



Travelers Can Minimize Costly Mishaps with Planning and Right Coverage



Travel nightmares abound during the busy summer vacation season. Some are scarier than others – and their financial impact on travelers can range from nuisance to catastrophic.

Whether stuck in an airport for hours due to a cancelled flight, arriving at a destination without luggage, falling sick in a country with poor healthcare facilities, or getting robbed of travel documents and cash, today's travelers and tourists are vulnerable to a wide range of mishaps when they set off to unfamiliar terrains.

International travelers' exposure to political unrest, natural disasters, and medical emergencies continues to rise. In a recent report, the consulting firm Control Risks recorded 38,523 political violence and crime incidents worldwide in 2017, an uptick of nearly 17% from 2016. According to the firm, these incidents are up 63% in Europe, 51% in Asia Pacific, 39% in Africa, and 26% in the Americas. The number of global natural disasters, including hurricanes and earthquakes, increased dramatically in 2017.

Insurance policies designed to protect travelers against such mishaps come in different shapes and size. As such it is important for travelers to review each policy's benefits and exclusions carefully.

Generally, standard travel insurance offers financial coverage and logistical support for trip delays or interruptions, baggage loss or delay, and certain medical expenses.

Medical Emergency and Evacuation

Prior to traveling, travelers can take certain precautions and make plans that will limit the need for medical evacuation and related costs. It is important to research the medical facilities in the region you are visiting and plan ahead for any pre-existing medical conditions. If the trip includes visits to remote areas, it is advised to preplan an evacuation route. Finally, engage an experienced consultant to review insurance options available and place coverage that provides the necessary services needed in the event of an emergency.

Emergency medical transportation for a serious illness, like a heart attack or stroke, can range from \$15,000 to more than \$200,000 depending on the location and extent of injury. If the emergency occurs in a remote area or the injuries are particularly severe, the costs can easily double or triple, according to insurer Allianz Global.

It is therefore important to find evacuation coverage with generous limits especially when traveling to remote areas or

if the trip involves adventurous activities, such as mountain climbing, deep sea diving or wildlife hunting.

Recently, a USI client, traveling with two other couples in Central America, suffered a major heart attack and was taken to a local hospital. It was obvious the facilities and the medical staff would not be able to provide the necessary care so the client had to be evacuated to a hospital in Florida. The travel insurance negotiated by USI's Personal Risk team, covered the medical cost of \$20,000 and the air transport cost of \$45,000.

Political Unrest

Democratic shocks, military tensions and social unrest continue to drive political conflicts and a surge in protests around the world.

Last year, large-scale civilian revolts rocked more than a dozen countries, including Argentina, Belarus, Ethiopia, Gambia, Korea, Romania and Venezuela. In nearly all of these incidents, travelers were trapped and forced to make emergency travel plans.

Incidents of political unrest are usually unpredictable, but travelers can mitigate the risk with research and planning. Before traveling, it is important to have a clear picture of the security conditions in the country you are visiting and stay abreast of any evolving crisis situation. It is recommended that travelers, especially those who visit high-risk countries, enroll in the U.S. State Department's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program to receive updates on safety and security information. There are also several mobile security applications and online resources that provide up-to-date safety information to travelers.

Some insurance carriers offer critical security services. For example, as part of comprehensive evacuation policy, some

carriers provide security firms to assist with in-country logistical support or extraction if needed. This coverage can be activated without a government-issued warning.

Natural Disasters

Natural disasters are among the leading cause of travel interruption and cancellations plans. As with medical emergencies and political unrests, a little planning can help reduce the risk of being stranded or injured in a natural disaster.

Unfortunately, not all travel insurance policies are the same when it comes to coverage for natural disasters, like hurricanes or earthquakes, which may disrupt travel plans. However, an effective travel policy will cover the extra cost of finding alternative flights, hotel rooms or meals when a trip is cancelled or cut short by severe weather.

In 2011, when a tsunami and earthquake hit Japan, a USI client and his family on vacation were stranded for several days in a hotel with no power and transportation. After the client reached out to USI, the USI Personal Risk team helped the client communicate with the local US Consulate and arranged an early return flight to the United States using a travel protection program. The new travel arrangement, costing more than \$10,000, was fully covered by the travel policy arranged by USI.

USI's Personal Risk team has helped thousands of travelers minimize the financial impact and stress of travel disasters. The team understands traveling can be complicated but with the right preparation and expert support, travelers can enjoy traveling and stay safe and secure wherever the road takes them.

For information about USI's travel coverages, visit www.travelinsure.com. You may also contact your local USI personal risk consultant or visit usi.com.

The USI ONE Advantage[®]

To analyze our client's personal exposures and challenges our personal risk team leverages USI ONE[®], a fundamentally different approach to risk management. USI ONE integrates proprietary business analytics with a networked team of local and national experts in a team based consultative process to evaluate the client's personal risk profile and identify targeted solutions to address those risks. Clients then receive tailored recommendations for more efficient investment of premium dollars through customized personal insurance risk management programs that enhance coverage and manage rate control.

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