



HR's 3 Duties To Business Traveling Safety

By [Jim Hutton](#) June 13, 2016 TLNT

The unpredictable acts of terror we recently saw in major business destinations like Paris and Brussels are a stark reminder that protecting and preparing talent for travel should be a primary consideration for all HR departments. However, are you confident in your organization's ability to manage employee welfare during business travel both in the U.S. and abroad?

Here are three duty of care initiatives HR professionals should keep top of mind when evaluating their traveler protection strategies.

1. Understand the landscape

While it's not possible for every organization to become a threat expert, companies need to ensure they have resources in place to collect and distribute pertinent information and intelligence — and update their travel policies accordingly. This information also needs to be interpreted and contextualized: What does this situational awareness mean for your travelers and your organization? There are many nuances and different rationales for issuing travel advisories, so it's important to determine your organization's risk threshold, and consider how a current situation could impact your organization's travel plans. HR professionals can utilize the [State Department's travel alerts and warnings database](#) and turn to trusted security experts to better understand the risk landscapes in various regions.

2. Instill a “know before you go” mentality

Are employees well versed in the key crisis response actions and communications? Are they aware of who they need to contact and how, if they find themselves in the proximity of an attack? Additionally, employees need to know their itinerary inside and out. A few things to keep in mind before leaving on a trip include being aware of nearby hospitals and transportation systems, and identifying where the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate is. Help employees think through every leg of their trip and confirm logistics.

Finally, information should flow both ways. The employer should be made aware of all travel plans and activities, including those that are recreational. For example, if an employer is only informed about an employee's whereabouts during company scheduled events, they may not be able to contact, locate or assist an employee when the employee is "off the clock," thus putting the employee's safety at risk and leaving the organization susceptible to legal and reputational risk.

3. Scenario planning

Many people may feel the safety advice their company offers will be scant protection at best. However, it's the little things that can make a difference in a life and death situation. For example:

- Be highly aware of your surroundings – look, listen, and watch what's going on.
- Pack and dress in a way that does not draw attention.
- Write down important contacts in case your phone gets lost or damaged.
- Be aware of increased interest in "soft targets" – areas where a large numbers of people gather and where security is minimal – such as sporting events, public arenas or public areas like marketplaces.

A critical step for HR professionals is to walk employees through this advice and conduct role play exercises with members from your organization's crisis or security team. If people have considered how they will respond to a specific event, it is more likely they will take an appropriate course of action in the heat of the moment.

Travel can throw many curve balls, but using these three duty of care initiatives as a guide, you're well on your way to protecting your employees *and* your organization from travel risk.