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## **Contingency Plan: Don't Leave Home Without It!**



*Simple things you can do to prepare for  
an unexpected departure from post*

### ***Contingency Plan: Don't Leave Home Without It!***

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### **Contingency Plan: Don't Leave Home Without It!**

- Keep busy. Think about the possibility of temporary employment or volunteer work. Contact the FLO Employment Program at [FLOAskEmployment@state.gov](mailto:FLOAskEmployment@state.gov) for more information.
- Keep in touch with fellow evacuees. Chances are your CLO will be working out of FLO, supporting your evacuated community.

### **Returning to post or on to a new assignment:**

If you return to the evacuated post, it is often helpful to meet with fellow evacuees to evaluate your experiences. Those who remained at post had a very different experience and it will take time for everyone to readjust and come together. Be patient.

### **Conclusion:**

No matter how calm things are at your post, you should not be lulled into thinking that "it can't happen here" as 65% of all evacuations occur in low to medium threat posts. In one year alone, 11 posts (from every region of the world) were under *ordered* or *authorized departure* at some point. More than 600 people were suddenly faced with making the kinds of decisions described in this booklet. Personal preparation in advance can alleviate some of the difficulties of an evacuation.

- Address book
- List of doctors, dentists, lawyers
- Travelers checks; U.S. currency, if possible
- Household effects inventory
- Household goods insurance policy
- Evacuation travel orders
- Personal items and change of clothes
- Snacks, juice, books
- Pack FLO's "Welcome Back" evacuation booklet  
<http://www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo/c1991.htm>

### When you are at your safehaven:

Ordinarily, safehavens are in the United States. The Under Secretary for Management **must grant permission for a foreign safehaven**. Be aware that the Education Allowance is not paid by the USG at a foreign safehaven of your choosing. Moving between safehaven locations within the U.S. will be covered by the USG when the move is to Washington, DC.

- Provide the Family Liaison Office your correct address, telephone/cell number and email. Let them know if you move.  

Family Liaison Office, U.S. Department of State  
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- Assume that the evacuation/authorized departure will last longer than original estimates. Plan accordingly.
- Apply for Subsistence Expense Allowance benefits.

### Contingency Plan: Don't Leave Home Without It!

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In today's world, USG employees and family members must live with the possibility of an evacuation from their overseas post. In the event of either an ordered or authorized departure, the Department of State and your post will do the following:

- Inform you of the emergency evacuation plan for your post.
- Arrange to transport you to a safehaven.
- Pay you a Subsistence Expense Allowance (SEA) <http://www.state.gov/m/a/als/260>, daily transportation and airfreight allowances during your evacuation.
- Provide support through the Family Liaison Office (FLO) to answer questions and help solve problems. Welcome Back! See FLO's Internet Web site at: <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/2115.pdf>
- Return you to post or send you on to a new assignment.

Evacuations are stressful experiences: Where to go? What to take? What personal papers are necessary? Contingency planning will help to reduce stress and frustration.

### Before going overseas on assignment:

- Make a list of the following for all family members. Leave a copy of this list with a trusted contact at home. Update it periodically and carry it with you when moving from one locale to another. Your list should include:
  - Passport numbers and dates of issue
  - Bank account numbers
  - Credit card numbers
  - Insurance policy numbers
  - Car registration, serial, and license numbers

- U.S. driver's license numbers
  - Social Security numbers, including children's
  - Current prescriptions, including eyeglasses and contact lenses
  - Contents and location of safe deposit box(es); give access to someone you trust.
  - Major assets and debts
  - Names and addresses of professional contacts
- Find a safe depository in the United States and put the following into it. Copy the items you will need at post.
    - Copy of will(s). Originals should be left with lawyer or executor, not in safe depository.
    - Power of attorney (one of the originals)
    - Birth and marriage certificates
    - Naturalization papers
    - Deeds
    - Mortgages
    - Stocks (or leave with broker in case you want to sell)
    - Bonds (or leave with broker in case you want to sell)
    - Insurance papers - life, car, house, medical, and household effects (HHE)
    - Current household effects inventory
  - Execute a Power of Attorney for each adult family member; have several originals and copies made. Powers of Attorney are required whenever you must transact business on behalf of spouse or other adult. Whenever possible, make the power of attorney specific to the action required – bank, child care, property management, medical (at home and at post), durable etc.
  - Learn the current laws of your legal residence and place

### **When there is an authorized or ordered departure:**

- Pack luggage with suitable clothing and essential items. Remember seasonal changes/weather conditions.
- Engage the children in packing their own backpacks or carry-on bags with toys, snacks, games, books, and other comforting items.
- Choose practical traveling clothes suitable to the climate of destination.
- Make sure carry-on baggage includes the following:
  - Medications (prescription and over the counter)
  - Medical/dental records, immunization cards
  - Extra glasses or contacts and prescriptions
  - School records, report cards, test scores, current samples of work, IDPs for special needs children
  - Current power of attorney (bank, durable, etc.)
  - Birth certificates, naturalization certificates, marriage certificates, adoption papers
  - Passports (for non-U.S. citizen family members, secure visas to enter the U.S.)
  - Driver's license, auto insurance policies, auto registration, and title, if applicable
  - Personal checks, check registers, latest bank statement
  - ATM and credit cards
  - Bills/financial records
  - Safe deposit box keys

later. Remember: the average length of an evacuation is four months.

