



Preparation, Training, and Surviving in High Risk Environments Overseas

This document contains checklists, resources, and tips to aid personnel going overseas. It is not intended to replace personal security and antiterrorism measures nor formal training, for which there are publications and training widely available. No tactics nor personal protection measures are contained in this electronic document. This information is extracted from IACSP's CD-ROM on this topic and presentation materials from its anti-terrorism conferences.

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Authored and donated to the association by IACSP journal writers and members from the Personal Security Institute (PSI)



Counterterrorism
www.iacsp.com



High Risk Environments Survival TM Checklist

Purpose:

As US personnel continue to surge overseas for both operational and commercial endeavors, there is an urgent need for up-to-the-minute, validated, credible information on what to do and what you need to "know before you go." This electronic reference document provides information, resources, and recommendations covering all of the key areas related to taking a trip overseas, minus individual protective measures or antiterrorism tactics, techniques, or procedures (for which recommended resources for this type of information are contained within). What you need to know, where to get more information, what topics to get training on and from who/where, and what to bring are all covered in this resource. Links are embedded to the document, so the user can go directly to the website of a given training entity, product line, or information resource. This checklist project constitutes years of experience and research from a variety of sources from a variety of CTS professionals who are members of the IACSP. It contains some of the same information presented at previous IACSP conferences, but updated and expanded. For the serious, security minded overseas traveler, this is information at your fingertips to that can save you countless hours of time, much effort, money and even possibly your health.

Intended Audience: The information contained in the IACSP High Risk Environments Survival ChecklistTM applies to all of the following professionals: government civilian, security professionals, contractors, military personnel, law enforcement, members of NGO's, and journalists. Businesspersons and travelers will also find much in this checklist that will make their trip safer, healthier, and more successful.

Distribution: The High Risk Environments Survival ChecklistTM is sent only by electronic means only (PDF file) and can be printed in color, photocopied, or used on a Pocket PC / PDA. Distribution is by email attachment directly from the IACSP to the purchaser/recipient. **This document is not for open distribution.** It may not be forwarded nor posted on websites or other media. This document, nor any portion of it, may be reproduced for or by any for profit purpose or entities. Photocopies may be reproduced for coworkers only.

Obtaining the document: Purchasers must provide an email address to receive this document. IACSP Life, Executive Package, and new annual members receive this document at no cost. Existing annual IACSP members received substantial discounts. Non-Members may purchase the document at its retail price.

Contents:

- ✓ Personal Security Preparation and Training – Areas of Concern (what to get training on)
- ✓ Antiterrorism / Personal Security Themes, Practices, and Concepts
- ✓ Books & Resources for Travel Prep / High Risk (with links)
- ✓ Intel Resources (OSCINT, information resources, and organizations) (with links)
- ✓ Antiterrorism / Personal Security Training
- ✓ Tips if working with US Military of Government Organizations
- ✓ Emergency Medical / Health information
- ✓ Personal OPSEC / INFOSEC Recommendations (with links)
- ✓ Recommended Personal Equipment and Gear (with links)
- ✓ Weapons and Protection Hardware
- ✓ Recommended Distributors / Major Sources for Tactical Gear Acquisition (with links)

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PERSONAL SECURITY PREPARATION AND TRAINING - AREAS OF CONCERN

The essential areas that you need to know/prepare, for survival & success

DRIVING / VEHICLE OPERATIONS

A high percentage of attacks and crimes, against persons as well as military units overseas, occur in or around vehicles and on roads. When you are on roads, you are more visible, exposed, and identifiable. You can be channelized and often are more predictable. **Many attacks and kidnappings occur in and near roads.** Many have found that being able to drive confidently and even offensively is as important as being armed. **Be prepared to "fight" with the car.** **We recommend both on road and off road antiterrorist/evasive techniques be learned and mastered.** Find a driving school that meets your needs and has material relevant to overseas. For "on road" driving, there are a few schools that deserve consideration: ADSI in Rhode Island, BSR in Summit Point, W. VA, and ITI near Richmond, Virginia. The recommended school for off-road high stress driving is the Team O'Neil Rally School (www.teamoneil.com). Team O'Neil has its own facility in a mountain valley, with varying heights, gradients, types of turns, multiple surfaces, and ability to change conditions, in addition to a shooting range. The author has found this facility to be a perfect simulation for what many of you will encounter overseas, especially in South, Southwest, and Central Asia. It is staffed by both former military special operations personnel and world champion off road driver Tim O'Neil. Land Rover offers a series of schools for off road driving specific to off-road vehicles.

