so, they must sign MIT's travel form before departure, and they must not take (or enable) any students or staff subordinates to travel to these areas.

**D. Travel Embargoes:**

1. U.S. law may prohibit or restrict travel to embargoed countries, whether the trip is on MIT business or for personal reasons.
2. Anyone who seeks to travel to embargoed locales must contact the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) before making travel plans or transferring any item or information in any medium to any individual or entity (whether a U.S. citizen or not) in embargoed countries. OSP will help determine whether travel to these countries is banned or whether a license is required or any other restrictions apply under OFAC's regulations.

**E. Waivers of Policy Available in Extraordinary Circumstances**

Where the categorization of travel risk is unclear, or extraordinary circumstances may warrant a waiver of MIT's travel policy, the following decision-makers are responsible for granting waivers:

1. Faculty and Academic Staff: Provost, with recommendation from the Vice President for Research/Associate Provost or the applicable School Dean.
2. Students: Chancellor, with recommendation from the Dean for Undergraduate Education, the Dean for Student Life, or the Dean of Graduate Students, conferring with the Dean of the applicable School.
3. Administrative Staff: Executive Vice President, with recommendation from the Vice President for Human Resources.

The Senior Counsel is available to serve in an advisory role to all of the above. Members of the MIT Medical Department may also advise.

#### **F. Additional Information**

Please refer to MIT's emergency and travel web sites for information about planning for travel, the risks of travel, and ways to avoid or better handle emergencies. Information on these issues, as well as on where to find out more about availability and access to your regular medical benefits, regular life insurance, and Travel Insurance, with links to relevant web sites, are available in the memorandum, "Important Information on Foreign Travel," which is posted on MIT's emergency and travel web sites.

Other references and resources regarding travel include the following:

1. CDC web site: <http://www.cdc.gov>
2. DoS web site: <http://travel.state.gov/>
3. WHO web site: <http://www.who.int/>
4. OFAC web site: <http://www.ustreas.gov/offices/eotffc/ofac>
5. MIT Benefits Office: <http://web.mit.edu/hr/benefits/> or 617-253-0500
6. MIT Emergency web site: <http://web.mit.edu/emergency>
7. MIT Insurance Office: <http://web.mit.edu/ila> or 617-253-2823
8. MIT Insurance Office: 617-253-2823
9. MIT Medical Health Plan: <http://web.mit.edu/medical/plans/index.html> or 617-253-1322 (faculty/staff) or 617-253-4371 (students)
10. MIT Medical: <http://web.mit.edu/medical> or 617-253-4481

11. MIT Police 24/7 Emergency: 617-253-1212
12. MIT Sponsored Research Office: 617-253-2492 (Re: travel embargoes, export controls, and sponsor restrictions)
13. MIT Travel Office: <http://web.mit.edu/travel> or 617-253-3547