

SAMS COVID-19 CONTINGENCY PLAN: Draft 2020.03.23

As the situation surrounding the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic continues to evolve the Society will develop this contingency plan (subject to change) that we ask all SAMS missionaries (and other personnel that this may apply) to review and implement, as appropriate and contextualizing with careful consideration. This will allow each of us to stay alert and prepare to respond appropriately as circumstances change. The plan is based on undergirding values (see Appendix 1)

This contingency plan underlying basis is the US State Department's 4 Travel Advisory Levels. However, on March 19 the State Department issued an unprecedented Global Level 4 "DO NOT TRAVEL" Advisory (see Appendix 2). Consequently, this document will emphasize guidance that may or may not apply in your context because of the complexities of dealing with a global pandemic and seeking to predict future developments. **This plan primarily focuses on two options: evacuation and staying, which likely will include sheltering in place for an indeterminate time.** SAMS home staff will attempt to contact you if there are any changes that may impact you.

A. EVACUATION GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

1. All individuals are free to evacuate, if deemed possible, based on their discernment.
2. SAMS leadership will support an individual's decision to evacuate.
3. SAMS is not mandating an evacuation.
4. Please consult with host diocesan leadership and keep them abreast of plans.

B. SAMS EVACUATION POLICY:

The following is SAMS Evacuation Policy as found in the Missionary Handbook. Since this is a global crisis, the policy is not fully applicable to such a situation. It is not possible to evacuate personnel to a place of "safety" because all areas are (or most likely will be) affected by the virus, but the Society wants you be aware of this policy..

In the event of a regional or countrywide crisis (such as a military, terrorist, economic, natural, or public health crisis in which there is a potential threat to life or safety) the Society, through the President and Mission Director, may determine that evacuation of personnel is a necessary action. The Society will attempt to consult with the Missionaries, the receiving diocese and governmental authorities to help in the determination of an evacuation order.

All personnel will be required to evacuate when an evacuation order is given by the Society. Any Missionary who chooses not to evacuate may so choose with the understanding that employment by the Society is terminated. The Missionary may appeal

this termination. The Missionary may be reinstated by the President and Mission Director after the evacuation order is lifted.

Even if an evacuation order is not given by the Society, Missionaries may use their discretion to evacuate at any time during a crisis. If possible before departure, consultation with the home office and the receiving diocese is recommended.

The last paragraph is most applicable currently. This was also stated in email communication sent to all personnel March 19/20: “Consequently, we believe everyone needs the freedom to make these decisions on their own because of these widely varying situations and our trust in your discernment. We also desire to provide counsel and care for you.” The Society will seek to support you in your location as far as and as long as circumstances in your context and the USA context permit.

C. KEY TRIGGERS FOR EVACUATION:

1. Evacuation orders made by
 - a. Local government
 - b. Embassies
 - c. Diocesan leadership
2. Exposure to unreasonable risk
3. Information/perspective from host culture nationals
4. Action by other NGO’s and international organizations
5. Limited access to living necessities
6. A window of opportunity to evacuate still is open.

D. TO BE CONSIDERED IN DETERMINING WHETHER TO EVACUATE:

1. Can we continue to perform ministry (not merely survive)?
2. Do we have access to food, water, **medication** and shelter?
3. What will be our access to medical care or transport (**Refer to Appendix 3 which may infer that this is or will be limited.**)?
4. Is there threat to bodily harm? What is likelihood of social unrest?
5. How is our emotional health, considering the cumulative effect of stress?
6. Do we have the ability to evacuate?
 - a. Can we get airline tickets or other transport (Appendix 2 may infer that U.S government ability to help may not be present now or much longer.)?
 - b. Can we obtain fuel or local transportation to get to airport?
 - c. What are potential risks of infection in transit relative to “sheltering in place?”
 - d. Will we be able to get lodging and other needs in transit if delayed?
 - e. Will we be able to get lodging and other needs at the place to which we relocate?
 - f. What impact is the global pandemic having in the place to which we relocate?
7. What will be the impact on our host cultures?
 - a. How does our presence potentially pose a threat to them?

- b. How will our staying help strengthen Gospel witness and ministry to the community?
8. How does being in any one of the following categories potentially impact our decision?
 - a. Visitors, short termers, and language learners
 - b. Individuals most vulnerable to possible viral infection
 - c. Families with children under 15
 - d. Degree connected in the community; those not so connected should be considered for earlier evacuation.