### When an evacuation is a possibility:

- Discuss contingency plans with family members. The United States is the designated safehaven. Families may go anywhere in the United States, including Alaska, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico; employees are normally required to safehaven in Washington, DC or wherever their headquarters is located (employees must check-in with headquarters before continuing on to their safehaven).
- When possible, make personal travel arrangements in advance for Members of Household.
- Make a list of items to pack in each suitcase (normally each evacuee is allowed one suitcase).
- Make a list of items for carry-on baggage.
- Update household effects inventory of items at post.
- Consolidate all personal records, financial documents, school records, etc.
- Prepare your house for departure -- secure valuables.
- Plan for your household employees.
- Plan for pets. The U.S. Government does not evacuate pets. Make advance arrangements for their care, food, etc. Keep the pets' records updated.
- Decide how money will be handled. Who will pay bills? Will you continue to use the joint checking account?

### Contingency Plan: Don't Leave Home Without It!

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- of domicile with regard to taxes and property.
- Employee and family member should each establish individual credit adequate for emergencies. Obtain individual credit cards.
- Establish a joint checking account, which will allow each spouse to fully access the account and bank services in the event they are separated for a period of time.
- Arrange to have the employee's paycheck deposited directly into a joint account in the U.S.
- Get an automatic teller machine (ATM) card for your bank account that can be used worldwide. Make sure each spouse knows the personal identification number (PIN).
- Put checkbooks, bankbooks, credit cards, some traveler's checks, and a small amount of cash in a safe (but easily accessible) place.
- Keep a list of regular billing dates for all recurring expenses -- insurance, mortgages, taxes, credit cards, etc. Whenever possible, create online automatic payments.
- Keep a current inventory of all your possessions, including valuable items such as artwork, jewelry and clothing.
- Decide what to take to post and what to put into storage. Consider putting items into storage that can't be replaced.
- Purchase personal property insurance for your storage and your HHE, making sure it provides adequate coverage for all events including flooding and acts of war.
- Pack some seasonal clothing, winter and summer, regardless of post.
- Update scrapbook and photo albums. Consider leaving sentimental photos and negatives or duplicate photos in storage or with a relative. File digital photos on CDs.

- Hand-carry employment documents for adult family members including resumes, references, and SF-50 personnel actions. Keep duplicates in the United States.
- Keep an up-to-date locator card in the Department's Employee Services Center or with your agency. Be certain your emergency contact person is willing and capable of dealing with an emergency.
- Update all personal address lists and make duplicates or file on a CD.
- Discuss with your immediate and extended family what they should do in case of an emergency you may encounter (evacuation, hostage taking, illness, or death). Provide them with emergency telephone numbers for your agency.
- Take the Security Overseas Seminar (SOS) prior to the first overseas assignment and an update every five years thereafter. The advanced SOS course fulfills the mandatory 5-year update. Highly recommended for spouses and other family members 18 or older. During the summer months, there are special sessions for teens and younger children.
- Purchase medical evacuation insurance for Members of Household. Have funds available for travel should there be an evacuation from post.

### **When you arrive at post:**

- Attend the post security briefing.
- Keep up with the current security situation at post. Practice emergency drills for a variety of scenarios with your family.
- Be aware of the warden system at post. Know who your warden is and ensure that your family contact information is current and accurate.

### **Contingency Plan: Don't Leave Home Without It!**

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- Make an inventory of your possessions and keep it updated. Photograph valuable items and file on a CD. Keep it updated.
- Learn some of the local language to help you in an emergency. Provide household employees with instructions and essential telephone numbers in their language.
- Enroll household employees in mission security training. Brief them on what to do in case of a medical emergency.
- Get acquainted with your neighbors early in your tour; this may prove helpful in the case of an emergency.
- Learn the location and routes to the closest hospital, police station, and friendly embassy.
- Attend a contingency planning workshop.
- Familiarize yourself with the basic procedures for sheltering-in-place during an emergency.
- Learn about allowances and safehaven locations *before* an evacuation.
- Keep immunizations up to date and recorded in your yellow shot card.
- If you have children in local schools, check the school's emergency evacuation plan. Become an involved parent.
- If you have children, choose a surrogate parent at post and supply that person with a current power of attorney for medical or other emergencies in the event you need them to care for your children unexpectedly.
- Maintain a separate emergency supply/first-aid kit to be used only for emergency situations.
- In advance, decide which necessary items should be taken with you in the event of evacuation or authorized departure and which items should be sent by airfreight