



Trip Planning Handbook for Volunteers



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1. BEFORE YOU DECIDE TO GO

Imagine the horror of a school bus full of children driving off a cliff to their deaths every 20 minutes, all day, every day. Would you repair that road, particularly if it could be done for just a few dollars and a few weeks of your time? Dirty water is that cliff. Someone – usually a child – is *dying every 20 seconds* from diarrheal diseases caused by dirty water and inadequate sanitation.

Lifewater Canada is a small group of volunteers and part-time employees working from their homes who are addressing that global tragedy. We consider it a joy and privilege to contribute our time and money to share the precious gift of safe, accessible drinking water in Africa and Haiti. We drill new wells, rehabilitate dormant wells, repair or replace broken handpumps, install rainwater catchment and storage systems, build toilets and handwashing stations, and provide vital health and hygiene training.

Why are we so committed to this cause? Because we believe all people are created in God's image, and all of us are entitled to safe, accessible water. Will you join us in this life-saving mission?

Lifewater volunteers give generously, including paying the costs of their overseas trips. But in return, they cherish their experiences and the impact they have on impoverished people in the Developing World. It is always humbling to discover how joyful people are despite their poverty – while we, in our Developed World affluence, are often so focused on what we don't have rather than what we do have.

Despite the attractions of an overseas trip with Lifewater, remember that it can also be frightening to step out of your comfort zone and into a world where we lose much of what we normally control – including where we will sleep, the safety of our food and drink, reliability of transportation, and the availability of basic supplies. These potentially unsettling experiences are even more intense when you travel to countries ravaged by civil war, natural disasters, or years of neglect by selfish dictators.

There are challenges and risks involved with volunteering overseas. They include travel delays or other inconveniences, program cancellations or curtailments, the loss of personal property, sickness or injury, and – in the most extreme circumstances – even death. This handbook is designed to help you prepare for and manage a wide variety of challenges and risks.

So please think carefully before signing up for an overseas trip. But if you still want to go after reading this handbook, we will warmly welcome you to what could be the greatest adventure of your life!

Lynda Gehrels



President
Lifewater Canada

2. INTRODUCTION

Volunteering in developing world countries poses challenges due to the comparatively lax laws and regulations governing society. Most communities have unreliable infrastructure, including a lack of access to safe drinking water and to refrigeration for food. Most people live in poverty and so North Americans are viewed as rich foreigners. There is often corruption, religious and/or social unrest, and potential political instability. Finally, it is physically demanding to work hard in hot, humid conditions.

This handbook will help you before, during, and after your overseas trip. The book begins with the challenges and risks travellers are most likely to encounter, but also includes advice about some extreme risks to ensure volunteers are prepared for even the worst-case scenarios. But the list is not exhaustive, and no set of guidelines can anticipate every situation that may arise.

Also, this handbook does not replace common sense and good planning. Everyone is encouraged to do as much research and preparation as possible before departing. If in doubt, the guiding principles are:

- Behave in a manner that would be appropriate at home
- Place safety – yours and everyone else’s -- first

Paying Your Own Way

Each volunteer is expected to pay for his/her own airfare, food, and accommodations to and from the host country, plus up to \$100 per day for “in-country” costs including accommodation, transportation, food, cell phones, etc. These items are eligible for tax receipts from Lifewater. *So save your receipts, but do not book your flights until you have aligned your travel plans with Lifewater and other team members.*

Travel Warnings

Before you commit to volunteering on an overseas trip with Lifewater, *please read this entire handbook* and familiarize yourself with any government travel warnings for the destinations you plan to visit. The warnings are available here:

- Canadian government: <https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories>
- U.S. government: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages.html>

Personal Travel Binder

We strongly recommend, if you volunteer with Lifewater Canada overseas, that you create a “travel binder” or sealable folder and keep it in your knapsack or carry-on luggage. In the binder, you should have your passport, visas, your outbound and return flight details, medical insurance information, names and contact information for your hotels or guest houses, vaccination documentation, etc. In a separate place, keep photocopies of your passport main page and visas.

