

Dear Parent or Guardian:

I am writing to you because your son or daughter has expressed interest in studying abroad next semester. We have assisted thousands of University of Rochester students in internationalizing their undergraduate experience. Most of them say that it was a time of tremendous intellectual and personal growth; you may know this if you yourself studied abroad in college, or have another child who has already done so. The University of Rochester is committed to international education and to preparing students to take their place in the global political and economic community.

Your son or daughter will go through a number of steps in order to spend a semester or year earning credits towards their degree in another country. They may apply to two or more study abroad programs, spend time in our resource library, meet with faculty and study abroad advisors, and consult with peer advisors who have already studied abroad. They are already enrolled in a non-credit, online course entitled "Study Abroad Orientation." This includes online presentations as well as a mandatory in-person group meeting. The course covers topics such as health and safety, financial aid, budgeting, packing, transfer credit, and much more. Through good preparation, we help make their transition to living overseas as smooth as possible. As part of the orientation, students receive 5 pre-departure orientation handbooks covering various topics. You may read these at <http://www.rochester.edu/College/abroad/predeparture/index.html>. Or contact the Center for Study Abroad for printed copies.

While your son or daughter is away, it is important for us to be able to reach parents and families if necessary. We want to be able to contact you in the way that is most convenient for you. We've enclosed a **Family Contact Information Form**, and request that you return it with the **Acknowledgement Form**. Please send these to us at your earliest convenience.

We hope that you find the information in this packet useful and interesting. We also have a section for parents at our website: <http://www.rochester.edu/college/abroad/parents/> If you have any questions please do not hesitate to call us at (585) 275-7532. You may also email us at abroad@admin.rochester.edu.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Levine
Assistant Dean and Director

PARENTS' FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

"Won't study abroad cost a lot more than spending a semester or a year at Rochester?"

The fact is, that for most students, a semester or a year abroad costs about the same as a semester at Rochester. If your son or daughter receives University of Rochester financial aid, it **will** transfer to a Rochester study abroad program. Advisers in the Financial Aid Office are there to help, and there are many special scholarships for which students may be eligible.

"What will the term bill look like for my student's semester or year abroad?"

It depends. If your child participates in one of the more than 75 UR-sponsored semester or academic year programs, he or she will be billed for UR tuition and basic housing. (UR programs are listed on the web site and in *UR There: A Guide to Study Abroad*.) If they choose a program not sponsored by UR, they will be billed for the UR semester study abroad fee (\$1300) but will pay the program sponsor directly.

“Will my daughter have to spend an extra semester at Rochester? Will the courses transfer?”

Study abroad advisers will only recommend programs where the courses *do* transfer, so students graduate on time. In most cases, students can even transfer courses for majors and minors by consulting with a department adviser. The Center for Study Abroad counselors guide students through this process.

“There’s so much going on at UR - how can he leave for a whole semester?”

There is a lot out there in Melbourne, London, Cairo, Tokyo, Madrid, Dublin, Shanghai, Vienna, or Beijing, too. Going away for a semester does not mean giving up all of the interests and activities they have at UR. For example, musicians seek out venues to play, and athletes find teams to join. Rochester will still be here when he gets back - and he will have new perspectives on UR, the United States, and himself when he returns.

“Can a science (or engineering) major study abroad?”

Request a copy of our “Study Abroad Opportunities for Science and Engineering Students” flyer for a list of programs. There are programs in 21 countries that offer science and/or engineering courses. Faculty advisors will be very encouraging. The Hajim School of Engineering and Applied Sciences and the Center for Study Abroad are working on developing new opportunities for engineers.

“My son doesn’t speak another language.”

Study abroad can change that. Or he may choose a program where courses are taught in English.

“My daughter has learning disabilities.”

All programs are open to students with disabilities. Learning Assistance Services counselors and study abroad adviser work with students to identify the programs that best suits their interests, talents and academic needs.

“My daughter is planning Take 5/med school/ grad school /law school. Won’t a semester abroad get in her way?”

Students who have clearly defined interests such as graduate or professional schools can plan with counselors in the Center for Study Abroad, the Center for Academic Support, and the Career Center. Many students have studied abroad as part of a Take Five project.

“I’m concerned about what employers or graduate schools will think of study abroad.”