COUNTERSURVEILLANCE / SURVEILLANCE DETECTION / ATTACK RECOGNITION / THREAT IDENTIFICATION

It is a fact that terrorists, and many criminals, conduct pre-attack surveillance. Criminals and other hostile persons will often give off "signs" of an imminent attack, which to the trained person can be quickly recognized. **Whether or not you are watching them, they are watching you.** *Having all of the weapons and gusto in the world may not be as good as if you saw the initial signs or an imminent attack and you are able to avoid it altogether. See them coming first and 'live to fight another day.'* Initiating counter-surveillance and surveillance detection practices is a proactive and preventative measure, versus the possible alternative which is reactive and possibly far more dangerous (and fatal). Acquire a good knowledge of IED, ambush, carjack, and kidnap tactics, so that you may learn the indicators of these, in order to see it coming or avoid them.

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In addition knowing surveillance and indicators, it may be helpful to learn specialized interviewing and communications methods that will help in determining a given person's intentions, both general verbal and visual threat cues. Seek more specialized training from the Center for Aggression Management (www.aggressionmanagement.com) and PHI Behavioral Assessment and Screening System (B.A.S.S.). (www.phi-llc.net) For specific surveillance detection training, there are a few companies which offer this, such as International Training Group, part of the Steele Foundation (www.itg4.com). One of the most important principles in threat identification is to "watch the hands" of a would be assailant. Especially if armed or considering use of force, positive threat I.D. is paramount.

USE OF COVER, CONCEALMENT, OBSTACLES, AND MOVEMENT

You should know the skills and requirements to protect yourself from (A) direct fire (B) indirect fire, and (C) explosions (bombs). There are specific skills that can be used to protect you from weapons fire, attack, and detection. These could be lifesaving skills:

Cover is any material barrier which might protect you from incoming small arms, shrapnel, or spalling. Many persons develop bad habits regarding "taking cover," primarily influenced by improper images from the media and movies. This is true especially regarding the use of firearms. Concealment, in most all cases, is not cover. It is better to create distance from an item of cover, but, cover can function as your "body armor," if you know what you are doing. You should learn how to quickly and effectively use cover whether it be building materials, natural materials, or vehicles. Note: Manmade materials can often be deceptively solid looking, but be easily perforated by small arms fire. Hollow-core concrete cinder block can be defeated by machinegun rounds. A wall that appears to be made out of brick or wood may be actually a veneer or false material to look like this. *Vehicles in most cases are "imperfect cover" and are, if anything, temporary cover.* Most rifle and machinegun caliber rounds will penetrate most places on a vehicle. The engine block, wheel wells (particularly the rims and brake disks), and the axle, provide some protection against handgun rounds and possibly protection against rifle calibers. But, in most cases, especially if the vehicle was the initial object of attack, they can quickly become "bullet magnets" and draw repeated fire. Even armored vehicles are vulnerable to attack and there have been successful attacks against them. The best advice is to learn how to quickly egress from and take cover at a vehicle, or at the earliest opportunity, take cover away from the vehicle. You should avoid being around glass during situations of gunfire, from vehicles or buildings, as spall material can cause serious wounds and blindness.

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Concealment is any method or combination of techniques and materials, which would prevent an unwanted person from detecting your presence. If you are not seen or located, it is possible that an assailant cannot engage you effectively or at all. Concealment can be prevention of detection from: (A) *vision (being seen)*, (B) *hearing (being heard)*, (C) *touch (by feel / tactile* such as someone pushing up against your vehicle, thus giving away their presence, or you enter a building with hard wood floors and the assailant can detect your being there simply by motion), and (D) *smell (olfactory*, such as hearing gunfire but not knowing where its coming from, running to a location, then suddenly smelling gunpowder in the building you just entered). Visual detection is the most common. This is usually due to movement, color, or contrast, or a combination of these. By knowing what can cause one to “get caught”, one can learn how to avoid detection. Being able to confuse, deceive, or prevent assailants from knowing your location can be the difference between being caught in a situation or being able to quickly escape. It could quite literally mean life or death.

