



WHAT IF?

FOR STUDENT MISSIONS COORDINATORS



What If? . . . For Student Missions Coordinators

Prepared by the Office of Volunteer Ministries, a service of the North American Division of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Edited by Andrea Keele and Ernest Hernandez. The Office of Volunteer Ministries Plan includes all mission projects operated by denominationally-owned entities.

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WHAT IF?

There are so many “what ifs?” It’s amazing that any of us work up the courage to go anywhere or do anything. What could be more anxiety-producing than having responsibility for a group of student missionaries on a trip far from home?

We understand your concerns, but assure you that our team is here to answer any questions you may have. We also happen to be excellent at offering practical help in case of an emergency! This booklet outlines just a few scenarios that can occur with your student missionaries, along with the appropriate actions you’ll need to take if they do. Remember that most mission trips go smoothly, and that advance preparation and planning helps remove much of the uncertainty that can exist. Our goal is to support you as you prepare and respond to your student missionaries’ needs and to maximize their mission experience to be enjoyable, productive and safe and, of course, return with wonderful stories to share.

This guide does not cover every possible emergency or crisis that could arise for your student missionaries, but can give you some basic guidelines for some of the more foreseeable ones. If you have questions or are not sure how to handle a situation, please contact the Office of Volunteer Ministries. You have our support and prayers!

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WHAT IF . . .

MY STUDENT MISSIONARY (SM) IS SICK OR INJURED?

The SM should inform the on-site supervisor

The SM should let their supervisor know right away if they need medical attention.

Call Europ Assistance

It is best if your student, their on-site supervisor or contact person calls Europ Assistance directly, but if they are having trouble, you can call as their coordinator.

Follow instructions from Europ Assistance

The SM or contact person will need to provide Europ Assistance with contact information for doctors and medical offices to guarantee payment, and any other information they need to determine what coverage is available for treatment and benefits. This could also include relocating the SM to the nearest hospital equipped to treat the medical issue if Europ Assistance deems it necessary. The key is to stay in close contact with Europ Assistance throughout the entire process to determine the steps that need to be taken. They are prepared to act quickly and efficiently to take care of the SM's needs.

Keep others informed

The SM's supervisor should keep you (and others in the organization, as needed) informed of updates on treatment. If you sense that the SM is giving you updates that their supervisor or other administrators should be aware of, please share that information so all are cognizant and able to help as needed. This includes updating parents or other family members, and facilitating communication if needed.

Be prepared for extra costs

If the mission site is unwilling or unable to pay the \$150 deductible and/or the 10% up to \$3,500 (which totals up to a maximum of \$500 out-of-pocket), be prepared to take care of these costs if needed. Most emergency expenses should be covered by insurance, but be ready to help in case other costs should arise.

Claims

If payment was already made for medical bills and your SM is asking you about claim forms, you or your SM should contact Adventist Risk Management.

EUROP ASSISTANCE: From outside the U.S.—Tel. 240-330-1570. From inside the U.S.—Tel. 888-927-5353.
Email. OPS@europassistance-usa.com

ADVENTIST RISK MANAGEMENT: Tel. 1-888-951-4276 (Option 2). Email. claims@adventistrisk.org
Claim forms can be downloaded at: <http://hesaidgo.org/medical-emergency>



WHAT IF . . .

MY SM HAS TO COME HOME EARLY?

If your SM has to return early for any reason, check that the following individuals have been notified:

- SM's supervisor/administrators on site
- Calling division volunteer coordinator (will communicate with GC)
- NAD volunteer coordinator (Elden Ramirez)

If you need a shortcut, contact Elden Ramirez and he will communicate with the local coordinator so they are informed and can follow up with the situation—and with requesting the early return through AVS so that insurance is billed for the correct amount of time that the volunteer was in service.

MY SM HAS AN UNRESOLVABLE ISSUE?

Issues at work or living arrangements

Your role as a coordinator is often as that of a support person. Here are a few suggestions:

- Acknowledge emails as soon as possible so SMs feel heard and supported.
- Encourage SMs to pray and work through issues with co-workers and administrators with honesty and humility.
- Advise SMs to reach out to their supervisor for advice or support as much as possible.
- Provide resources to help if you have them available—Bible verses, website links, etc.
- Caution SMs about posting everything on social media. Instead, encourage them to confide in and request prayer from a few close family members or friends.
- Let SMs know your confidence in them, and encourage them to allow God to grow them and their faith through the trials.

Issues with supervisor or administration

Occasionally, serious dysfunctions arise in a mission location. If an SM (or group of SMs) shares serious issues about an organization, please pass those on to the Calling Division Volunteer Coordinator or, if unavailable, NAD Volunteer Coordinator Elden Ramirez.



WHAT IF . . .

MY SM FEELS UNSAFE?

Assault, harassment or stalking

If your SM reports any of these incidents or situations, it is important to take them seriously. The exact course of action depends on the degree of danger in the situation, but could include the following:

- Encourage the SM to journal (*not* on social media, but on paper) as much information as possible, especially dates, times, locations, and what may have led to the situation. Generally, this helps a person in crisis retain some control over the situation. Also, when questioned later, the SM may need to refer back to their notes.
- Document all communication. Be sensitive and confidential. In anticipation of legal implications (for the SM, the accused, and your school), ask the SM for written permission to use this information, if necessary.
- Involve the supervisor and/or local administration if at all possible, according to the situation.
- Communicate with and seek guidance and assistance from division coordinators, and your school's legal department.
- Find out what resources are available to the SM locally—other SMs or trusted administrators.

Political instability or natural disaster

Your SM's local mission administration and calling division will be involved in monitoring crises and facilitating emergency evacuation if needed. Contact the Office of Volunteer Ministries for updates.



WHAT IF . . .

MY SM LOSES IMPORTANT BELONGINGS?

Stolen or lost belongings

- The SM should report missing valuables to their supervisor, and if necessary, the local police.
- If baggage or items are lost while traveling, contact the airline or other travel company to recover missing luggage.
- If missing items are not recovered, complete the Personal Effects Baggage Claim Form and email to claims@adventistrisk.org. This form can be found on our website at: <http://hesaidgo.org/medical-emergency>
- If the SM's wallet is stolen or lost, they should cancel all credit/debit/ATM cards and checks as soon as possible.

Stolen or lost passport

- The SM should report a stolen passport to the local police.
- The SM should contact their local U.S. or Canadian embassy or consulate and schedule an emergency appointment to apply for a new passport. It is extremely helpful if they have a copy of their passport with them, on file with family or at your office.
- The SM will need to complete other forms and documentation that can be found at:

U.S.—www.travel.state.gov

Canada—www.cic.gc.ca

CALL FOR HELP

Let your SMs know who to contact if they need help:

- 1. Local Supervisor**
- 2. SM Coordinator**
- 3. Local Division Volunteer Coordinator**
- 4. NAD Volunteer Coordinator**

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

—Matthew 28:19-20 (NRSV)