Students who study abroad *highlight* it on resumes. Employers and graduate schools – yes, even medical schools - look for independent people who can adjust to new situations. Alumni emphasize how interested interviewers are in their international background. The Career Center also encourages these experiences. You will find University of Rochester students who went abroad for a semester or for a year in all fields: professors, physicians, scientists, lawyers, entrepreneurs, journalists, writers, teachers, gallery and museum administrators, human rights activists, filmmakers, and academic administration, to name a few!

“Where will my son live while abroad?”

There are many types of housing on study abroad programs. Some offer residence halls, but it is more common for students to live in apartments, either with other students from US colleges and universities, or with local students. Homestays may also be an option. Particularly in locations where students are eager to acquire new language skills, students may choose to live with families. Some programs offer only one type of housing, but others offer multiple options. It is important for students to understand the different choices before committing to a program, and that they are required to live in the program’s housing. Normally, they will be in double-occupancy rooms.

“While my daughter is overseas, who is responsible in case of emergency?”

Every study abroad program has a responsible local director, available on 24-hour call in case of emergencies. That person is fluent in the local language(s), and in many cases, is a citizen of the country. Either they, or their staff, will guide students in the event of medical or other problems. Program directors manage everything from cultural questions, mediating roommate problems, helping students adjust to local foods, registering for classes on the program, or guiding students in the event of a crisis. The Center for Study Abroad at the University of Rochester is always available for questions. Evenings and weekends, emergency issues can be addressed to UR Security at 585-275-3333. Security staff are then in contact with study abroad staff.

“What if my son needs to leave the program?”

In the event that your child enrolls in a study abroad program and is unable to complete it, refunds, if any, will be based on the UR’s standard refund schedule, and on recoverable costs. The refund schedule is applied according to the calendar of the study abroad program. If students enroll in a non-UR program, no refund is possible for the UR study abroad fee, and they would communicate directly with the program sponsor about the possibility of any refund of the program fee.

“My daughter does not have a US passport. How will she remain in status while abroad?”

International students can study abroad as part of their UR academic program. In order to maintain their SEVIS record and eligibility for re-entry in valid F-1 or J-1 status, they must notify the International Services Office (ISO) in advance. A new immigration document will be issued to show that the study abroad is authorized. ISO will guide students and provide them with necessary information about maintaining valid immigration status.

UR-SPONSORED AND NON-UR-SPONSORED PROGRAMS

Rochester students may choose from a wide variety of study abroad programs. A UR-sponsored and affiliated program is one with which we have a formal agreement, and a complete list appears on our web site.

There are also more than 4500 programs offered by other institutions and universities (“non-UR-sponsored.”) Your son or daughter should meet with a study abroad counselor before choosing a program.

WHY STUDENTS CHOOSE UR PROGRAMS

- UR programs are carefully selected by faculty to meet the needs of our students. UR faculty and administrators have particular in-depth knowledge of these programs' curricula through their own research interests or personal experience.
- Grades earned on a UR-sponsored program will be shown on the UR transcript, although for the most part, they will not be calculated into the grade point average (GPA). (Grades earned on non-UR programs will not be shown on the UR transcript, nor will they be calculated into the GPA.)
- UR program applications are managed and coordinated by the Center for Study Abroad. Our office is the primary liaison between students and program sponsors.
- On a UR-sponsored program, **elective** transfer credit is automatic upon completion of approved coursework with a C or better. (All students need to obtain appropriate faculty permission for overseas coursework to count towards a major, minor, or certificate program.)
- Students who participate in University of Rochester-sponsored programs are eligible for additional special scholarships.

WHY STUDENTS CHOOSE NON-UR PROGRAMS

- Although the minimum overall GPA for applying to UR-sponsored program is 2.8, many programs have more stringent requirements. Students may find that they have more flexibility with non-UR programs.
- For some students, particularly for those who do not receive any merit or need-based scholarships from UR, the overall cost of the program may be lower.
- No college or university can offer a program in every country. Allowing students to choose from the more than 4500 options available opens every possibility.

Students on non-UR programs need to obtain approval before going abroad for **all** coursework taken overseas, since some non-UR courses may not be accepted by UR for transfer credit. Advisers in the Center for Study Abroad assist students in determining transferability of overseas coursework. For example, it is essential that the adviser determine if the program is offered by an accredited institution.

STUDY ABROAD STATUS

All UR students studying abroad who wish to receive academic credit for their work are placed on "study abroad status" which maintains the student as a full-time, matriculated, University of Rochester student. Students on study abroad status are eligible for continuation of UR health insurance while abroad. Students may not use Inactive Status (used for a leave of absence from UR) and receive academic credit from a study abroad program.