E. CONSIDERATIONS WHEN SHELTERING IN PLACE (THIS IS BEING REQUIRED IN MANY COUNTRIES WITHOUT MUCH ADVANCE NOTICE. PREPARING AHEAD OF TIME IS CRITICAL) :

1. In the event of the need to “shelter in place,” individuals and families should maintain or have access to a level of supplies capable of sustaining a healthy wellbeing for an indeterminate amount of time.
2. Basic supplies consist of food, water, alternate water purification system, sanitation supplies, First-Aid kits, **medications**, flashlights, batteries, **light sticks** and additional power supplies for cell phones or computers for no less than two weeks, spiritual journal/reading, **entertainment, and comfort items**.
3. Currency in sufficient quantities to sustain individuals and family members for indefinite time as ATMs and credit cards may be unusable.

F. GENERAL SAFETY & SECURITY:

1. U.S. citizens should enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program <https://step.state.gov/step/>
2. If evacuating, extra time should be built into flight itineraries as heavy testing and monitoring is in place internationally. Additionally, airports could be closed on a case by case basis.
3. All individuals returning to USA must stay on a self-imposed 14-day quarantine if not required by government to quarantine in another way.
4. All individuals should use preventive measures (proper hygiene) and ensure they monitor themselves, family members, and other with whom they come in contact.
5. Individuals showing signs of fever or flu-like symptoms should notify SAMS leadership and any other local leadership available. They should not travel, and should remain at home until rested and symptoms no longer exist.
6. Make a Risk Assessment. Risk = Threat X Cost. Risk: the level of exposure to the threat. Threat: a declaration of the intention to inflict harm, pain & misery. Vulnerability: the

likelihood of success of a specific threat on a target. Cost: Determining the threats posed and the risks to those threats posed. Organizing those risks and threats in order of priority.

7. Traveling in country:
 - a. Remain alert when traveling.
 - b. Plan primary and alternate re-designed routes with location areas to go to in the event of an emergency evacuation.
 - c. Try not to travel with anything that will draw undue attention to yourself. Dress modestly.
 - d. Break your cash up into separate bundles on various areas on your person.
 - e. Practice relaxed situational awareness, be alert, pay attention to your surroundings and use common sense in all situations.
8. Always use common sense.
9. Pray.

COMMUNICATION:

1. To ensure wellbeing, SAMS missionaries should maintain regular communication with diocesan bishop and leadership, teammates, and SAMS home staff.
2. Stay in touch with your family members, friends, the U.S. Embassy and ensure that they know how to reach you in the event of an emergency. Have primary and secondary persons to call.
3. Have a communications plan which does not solely rely on cellular data.
4. Email is the preferred platform for communication with SAMS as it provides reliability and consistency. Other platforms may be used such as Whatsapp, texting, phone, or Messenger as warranted.
5. Consider developing a physical “relay” plan to account for individual team members who live in close proximity to one another and where this plan can be accomplished safely. (EXAMPLE: “A” checks in with “B” and returns home; “B” checks in with “C” and advised “A” & “B” are safe; “C” checks in with “D”, etc.).
6. Consider whether your senders, intercessors, extended family, or others could benefit from some of this basic information and provide them with updates as appropriate.

SAMS CONTACTS

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(Please copy Stewart and Denise when communicating with Wayne on questions you may have about preparedness, safety and/or security. You can ask questions or set up time to whatsapp/skype through email inquiry.)

SAMS Missionary 24-hour hotline: 724-266-0735 (or use direct dial numbers above)

Appendix 1: Values and Principles Undergirding this Protocol

The lives of the people working with us, and of the local people wherever we work, are always more important to us than protecting our resources and programs. At the same time, we recognize that to live out this mission and these values we cannot avoid risks. Different levels of risk will be appropriate to different SAMS programs and contexts, and this policy outlines these differences.

We emphasize living out the values of being relational and faithful as being key to our security. We recognize that safety and security is, to a great extent, best assured when we are well integrated into the local community and valued for our contributions to the local church's mission. To this end, a great deal of responsibility for safety and security lies with SAMS people in their locality, building good relationships and taking advice from the leaders of the church.

It is the responsibility of SAMS people to strive to understand the host culture and behave in a manner that is respectful of its cultural norms, while remaining vigilant to any changes in the operational environment that might increase their exposure to threats.

Underdeveloped infrastructure, local institutional limitations, or deteriorating situations often exacerbate these risks.