3. PASSPORT AND VISAS

It is your responsibility to carry a valid passport and to have obtained the appropriate visas when travelling with Lifewater Canada. Please ensure your passport is valid for 6 months beyond the duration of your volunteer trip.

Tourist visas are required to do volunteer work in most African countries (but not in Haiti). If you plan to overnight (or longer) in another country on route, apply for a transit or tourist visa.

Many visas are not available upon arrival and must be obtained outside of the country before you travel. Visas for Kenya are normally available upon arrival by both U.S. and Canadian citizens. As this can change without notice, you should always verify this with your travel agent or the embassy.

In addition, there can be long wait lines and if there are documentation problems, you may be denied entry. Visas are normally valid for 3 months from the date of issuance. Therefore, do not apply too early, as your visa needs to be valid for your entire stay in the country in question.

1. Visa Application Process

Always check with the embassy to ensure you have the most current forms, costs, and other requirements. Visa application forms can be downloaded from the consular sections on the following web sites:

- Liberia: <http://www.liberianembassyus.org/> (for Canadian and U.S. residents)
- Kenya: <http://www.kenyahighcommission.ca/> (for Canadian residents)
<http://kenyaembassy.com/> (for US residents)
- Nigeria: <http://www.nigeriacottawa.com/> (for Canadian residents)
<http://www.nigeriaembassyusa.org/> (for U.S. residents)
- Haiti: Visas are not necessary for Canadian or U.S. residents to visit Haiti

Often your Team Leader will help coordinate all the visas for everyone who is volunteering on your trip. Don't get your visa too early because it may expire before you leave the country you are planning to visit. Don't try to get it too late or it may not be ready when you need to depart from Canada. *Two months prior to departure is a good time to apply.*

Ensure all information on the forms is filled out correctly to avoid delays and extra charges for refusal of your visa. Follow all instructions on the visa form exactly and ensure all supporting paperwork (passport, photos, money order, guarantee letter (if required), return courier waybill, etc., are included. Remember to sign each copy of the application that you submit to the embassy.

You must enclose a pre-paid return courier waybill so the embassy can send you your visa and passport without charge. Otherwise, the visa will just stay at the embassy and not be sent to you since the staff there have no budget to do so. *Always use FEDEX to submit your visa application. DO NOT use Canada Post, UPS, etc.*

2. Official Letter of Invitation and Financial Assurance

If you are carrying major pieces of equipment, this letter should list items you are carrying

and specify what they will be used for. This letter will help a lot in certain airports where custom officers may ask you to pay duty on the items. Lifewater will write this letter for you.

An Official Letter of Financial Assurance is required for the visa application for Liberia. Lifewater Canada will prepare this letter but each volunteer needs to provide the details. Further information regarding particulars will come to each volunteer via email.

3. Check your issued visa to ensure it is correct

Check your visa as soon as it has been issued – it is your responsibility to ensure it is correct. Problems that have occurred in the past include lack of signature, incorrect dates, wrong type of visa, and embassy staff using white-out to correct mistakes (it must be re-done because customs agents will not accept white-out). Likewise, if you applied for a multiple-entry visa, check to ensure one has been issued. Be aware that possession of a visa does not guarantee you entry into a country. The final decision on whether you may enter rests with the country's immigration official to whom you present your passport and visa upon arrival.

4. Requirements for travel through the U.S.

If you travel through the U.S under the visa waiver program (applicable to most European passport holders), you must register your trip with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Check with your travel agent about this.

Secure Flight requires airlines to collect a passenger's full name (as it appears on government-issued ID), date of birth, gender, and Redress Number (if applicable). To avoid unnecessary delays and to prevent misidentifications or possibly being denied boarding, passengers should provide complete Secure Flight data when booking airline travel, whether they have booked directly with the airline, a travel agent, or an online booking site.

5. Permanent Residents

If you live in your country of residence as a permanent resident but travel on a different passport, you must bring documentation that allows you to return to your country of residence. In Canada and the U.S., this is called a Permanent Resident Card and it must be valid upon your return.

