



ssa
education abroad

Guidelines for Student Safety and Security

[SSA Education Abroad](#) (SSA) has, as one of its primary goals, the safety and wellbeing of students, and the peace of mind of their parents and home university staff. The following procedures have been established to ensure this goal.

Personal Health and Safety

- SSA provides each student with an individual insurance policy that covers illnesses and accidents. Detailed information is included in the [Student Handbook](#) and orientation materials for each study abroad location:
 - [Spain](#)
 - [Argentina](#)
 - [Cuba](#)
 - [Puerto Rico](#)
 - Panama

SSA staff members and/or Resident Directors will accompany students to the doctor, if requested.

- One of the first presentations given to all students once on site is the Health and Safety Orientation, designed to make students aware of general safety issues as well as those related directly to their host cities and countries.
- SSA has 24-hour [emergency telephone numbers](#) that connect students directly to the Resident Directors or on-call staff:

Alicante, Spain: (011 34) 690-774-830

Barcelona, Spain: (011 34) 689-766-723

Seville, Spain: (011 34) 699-306-451

Córdoba, Argentina: (011 54) 351-535-3751

Havana, Cuba: (011 53) 5841-2920

Panama City, Panama: (011 507) 6983-7420

Boquete, Panama: (011 507) 6983-7420
San Juan, Puerto Rico: (787) 587-0747
U.S. Office: (413) 687-7069

Students receive this number during orientation. It is also provided in the recorded messages, in English and Spanish, on the answering machines at our U.S. office phone number: (413) 256-0011.

- Students are provided with emergency telephone numbers for police, fire, ambulance, U.S. Embassy, and hospitals during orientation. SSA will provide assistance in filing police reports when necessary.
- The Resident Directors, in conjunction with the SSA staff, monitor the wellbeing of students and provide advice and counsel with any problem or emergency, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- SSA sponsored study trips outside of Alicante, Barcelona, Seville, Córdoba, Havana, Panama City, Boquete, and San Juan, are supervised by a minimum of two SSA professors or staff members; with larger groups, at least one professor/staff member is assigned to every 20 students. The professor/staff member in charge carries a cell phone. Students are given this number in writing at the beginning of the trip. In case of emergency, the professor in charge will contact the appropriate local authority (ambulance, police) as well as the SSA emergency number.
- When traveling independently, students are requested to file a Travel Information Form, informing SSA administration of their itinerary and contact information.
- The SSA facilities at Calle Harinas in Seville, Spain are monitored by an alarm system that includes video surveillance and an emergency response system provided through a third party.
- Students in SSA programs have access to the emergency network and facilities provided by the host institutions (Universidad de Alicante, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Universidad de Sevilla, Universidad Pablo de Olavide, Universidad Nacional de Córdoba, Universidad de la Habana, and Universidad del Sagrado Corazón).

Large Scale Emergencies

- For emergencies including, but not limited to, natural disasters, social or political unrest, terrorist attacks, kidnapping, a hostage situation, or pandemics, the SSA Resident Directors monitor local conditions through the media, local civil authorities, the U.S. Embassy, and the U.S. Department of State advisories. SSA participates in the Warden System established by the U.S. Consulates in Spain, Argentina, Cuba, Panama, and Puerto Rico and designed to keep U.S. citizens informed of U.S. Department of State advisories and warnings.

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In USA: 433 West St, Suite 8, Amherst MA 01002, USA ♦ Tel (+1) 413-256-0011

In Spain: Calle Harinas 18, 41001 Seville, Spain ♦ Tel: (+34) 954-22-4107

- SSA has a phone tree contacting procedure to be put into effect if necessary.
- The SSA Resident Directors will call for a meeting with students, as well as use email and written notices, to provide the most recent U.S. Department of State information available and address student questions and concerns.
- SSA will encourage students to contact their families, and will facilitate contact if usual channels of communication are not available in the U.S., Spain, Argentina, Cuba, Panama, or Puerto Rico.
- If local conditions warrant, students will be encouraged to maintain a low profile, avoid travel outside of their program location, and remain aware of their surroundings. SSA will cancel classes and encourage students to remain with their host families if necessary.
- The U.S. office of SSA will serve as contact in the U.S. and will keep study abroad staff at students' universities informed of developments in our program locations, including copies of emails and written information distributed to students.
- SSA programs will be suspended in the case of severe emergencies (U.S. Department of State warning, large-scale terrorist activity in the host city or country, civil unrest, martial law, pandemic, etc.).
- SSA is prepared to carry out an evacuation from Spain, Argentina, Cuba, Panama, or Puerto Rico, if programs are suspended. SSA will make every effort to expedite students' return to the U.S., in conjunction with U.S. Department of State or Armed Forces representatives, via commercial airlines or U.S. military bases. If necessary, SSA will charter transportation by road, rail or air to ensure the safe evacuation of students. SSA always keeps sufficient cash on hand in local and U.S. currency for emergency purposes.

Risk Management Protocol and Emergency Response Plan

These guidelines describe how SSA staff must address incidents and emergencies.