Students who go on UR-sponsored programs are placed on study abroad status and are charged tuition and basic housing. Students studying on Non-UR sponsored programs pay the program directly and are assessed a \$1300 per semester administrative fee which is charged to the UR term bill (see "Billing" below).

FINANCING STUDY ABROAD

Listed below are general guidelines regarding financial aid eligibility for students on study abroad programs. However, as each student's financial situation is unique, it is his or her responsibility to meet with both a financial aid counselor and a study abroad counselor while planning a semester(s) abroad. Financial aid can be defined as a combination of any of the following: merit scholarships from UR, need-based aid, and loans.

FINANCIAL AID

For those participating in UR Programs: If your child is a financial aid recipient, they will be eligible to receive financial aid during their semester abroad. If the total program cost is less than the cost of studying at UR for that semester, their need-based aid will be reduced proportionately. Merit awards will not be reduced. Please have your child meet with a financial aid counselor to discuss his or her specific situation.

For those participating in Non-UR Programs: If your child chooses to study on a non-UR program, they will not be eligible to receive the same financial aid. Most importantly, they will not be eligible for any University of Rochester financial assistance. It is especially important for your child to discuss their plans with their financial aid counselor to determine what types of aid they will be eligible for while abroad and to ensure the continuation of their aid when they return. A small number of study abroad programs have their own financial aid or scholarships available.

In order to be reviewed for federal aid eligibility, students participating in a non-UR study abroad program must complete a Consortium/Contractual Agreement. Detailed instructions on completing the Agreement are included. A Consortium/Contractual Agreement involves multiple steps and requires several signatures, so your child should not delay in completing this requirement. **Your child's coursework must be approved before the UR Dean can sign the Consortium Agreement.**

SCHOLARSHIPS

There are numerous scholarships and other resources available for study abroad. Application deadlines vary and some may be up to a year in advance of a study abroad program. Also, be sure your child checks with a financial aid counselor to discuss how these outside awards might affect their aid. In any case, it will be to your child's benefit to win a prestigious national award.

A list of all of these scholarship programs is available from the Center for Study Abroad.

BILLING

If your child is participating in a study abroad program in the fall, the fall semester statement will be posted online in mid-July. If your child is participating in a study abroad program in the spring, the spring semester statement will be posted online in mid-December. Your child will not receive a statement in November unless they have a balance from the fall semester. Students participating in a full-year program will be billed on a semester basis.

The balance must be paid in full from the prior semester to register for a study abroad program. If there is a past due balance, students may settle their account with the Bursar's Office, 330 Meliora Hall, 275-3931. Your child's registration for a study abroad program is subject to cancellation if payment is not kept current and their past due balance is \$5,000 or greater, or if they submit a check that is returned by the bank, unless acceptable arrangements are promptly made

If your child is participating in a non-UR program, UR will bill them for the study abroad fee (\$1,300). This fee partially covers costs incurred by the University for administrative services and guarantees that credit will be awarded for courses taken abroad. Your child will be billed directly for the program by the college or university that sponsors the program.

For more information about refunds and other billing questions, please see the student pre-departure handbook, "Money Matters" available on our website at <http://www.rochester.edu/college/abroad/predeparture/index.html>

INSURANCE

Medical Insurance: Check your health insurance coverage to find out if the student will be covered during the stay abroad, and whether any special conditions apply. If the student is insured through the University of Rochester Health Service, this coverage will extend overseas. Be sure you and your child know how this system works: how bills are paid, in the case of a medical emergency, and how to access routine treatments.

Should students require medical attention abroad, it may be necessary for them to have sufficient cash on hand to make payment at the time of treatment since the foreign physician and/or hospital may not be able to process medical bills through an American insurance company.

For students who study abroad during the academic year, UR provides them with a MEDEX insurance policy (ID#341451) that provides coverage for emergency medical evacuation and repatriation of remains. Students who participate in UR programs sponsored by IES, CIEE, DIS and AUC, or who are covered by the UR/Aetna insurance plan already receive this benefit. This benefit does *not* cover routine medical services.

Travel and Property Insurance: Student travelers should have insurance to cover any loss of money because of trip interruption or cancellation, as well as loss of baggage and other property while traveling or living in overseas. In addition, we recommend that students consider purchasing personal liability insurance against injury or damage

caused by or resulting from students' acts or omissions during enrollment in any program.

The University of Rochester is not liable for damage or loss of personal property. Contact your insurance agent regarding property insurance.