4 . CHECKED LUGGAGE PREPARATION AND PACKING

1. **Choosing your Suitcases**

When choosing your suitcases, ensure they have secure closing latches and good wheels since there is a lot of walking at airports. Consider buying one older suitcase at a second-hand store that can be left in-country if you don't need it for the trip home (be careful since some older suitcases weigh up to 15 lbs empty!). Alternatively, bring along suitcases sized so one will fit inside the other for the trip home. Soft-sided bags or duffel bags are lightest and easiest to stow in vehicles but leave the contents of your luggage more vulnerable to damage.

2. **Preparing your Suitcases**

- a) Bring a luggage strap and/or duct tape to securely close a suitcase if the latch breaks in transit.
- b) If your suitcase has a combination lock, set the code to "000" and secure the code in place with duct tape. Locked suitcases will be broken open by airport security or customs officers, resulting in a broken bag and likely items being lost from your suitcase.
- c) Strongly attach an identification tag with your name, address, and phone number to the outside of your suitcase (fold it so it's not visible to airport crooks who want to see who is heading out of town!) Tape another large information sheet to the inside of your suitcase so it can be traced if your bags go astray and the outside tag is ripped off. Include your destination address so your luggage can be forwarded to you should it get lost in transit.
- d) It can be quite intense finding bags in the busyness of African airports. To enable team members to confidently grab and collect other volunteers' suitcases, please mark every suitcase in both of the following ways:
 - Put a large silver duct tape "X" on both sides, or
 - Put red tape or string on one or more handles

3. **Checked luggage weight and dimension limits**

Checked bags are usually limited to 23 kg or 50 lbs per suitcase, and two suitcases per person. Make sure your suitcases do not weigh over 22 kg or 49 lbs to avoid hassle and potentially huge overweight charges! Note that standard overweight charges are typically \$100 for weights over 23 kg or 50 lbs but less than 32 kg or 70 lbs. Bags over 32 kg or 70 lbs will normally not be accepted.

Airlines also have strict limits on the length, width, and height of each piece of luggage. Luggage weight and dimension limits can change overnight so check the airline's web site for details. Be sure to check the limits of each and every airline – the maximum amount of luggage you can take will be dictated by the most restrictive limit of any of the airlines with which you travel!

Lifewater Canada asks that at least half of your luggage space/weight be used to facilitate the work in the destination (ie. carrying equipment and/or supplies for the well drilling program). Talk to your Team Leader to learn what you may need to carry. Ask the airline(s) for humanitarian waiver(s) for the second suitcase to waive excess baggage fees.

4. **Don't leave the airport before first reporting any lost luggage**

Should you discover upon arrival at your destination airport that your luggage is missing, you should immediately report this to your Team Leader and the airline information desk in the

baggage hall. Do NOT enter the arrivals hall without first reporting your loss to the airline because they will deny responsibility once you enter the public areas. The staff at the information desk will tell you the procedure for reclaiming your luggage and advise you on any forms that may need to be filled in and stamped.

5. Retain all of your boarding passes after you fly

Please keep all your boarding passes and give them to your Team Leader. Lifewater needs them to verify with Revenue Canada (to give you a tax receipt) that you actually travelled. If you lose your boarding passes while travelling, report this immediately to the airline(s) involved. They can provide replacements and ensure that no one else uses your original passes.

5. MANAGING CHALLENGES AND RISKS WHILE TRAVELING

1. Losing key travel items

Key documents and items include your passport, a copy of your itinerary, boarding passes, printed plane tickets (ie - not e-tickets), wallet/purse and money. To mitigate the impact of such losses:

a) ***Scan colour copies of all important documents***

This includes your passport, visa stamps, driver's licence, credit card number (and cancellation number), medical insurance (phone & policy numbers), team member contact info (home phone, cell phone and email) and local team phone/email. Leave a copy with someone at home, print a copy to take with you, and email a copy to yourself so you can access them if you lose everything.

b) ***Write key information inside your belt***

Write your passport number, embassy phone number and other important info inside your belt. In the improbable circumstance that you are alone and lose everything, you have this starting point!

c) ***Keep important documents in a money belt under your clothing***

This will keep the documents out of view of potential thieves. In addition, have a small travel neck wallet which is more accessible, in which you keep the documents you need that day.

d) ***While packing, spread your money around***

Split up your money so you do not lose it all if your wallet/purse is stolen or your carry-on bag lost. Keep some money in your passport pouch or in a little pouch that clips to bra straps. Send yourself an email listing hiding places to avoid heart-stopping days searching if you forget where you hid it!

e) ***Keep your driver's licence separate from other identification***

Keep it in a separate location from your passport so you always have access to photo ID.