Obstacles can be objects used to impede the movement of an assailant, whether they are on foot or in a vehicle. This could slow their progress and/or cause them to change their line of attack. For instance, if an attacker with an edged weapon moves in your direction, placing a vehicle or other solid object between you and them might buy you enough time or distraction to their plan to allow you to defend better. When attempting to escape, putting obstacles between you and pursuers may slow or break their advance.

Movement A moving target is more difficult to hit. Movement causes an assailant to react to you. Movement is how you get to cover and also how you can disengage or at least create distance from a threat. Movement can confuse an assailant to your location. In low light conditions, movement away from your last known location, using specific techniques, can confuse the attacker, particularly if they are firing at you. In a confrontational situation, movement can be your friend. If unarmed or outgunned, it may be all that you have.

In many firearms shooting and self-defense schools, they will teach formal blocks of instruction on use of cover, concealment, obstacles, and movement. These skills, combined with sound tactics, can be extremely advantageous. Not enough emphasis is given to these individual skills, nor the combination of them, but such training is highly recommended. Being able to incorporate these skills into a series of tactics is an important element of your self defense overseas. Regardless of your profession or intent during a trip overseas, there is the likelihood that you could end up in a hostile situation and you must be ready to act quickly and with resolve. With some instruction and knowledge on these and some other survival skills, these can serve as an excellent ‘insurance policy’ to make sure that you are prepared.

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NAVIGATION

Getting lost can lead to other problems in a foreign land. At a minimum, it can delay your plans, cause failure of a mission, or deplete your supplies. It can be very easy to become disoriented or misrouted, particularly in cities or areas that are not logical laid out or impoverished. Some tourist and commercial maps may either skip important details, not be made to scale, or not show enough detail or relief to conduct proper navigation. Signs may not be readable or even exist where you are going. Take the time to plan your routes. Have primary and alternate routes (up to four) for every movement that you make, especially in areas prone to terrorism. These same skills can be applied to many environments. Learn how to use a GPS and mapping software. Delorme Mapping in Yarmouth, Maine has very comprehensive software and printed atlases. Global Security.org and Google Earth are excellent resources for imagery. Even the U.S. government buys some of its satellite imagery from private contractors, and some high resolution overhead imagery of your location and routes can be available at a nominal cost. An excellent, but restricted capability is the FalconView software. Acquire materials on this topic such as "Be an expert with a map & compass" by Bjorn Kellstrom. An excellent navigational exercise is the sport of Orienteering, via the US Orienteering Federation. Knowing basic navigation forms the basic for "staying found" and orienting oneself in an unfamiliar location. It is recommended to periodically study your maps and photos during a trip overseas, and keep up to date on developments (political, military, civil, and weather) that can affect your route planning. All of this could save you much time and effort. Getting lost can get you into trouble or worse.

SURVIVAL

Survival is part mindset and part knowledge. Acquire survival skills for the environment that you will be in. There are general principles to learn, as well as climate/geographically oriented techniques for where you are going. If you are lost, on the run, or stranded, having such knowledge and a few simple items can mean everything. There are many publicly available training resources for survival in wilderness, deserts, cold weather, and urban environments. More complete survival preparation will include covering the route to the country you are going to visit, whether over water, mountains, or deserts. These are all possibilities in the event of an aircraft crash or diversion or emergency on railways. Add to this as variables, less reliability and poor safety records of some foreign carriers. Natural disasters can force you into a situation where "living off the land" is required.

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CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS CUSTOMS & COURTEOUSY

The traveler to any other country should be well informed in a number of areas concerning the culture there. This is necessary in order to establish and maintain rapport, as well as to prevent domestic upheaval, and even a confrontational incident. To offend or insult a foreign national in their own land, whether intentional or not, could cause a number of negative results, to include violence or death. How well you deal with persons in the host nation could mean everything in terms of both mission success as well as survival. Many of these countries have tribal, religious, and factional differences within, and not knowing their customs and courtesy as well as cultural sensitivities could spell disaster, or at a minimum, mission failure. In fact, it is often due to these internal civil or religious differences that result in outside intervention or involvement and why you may be there. By the time you arrive in country, internal tensions could be at an all time high. Travelers and those on official business should also realize, that no matter what your status, that its "their country" that you are in. What you think may be kind or proper may be completely insulting or even confrontational in other countries and cultures. It is often better to go the route of "winning hearts and minds" versus more forceful or demeaning treatment of those in a host nation, and often you will achieve better results. Further, travel of only a few miles or to a different province or region could mean dramatic changes in culture and how you may have to deal with people.