While SAMS is committed to the safety and security of Missionary Personnel, it is recognized that there are many variables beyond the control of SAMS which affect the welfare of our

people, and it is not possible to eliminate all the risks associated with the work that we do in the places where we work.

Appendix 2: Global Level 4 Health Advisory – Do Not Travel

The Department of State advises U.S. citizens to avoid all international travel due to the global impact of COVID-19. In countries where commercial departure options remain available, U.S. citizens who live in the United States should arrange for immediate return to the United States, unless they are prepared to remain abroad for an indefinite period. U.S. citizens who live abroad should avoid all international travel. Many countries are experiencing COVID-19 outbreaks and implementing travel restrictions and mandatory quarantines, closing borders, and prohibiting non-citizens from entry with little advance notice. Airlines have cancelled many international flights and several cruise operators have suspended operations or cancelled trips. If you choose to travel internationally, your travel plans may be severely disrupted, and you may be forced to remain outside of the United States for an indefinite timeframe.

On March 14, the Department of State authorized the departure of U.S. personnel and family members from any diplomatic or consular post in the world who have determined they are at higher risk of a poor outcome if exposed to COVID-19 or who have requested departure based on a commensurate justification. These departures may limit the ability of U.S. Embassies and consulates to provide services to U.S. citizens.

For the latest information regarding COVID-19, please visit the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's \(CDC\) website](#).

You are encouraged to visit travel.state.gov to view individual Travel Advisories for the most urgent threats to safety and security. Please also visit the website of the relevant U.S. embassy or consulate to see information on entry restrictions, foreign quarantine policies, and urgent health information provided by local governments.

Travelers are urged to enroll in the [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#) to receive Alerts and make it easier to locate you in an emergency. The Department uses these Alerts to convey information about terrorist threats, security incidents, planned demonstrations, natural disasters, etc. In an emergency, please contact the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate or call the following numbers: 1(888) 407-4747 (toll-free in the United States and Canada) or 1 (202) 501-4444 from other countries or jurisdictions.

If you decide to travel abroad or are already outside the United States:

- Consider returning to your country of residence immediately using whatever commercial means are available.
- Have a travel plan that does not rely on the U.S. Government for assistance.
- Review and follow the [CDC's guidelines for the prevention of coronavirus](#).
- Check with your airline, cruise lines, or travel operators regarding any updated information about your travel plans and/or restrictions.

- Visit travel.state.gov to view individual Travel Advisories for the most urgent threats to safety and security.
- Visit our Embassy webpages on COVID-19 for information on conditions in each country or jurisdiction.
- Visit the [Department of Homeland Security's](https://www.dhs.gov) website on the latest travel restrictions to the United States
- Visit [Keeping workplaces, homes, schools, or commercial establishments safe](#).

Appendix 3: Important statement by IMG on availability of medical services and transport:

IMG remains ready to provide advice, guidance, and practical support in this rapidly evolving situation. By far, most members who contract COVID-19 will have mild disease and not require admission to hospital but may be admitted to isolation facilities for up to 14 days. If members become more severely unwell, they should follow local advice – they may be directed to specific facilities that are better equipped to manage their condition.

IMG's ability to move patients with COVID-19 varies throughout a pandemic. Both the originating and accepting countries will likely not allow any patient to travel when infectious. Additionally, travel restrictions are being placed on international travel by many countries across the globe. In most cases, members will have mild disease, remain in country, recover within 14 days, and then be able to travel (if necessary). It is possible that they may be subject to an additional period of quarantine on returning to their home country. As we progress further into a pandemic phase, where there is established community spread, restricting travel between countries becomes less helpful and it is possible that there will be a relaxation of restrictions. In reality, a lag in governmental response combined with regional variations will make transfer of COVID-19 patients complicated. The major challenge in these cases is sourcing an accepting bed, either because countries do not want to import cases or because of the lack of intensive care resources. IMG will make every attempt to coordinate transports in these cases and know which of our air ambulance providers can transfer these patients.

Patients with non COVID-19 disease or injury in outbreak areas may be subject to travel/evacuation restrictions. The extent to which this may occur depends upon the government involved. When widespread testing becomes available, it is our hope that port health authorities will allow transfer, but companies that have employees in poorly resourced areas must have contingency plans for staff to remain in country for treatment. In all cases, IMG will assess capabilities and options individually and will proactively maintain surveillance of our network providers, as well as the spread of the virus, to enable us to act quickly to supply our clients with the best course of action based on their unique situation.

For Complete Information from our insurer IMG consult:

<https://www.imglobal.com/coronavirus>