2. Money Matters

a) ***Avoid gift-giving***

Your Team Leader can tell you why gift-giving often turns out badly! If you still want to give gifts, buy them in-country to stimulate the local economy and minimize the amount of luggage. Talk to your Leader about options for communal gifts.

b) ***Don't try to control how gifts to locals are used***

If you insist on giving gifts, accept that you cannot control how the recipients use them. The expensive work boots you buy for someone may be sold for \$10, money given for schooling may be spent on house repair, etc.

c) ***Don't try to micro-manage how the in-country per diem is spent***

The \$75 to \$100 per day you provide covers food, airport pickup, accommodation, drivers, translators, transportation, phones. Think of it as a tax-deductible gift and enjoy the fact you don't have to worry about paying for things during your trip.

d) ***Keep receipts for your plane tickets, immunizations, etc.***

Lifewater can issue you a "Gift-in-Kind" receipt with these to help with your income tax!

e) ***Your Team Leader may ask you to buy things for Lifewater***

If you are asked to purchase items, keep the receipts to be reimbursed or to receive a tax receipt.

f) ***Bring money as \$USD***

Credit cards or travellers' cheques may not work overseas, and Canadian currency may not be accepted.

3. Getting sick while travelling

This can happen due to jet lag, food at strange times, food/drink that may be unsafe, or due to medical conditions. To reduce the risk of this happening:

a) ***Get checked by a doctor and dentist before you leave***

If you not feeling well, get a medical professional to examine you to ensure you are safe to travel.

b) ***Keep all prescription medications in your carry-on baggage***

Ensure medications are kept in their original, labeled bottles to avoid having them confiscated by airport security. Have a doctor's letter for any narcotics or restricted medications.

c) ***Take food and hand cleaner on the plane***

Clean your hands regularly and eat trail mix when you are hungry. This can really help if you are faced with unappetizing airplane food or if you are sleeping when meals are served.

d) ***Drink lots of water to stay hydrated***

Also, minimize intakes of coffee, tea, and alcohol because they can dehydrate you.

4. Preparing to fly home

a) ***Flight reconfirmation***

Flights with some airlines need to be confirmed at least 72 hours in advance or your seat may be given away. Given the frequency of cancellations, you should reconfirm your flight far enough in advance that you can move onto an earlier flight if your routing has been cancelled. On the day of your flight, check again with the airline to see if your flight is operating so you do not waste time waiting at the airport.

b) ***Left-over foreign currency***

If you have any foreign currency left before you fly home, exchange it before leaving the host country. It is often illegal to export local money and it may be impossible to exchange it at home. However, do NOT give all your money away before leaving the country because you may need some if there are unexpected travel delays.

5. MANAGING CHALLENGES AND RISKS WHILE “IN-COUNTRY”

1. Getting sick or not feeling well

Always wash your hands after toileting and before eating, avoid dairy products and food that is not thoroughly cooked, and do not drink water or eat raw fruit or vegetables from village sources. Diarrhea which lasts for longer than 48-72 hours, shows signs of blood or is concurrent with a headache or high temperature should always be taken seriously. Promptly seek medical advice. You should also:

a) ***Get all appropriate prescriptions and immunizations***

To minimize the risk of becoming sick while travelling, arrange several weeks before your trip to visit a travel clinic or public health office to receive all appropriate vaccinations and anti-malaria medication. You can find recommendations at <https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/health-safety/vaccines>. *A Yellow Fever vaccination, and proof of it, are required for Liberia, Nigeria, and Haiti.* Take your anti-malaria medication during and after the trip.

b) ***Recover from jet lag before exerting yourself***

Depending on your travel duration and number of time zones crossed, you may arrive feeling fresh and ready to go or tired and worn-out. Drink lots of water, get plenty of rest, and get acclimatized before getting busy. Talk to your Team Leader daily about how you are feeling.