Prior to Departure

Before a program starts, Resident Directors will have the following information for each participant:

- Passport copy
- Emergency contact information
- Medical information
- Health insurance card
- Flight information
- Homestay assignment

Orientation

Resident Directors will communicate the emergency response plan as well as emergency contact information with students during the on-site orientation.

Types of Incidents and Protocol

Once a critical incident occurs, the Resident Directors must document all information available and the steps taken throughout the incident using the guidelines of the SSA [Incident Report](#). Resident Directors must complete and submit the incident report to the SSA Executive Team and Student Services Manager immediately. Resident Directors will also send follow up communication until the incident is fully resolved. The Student Services Manager will communicate this information and all pertaining updates to the students' home institutions.

Resident Directors will execute the following protocol:

Medical Emergencies

In cases of serious medical situations, Resident Directors will:

- Inform students of the location of the closest hospital/clinic to the host university or homestay.
- Obtain the necessary medical help and take the student to a hospital/clinic, verify the nature of the emergency with a doctor, inform healthcare personnel about chronic medical conditions, and assist with medical insurance paperwork.
- Have the student call his/her emergency contact. If the student is not able to communicate, the Resident Directors will call the emergency contact and, if possible, obtain the student's permission prior to the call.

Robbery and Assault

Resident Directors will:

- Call local law enforcement agency.
- Take student to the doctor if necessary.
- Assist student in obtaining funds to replace stolen money.
- Assist student in contacting the U.S. Embassy to replace passport.
- Have student call his/her emergency contact.

Mental Health and Suicide Attempt

Before departure, students with mental health conditions are required to provide detailed information of their condition, treatment, medications, etc. Once on site, they are encouraged to ask for advice or assistance from a professional counselor, if necessary. Resident Directors will:

- Provide students with all the [information and resources](#) they may need for their condition.
- Arrange for students to meet with one of the English or Spanish speaking psychologists SSA works with. This service has no extra cost.

Sexual Violence

Resident Directors will hand out the [Sexual Violence Protocol](#) as well as the [Sexual Violence Guidelines](#) during Orientation to each program participant. Resident Directors will:

- Take student to the doctor if necessary.
- Call local law enforcement agency to report incident.
- Help student find counseling.
- Help student return home, if requested or required.

Natural Disasters and Group Accidents

Resident Directors will:

- See to the safety of all group members.
- Communicate immediately with SSA staff as to the safety and state of health of all group members, the group's location and plans.
- Communicate the same information to the nearest U.S. Embassy.
- Consult with the U.S. Embassy and local authorities for advice on how to respond to the situation.
- Discuss plans with group members. This may include change of location, change in program schedule, cancellation of the program, or a shift in emphasis in the program.
- Some students may decide to return home immediately. In these cases, Resident Directors will assist in making arrangements.

Civil Disturbance or Act of Terrorism

Resident Directors will:

- Monitor situations and locations which can be potentially dangerous.
- Inform students and advise them to avoid such areas whenever possible.
- Discourage or forbid, if necessary, attendance at particularly sensitive political meetings, rallies, or other sizable gatherings.
- Communicate with the U.S. Embassy if they suspect problems are likely to erupt.
- Execute evacuation procedures in case it becomes necessary and follow instructions issued by the U.S. Embassy.

Missing Student

Resident Directors will:

- Inquire with friends and associates of the missing participant about the student's whereabouts.
- Notify the U.S. Embassy and local authorities.
- Follow up with authorities daily.

Student Arrest

Resident Directors will:

- Contact local law enforcement agency.
- If a student is incarcerated, send staff to make an in-person visit to determine what happened.
- Have the student call his/her emergency contact. If the student is not able to communicate, the Resident Directors will call the emergency contact and, if possible, obtain the student's permission prior to the call.
- Report situation to the U.S. Embassy.
- Assist student in obtaining funds for bail if possible.
- Contact CISI Health Insurance to request the legal advice services they provide.

Death of a Student

If a student dies while participating in the program, Resident Directors will record all available facts accurately.

- If word comes by phone, obtain the identity of the person giving the information.
- Determine the cause of death.
- Find out the time and place of death.
- Obtain name and address of undertaker, if available.
- Find out the participant's religion. Wait until you have heard from the family as to their wishes.
- If the participant died in an accident, inquire about the local laws regarding autopsy.
- Find out if anyone has contacted the participant's family. Discourage others from contacting family members or making social media posts until SSA has formally notified the family of the deceased.
- Contact CISI Health Insurance regarding insurance coverage and procedures for repatriation of remains.

Racially-Motivated Verbal or Physical Harassment

Students are encouraged to report any form of racially-motivated verbal or physical harassment to the Resident Directors or SSA staff immediately. Resident Directors will:

- Take student to the doctor if necessary.
- Call local law enforcement agency to report incident.
- Help student find counseling.

Drug and Alcohol Abuse

Students are informed that it is forbidden to have, take, or smoke any kind of drug during the program. Violation of this norm may lead to expulsion from the program. Resident Directors will:

- Take student to the doctor if necessary.
- Help student find counseling if necessary..

Sources

- U.S. Department of State
- Studentsabroad.com Study Abroad Student Handbook
- UNG Risk Management Protocol and Emergency Response Plan