PRE-DEPARTURE ORIENTATION

The Center for Study Abroad organizes a Pre-Departure Orientation for students studying abroad in the coming semester. It is primarily on-line, and includes one required group meeting. All students receive a departure packet containing valuable information. If you would like a copy of the Pre-departure Guide, please visit our website: <http://www.rochester.edu/College/abroad/predeparture/index.html>

TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS WHILE STILL AT UR

We often remind students to take care of *all business before they leave the UR campus*. It is much easier for students to contact professors and staff members, obtain necessary signatures, and sign important forms in person, rather than from a distance. Here is a brief checklist we provide to students in their Pre-departure packet:

- Find out about your banking options. Your program will give you information about banking in your host country.
- Meet with a counselor in the Financial Aid Office in Wallis Hall if you receive any financial aid (this includes need-based aid or merit awards, i.e. scholarships).
- Obtain course approvals for foreign language courses and for courses you wish to use towards your major, minor, or certificate. If you are going on a non-UR program, you will need to have all courses approved for transfer credit.
- Make several copies of your passport. Leave a copy at the Center for Study Abroad.
- Research the city and country where you will be studying.
- Forward your UR email account to a web-based email provider such as Yahoo or Gmail. All official correspondence will only be sent to your UR email account.
- Visit the River Campus post office to give a forwarding address and to maintain your CPU box.

How to Contact the Center for Study Abroad & Other UR Offices

**206 Lattimore Hall
Rochester, NY 14627-0376
TEL: (585) 275-7532
FAX: (585) 461-5131**

abroad@admin.rochester.edu

<http://www.rochester.edu/abroad>

University of Rochester Security Maintenance & Transportation Building TEL (585) 275-3333 FAX (585) 273-1128 e-mail: 4info@security.rochester.edu	Residential Life Contact: Laurel Contomanolis TEL (585) 275-3166 FAX (585) 275-7941 e-mail: housing@reslife.rochester.edu
Bursar's Office TEL (585) 275-3931 FAX (585) 461-3356 e-mail: bursar@admin.rochester.edu	Registrar's Office Contact: Nancy Speck TEL (585) 275-8131 FAX (585) 275-2190 e-mail: registrar@mail.rochester.edu
Career Center Law professions, career planning TEL (585) 275-2366 FAX (585) 461-3093 e-mail: careers@mail.rochester.edu	River Campus Parking Office Contact: Glenroy A. Sicard, Sr. TEL (585) 275-3983 FAX (585) 275-8097 e-mail: rcpark@services.rochester.edu
Financial Aid Office Contact: Any Financial Aid counselor TEL (585) 275-3226 FAX (585) 756-7664 e-mail: help@finaid.rochester.edu	International Services Office Contact: Cary Jensen TEL (585) 275-2866 FAX (585) 244-4503 e-mail: questions@iso.rochester.edu
University Health Services (UHS Health Insurance Coverage) \ Contact: Linda Dudman TEL (585) 273-5770 FAX (585) 276-0149 e-mail: ldudma@uhs.rochester.edu	Warner Graduate School of Education and Human Development (MA, 3/2 Programs) TEL (585) 275-3950 FAX (585) 473-7598 e-mail: admissions@warner.rochester.edu
Simon School of Business (MBA, 3/2 Programs) Contact: Rebekah Lewin, Executive Director of M.B.A. Admissions and Administration TEL (585) 275-0492 FAX (585) 271-3907	Center for Academic Support General academic issues: any Academic Advisor Certificate Programs: any Academic Advisor Graduate Fellowships: Belinda Redden Health Professions: Dan Blake / Chip Bailey Take Five: Joseph Rodgers TEL (585) 275-2354 FAX (585) 275-2190 e-mail: cascas@mail.rochester.edu
Office of the Dean of Students Contact: Dawn L. Bruner, Director of Parent Relations TEL (585) 275-5415 FAX (585) 276-0151 e-mail: dawn.bruner@rochester.edu	

Useful items and gift ideas for students going abroad

Here are some suggestions that can be purchased on-line, or in stores that cater to travelers' needs.

