

Pre-departure briefings: essential to project success

Travelling to any new destination requires preparation, whether the trip has been planned in five hours or five months. Pre-departure briefings are often on check-lists for travel arranged well in advance, but can easily be forgotten when it's last-minute.

Pre-departure briefings specific to your exact destination are critical to the success of any trip. If you are travelling to a new country or a different region within a country you have been to before, obtaining localised advice about medical facilities, security concerns, transport, general services and cultural considerations can prevent serious incidents from occurring.

Ensuring staff and volunteers have access to such advice before undertaking work-related travel also falls under legal duty of care obligations.

Richard's story ...

A frequent traveller and senior partner in a leading professional services firm, Richard Boynton was caught off-guard when he was required to go to Papua New Guinea (PNG) at short notice.

Preparing to leave, Richard was focused on the job at hand, but having never been to PNG before he failed to consider the potential health and safety risks associated with the trip.

However, Richard's HR team, aware of their duty of care obligations, contacted the International SOS Assistance Centre for advice. Given the urgency of his trip, later that day Richard was briefed over the phone by an International SOS doctor and security expert on the medical and safety risks in PNG and what to do if he found himself in any trouble.

As an additional safeguard, Richard's company signed up to the International SOS TravelTracker service, which offers real-time tracking and communication with staff travelling overseas. It also provides automated pre-travel advice and insightful reports for Richard and his HR team, covering not just PNG, but over 220 countries and 400 cities. It is an effective solution to help fulfil critical requirements of travel risk management plans and meet duty of care obligations.

Thorough preparation and access to information and analysis on emerging incidents in PNG meant Richard's trip went without incident, and his organisation met their duty of care obligations.