Prior to travel and then upon arrival, get up to date and accurate information on the following areas regarding the culture, with special emphasis on the "do's and don'ts":

- ✓ **Social Etiquette- 10 areas to ask about:**
 - (1) Greetings to use as well as avoid
 - (2) gifts (when appropriate and what, if at all)
 - (3) conversation
 - (4) what to look at or not
 - (5) gestures to avoid for face/hand/body
 - (6) how to address a person
 - (7) entering a person's home or workplace
 - (8) Invitations and Offerings (how to deal with this, what to accept what is rude to turn away, etc.)
 - (9) socializing
 - (10) Eating/Drinking

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- ✓ **Attire:** Wear of Western attire (what may offend the locals), Wear of host nation attire (to include knowing what not to wear if dealing with a rival group), what external jewelry or adornment is appropriate or not, footwear, headwear, etc.
- ✓ **Codes, Traditions, and Lore**
- ✓ **Cultural Cornerstones** (example: animals and their role, religion, holidays, etc.)
- ✓ **Gender roles** (to include treatment of male vs. female)
- ✓ **Conduct of business, Deadlines, bargaining**
- ✓ **What will cause domestic upheaval or insult (and how to avoid it)**

Excellent Resource: “Culture Matters – The Peace Corps Cross Cultural Handbook”, document #T0087, 266 pages, Peace Corps Information Collection and Exchange, U.S. Peace Corps ISBN 0-9644472-3-1, U.S. Printing Office, free download at www.peacecorps.gov

ADDITIONAL AREAS OF CONCERN FOR CULTURAL AND AREA ORIENTATION

- **INTERPRETERS** (vetted, non-vetted, and tour guides.) Know how to deal with and make best use of these. A locally hired interpreter can literally act as your “seeing eye dog” in an unfamiliar land, knowing many things that your best research could not determine. Then can be invaluable in their ability to assist in both your welfare and safety. A good interpreter can make your life easier overseas and can handle many details that would otherwise be troublesome or that could expose you to increased risk (example: having your interpreter conduct some of your shopping and errands, thus reducing your travel and exposure, or, being able to navigate for you in areas that are poorly mapped or maintained) But, be careful about what details that you allow and un-vetted interpreter to have.
- **DRIVERS / HIRED TRANSPORTATION** (as you will come into contact with this aspect of a country certainly, but it can also be a great cultural resource)
- **DOMESTIC AND IN COUNTRY TRAVEL SERVICES** (utilize both of these)
- **DIPLOMATIC MISSION IN THE US** (The consulate/embassy and their website can be a great source of information on a given country and their culture before going there. Many feature info that is specifically of value to Americans.)

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IMPORTANT: SAMPLE TEASER ONLY!

The actual CD is Over 40 pages of pertinent information culled from nearly 20 years of experience and research from a variety of sources and IACSP hands-on professionals (Tactical Trainers, Special Forces Soldiers in Afghanistan, Corporate Security personnel, etc.).

As U.S. and coalition forces, corporate employees, and contractors continue to surge overseas for both operational and commercial trips, there is an urgent need for up- to- the minute, validated, credible information on what to do and what you need to "know before you go." This checklist can save you countless hours of time, much effort, money and even possibly your life.

Audience/Applicable to: The IACSP HRES CD applies to all of the following: military personnel, security professionals, contractors, government civilian and law enforcement, NGO's, and journalists. Business persons and travelers will also find much in this checklist that will make their trip safer, healthier, and more successful.

Cost: IACSP Basic Members: \$39.99

Executive Members: \$20

Corporate Members: \$30

Non-Members: \$75

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****IMPORTANT:** The HRES CD can be emailed to you as a PDF (preferred) if you provide your email address.

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