1. *TRAVEL GUIDE / MAP*
2. *"HEALTHY TRAVEL" GUIDE*
3. *PAPERBACK COOKBOOK*

4. *INEXPENSIVE WATCH*
5. *ALARM CLOCK*
6. *SMALL FLASHLIGHT*
7. *SAFETY WALLET*
8. *SMALL PHOTO ALBUM OF FAMILY AND FRIENDS*
9. *DECK OF CARDS OR HAND-HELD GAME*
10. *ADDRESS LABELS FOR SENDING POSTCARDS*
11. *PHONE CARD*
12. *"SLEEP SACK"*
13. *CAMP TOWEL*

Latest Department of State Travel Precautions as of August 8, 2011:

July 26, 2011

The Department of State has issued this Worldwide Caution to update information on the continuing threat of terrorist actions and violence against U.S. citizens and interests throughout the world. U.S. citizens are reminded to maintain a high level of vigilance and to take appropriate steps to increase their security awareness. This replaces the Worldwide Caution dated January 31, 2011, to provide updated information on security threats and terrorist activities worldwide.

The Department of State remains concerned about the continued threat of terrorist attacks, demonstrations, and other violent actions against U.S. citizens and interests overseas. The Department of State believes there is an enhanced potential for anti-American violence given the death of Osama Bin Laden in May 2011. Current information suggests that Al-Qa'ida and affiliated organizations continue to plan terrorist attacks against U.S. interests in multiple regions, including Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. These attacks may employ a wide variety of tactics including suicide operations, assassinations, kidnappings, hijackings, and bombings.

Extremists may elect to use conventional or non-conventional weapons, and target both official and private interests. Examples of such targets include high-profile sporting events, residential areas, business offices, hotels, clubs, restaurants, places of worship, schools, public areas, and other tourist destinations both in the United States and abroad where U.S. citizens gather in large numbers, including during holidays.

U.S. citizens are reminded of the potential for terrorists to attack public transportation systems and other tourist infrastructure. Extremists have targeted and attempted attacks on subway and rail systems, aviation, and maritime

services. In the past several years, these types of attacks have occurred in cities such as Moscow, London, Madrid, Glasgow, and New York City.

Current information suggests that Al-Qa'ida and affiliated organizations continue to plan terrorist attacks against U.S. and Western interests in Europe. European governments have taken action to guard against terrorist attack, and some have spoken publicly about the heightened threat conditions. In the past several years, attacks have been planned or occurred in various European cities.

Credible information indicates terrorist groups also seek to continue attacks against U.S. interests in the Middle East and North Africa. For example, Iraq remains dangerous and unpredictable. Attacks against military and civilian targets throughout Iraq continue. Methods of attack have included roadside improvised explosive devices, mortars, and shootings; kidnappings still occur as well. Security threat levels remain high in Yemen due to terrorist activities there. The U.S. Embassy has had to close several times in response to ongoing threats by Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). U.S. citizens as well as other Westerners have been targeted for attack in Yemen. U.S. citizens have also been the targets of numerous terrorist attacks in Lebanon in the past (though none recently) and the threat of anti-Western terrorist activity continues to exist there. In Algeria, terrorist attacks occur regularly, particularly in the Kabylie region of the country. In the past, terrorists have targeted oil processing facilities in both Saudi Arabia and Yemen.

The events of the last few months in many countries in the Middle East, including Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Bahrain, and Syria, have resulted in civil unrest and large-scale protests and demonstrations. The situation in Libya remains volatile and dangerous and the threat of violent military and terrorist operations remains high, even in opposition-controlled areas. U.S. citizens are warned that demonstrations intended to be peaceful can escalate into violent clashes. U.S. citizens are reminded that demonstrations and riots can occur with little or no warning. U.S. citizens are urged to avoid areas of demonstrations if possible and to exercise caution if within the vicinity of a demonstration.

A number of Al-Qa'ida operatives and other extremists are believed to be operating in and around Africa. Since the July 11, 2010 terrorist bombings in Kampala, Uganda, for which the Somalia-based, U.S.-designated Foreign Terrorist Organization al-Shabaab has claimed responsibility, there have been increased threats against public areas across East Africa. The terrorist attacks of August and September 2010 against the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and African Union (AU) peacekeeping forces in Somalia, as well as the bombing of hotels and minibuses in Somalia, highlight the vulnerabilities to terrorist attacks in East Africa and around the world. Additionally, the terrorist group Al-Qa'ida in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) has declared its intention to attack Western targets throughout the Sahel (which includes Mali, Mauritania, and Niger). It has claimed responsibility for kidnappings, attempted kidnappings, and the murder of several Westerners throughout the region, including southern Algeria.

U.S. citizens considering travel by sea near the Horn of Africa or in the southern Red Sea should exercise extreme caution, as there has been a notable increase in armed attacks, robberies, and kidnappings for ransom by pirates. Merchant vessels continue to be hijacked in Somali territorial waters, while others have been hijacked as far as 1,000 nautical miles off the coast of Somalia, Yemen, and Kenya in international waters.

The U.S. government maritime authorities advise mariners to avoid the port of Mogadishu and to remain at least 200 nautical miles off the coast of Somalia. In addition, when transiting around the Horn of Africa or in the Red Sea, it is

strongly recommended that vessels travel in convoys and maintain good communications at all times. U.S. citizens traveling on commercial passenger vessels should consult with the shipping or cruise-ship company regarding precautions that will be taken to avoid hijacking incidents. Commercial vessels should review the Department of Transportation Maritime Administration's suggested piracy countermeasures for vessels transiting the Gulf of Aden, which can be found at <http://www.marad.dot.gov/>

The U.S. government continues to receive information that terrorist groups in South and Central Asia may also be planning attacks in the region, possibly against U.S. government facilities, U.S. citizens, or U.S. interests. The presence of Al-Qa'ida and its affiliates [Taliban elements, Lashkar-e-Tayyiba, indigenous sectarian groups, and other terror organizations, many of which are on the U.S. government's list of Foreign Terror Organizations (FTOs)], poses a potential danger to U.S. citizens in the region. Terrorists and their sympathizers have demonstrated their willingness and ability to attack targets where U.S. citizens or Westerners are known to congregate or visit. Their actions may include, but are not limited to, vehicle-borne explosive attacks, improvised explosive device attacks, assassinations, carjackings, rocket attacks, assaults, or kidnappings.

Such attacks have occurred in a number of South Asian states, including Pakistan, where a number of extremist groups continue to target U.S. and other Western citizens and interests, and Pakistani government and military / law enforcement personnel. Suicide bombing attacks continue to occur throughout the country on a regular basis, often targeting government authorities such as police checkpoints and military installations, as well as public areas such as mosques, and shopping areas. In Afghanistan, remnants of the former Taliban regime and the Al-Qa'ida terrorist network, as well as other groups hostile to International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) / NATO military operations, remain active. There is an ongoing threat of kidnapping and assassination of U.S. citizens and Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) workers throughout the country. There is an increased threat of terrorism in India. Terrorists have targeted public places in India frequented by Westerners, including luxury and other hotels, trains, train stations, markets, cinemas, mosques, and restaurants in large urban areas.

Supporters of terrorist groups such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, Al-Qa'ida, the Islamic Jihad Union, and the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement are active in the Central Asian region. Members of these groups have expressed anti-U.S. sentiments and attacked U.S. government interests in the past. Previous terrorist attacks conducted in Central Asia have involved improvised explosive devices, suicide bombings, assassinations, and kidnappings.

Before You Go

The Department of State encourages U.S. citizens living overseas or planning to travel abroad to enroll in the [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#). When you enroll in STEP, we can keep you up to date with important safety and security announcements. Enrolling will also make it easier for the Embassy to contact you in the event of an emergency. You should remember to keep all of your information in STEP up to date; it is particularly important when you enroll or update your information to include a current phone number and e-mail address.

U.S. citizens are strongly encouraged to maintain a high level of vigilance, be aware of local events, and take the appropriate steps to bolster their personal security. For additional information, please refer to ["A Safe Trip Abroad"](#).

U.S. government facilities worldwide remain at a heightened state of alert. These facilities may temporarily close or periodically suspend public services to assess their security posture. In those instances, U.S. embassies and consulates will make every effort to provide emergency services to U.S. citizens. U.S. citizens abroad are urged to monitor the local news and maintain contact with the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.

As the Department of State continues to develop information on potential security threats to U.S. citizens overseas, it shares credible threat information through its [Consular Information Program documents](#), such as Travel Warnings, Travel Alerts, Country Information, and country specific Messages and Emergency Messages, all of which are available on the Bureau of Consular Affairs website at <http://travel.state.gov/>. Stay up to date by bookmarking our [website](#) or downloading our free [Smart Traveler iPhone App](#) for travel information at your fingertips. Follow us on [Twitter](#) and the Bureau of Consular Affairs page on [Facebook](#) as well.

In addition to information on the internet, travelers may obtain up-to-date information on security conditions by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll-free in the United States and Canada or, from other countries, on a regular toll line at 1-202-501-4444. These numbers are available from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm Monday through Friday, Eastern Time (except U.S. federal holidays).