c) ***Eat and drink safely***

Unsafe food and water are the leading causes of illness among travelers. Reduce the likelihood of suffering diarrhea by avoiding roadside stalls selling local food; also decrease the amount you eat and stay hydrated with safe water. *If you can't boil it, cook it, or peel it, forget it!*

Before you go, buy and pack high-protein power bars such as Clif, ProteinPlus, and/or PowerBar. Bring two per day because you often won't feel like eating lunch in the hot tropics. Also bring along 1-2 tins of powdered GatorAde (or a similar product) per person per week to keep up your electrolytes when you are sweating.

d) ***Avoid sunstroke and heat exhaustion***

Avoid sunstroke and heat exhaustion by staying hydrated, by taking regular breaks when sweating a lot, and by wearing a good hat, appropriate clothing, and sunglasses. You can also take a basic First-Aid course before you go and familiarize yourself with the symptoms of sun stroke, heat exhaustion, and dehydration.

e) ***Prevent insect bites***

Diseases like dengue fever and malaria are spread through insect bites. Malaria is prevalent where Lifewater works. It can cause fever, chills, sweats, headaches, body aches, nausea, vomiting, and/or fatigue. Protect yourself and prevent insect bites by:

- Wearing lightweight long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and a hat outside whenever possible
- Using flying-insect spray (containing a pyrethroid insecticide) to quickly kill flying insects
- Remaining in a screened or air-conditioned area during the peak biting period (dusk and dawn)

- Using bed nets (ideally treated with permethrin or deltamethrin) if you are not sleeping in an air-conditioned or well-screened room (bring window screen and duct tape to fix broken screens)
- Using insect repellent with 30%-50% DEET.

f) ***Avoid direct contact with animals***

Do not touch or feed any animals, including dogs and cats, since veterinarian care is unavailable and even animals that look like healthy pets can have rabies or other diseases. Be sure you are up to date with your tetanus vaccination. If you are bitten or scratched, immediately wash the wound well with soap and warm water and go to a doctor. After your return home, tell your doctor if you were bitten or scratched and inquire about a rabies vaccination.

g) ***Always wear shoes***

To prevent fungal and parasitic infections, keep feet clean and dry. Never go barefoot in your guest house, in the shower, and especially on beaches where animals may have defecated.

h) ***Mandatory medical insurance policy***

You must have medical insurance appropriate for your personal health. If you need medical assistance while travelling overseas, your private or provincial health plan will not provide enough coverage. Employer health plans are often limited in scope and insurance plans that came with your credit card are not acceptable. Lifewater will not cover medical bills you incur overseas.

Take your time and make an informed medical insurance purchase. Before traveling, ask your Team Leader if there is a specific insurance carrier to use. Ask your insurance agent about exclusions, prepayment of medical expenses, and inclusion of emergency evacuation and repatriation. Ensure full coverage is in effect in countries that carry a travel advisory. Insurance normally does NOT cover you for issues warned about in travel advisories such as being hurt in a terrorist act for which there was a prior advisory. Read the coverage before you go so you know what is and is not covered.

Always carry a copy of your insurance information. Give the Trip Leader the name of your insurance provider, your policy number, and the policy's emergency assistance phone numbers.

i) ***Consider evacuation services***

Companies like Global Rescue offer coverage for issues like emergency evacuation during natural disasters, civil unrest, transportation to a hospital of your choice, etc. Please investigate this option to make an informed decision about the level of risk for which you prefer to be covered.

2. Getting lost or stranded

Getting back to your guest house is difficult if you don't know where you are or if you have no working vehicle or driver. To minimize the risks:

a) ***Have local Lifewater workers drive and guide you***

Drive a vehicle only after first getting approval from the Team Leader. You must have an International Licence to do so.

b) ***Always take a GPS unit with you***

And ensure you know how to operate it and your guest house's coordinates are entered as "home."

c) ***Always have a cell phone with you***

This is to phone the Team Leader, other volunteers, or local workers if you need logistical support.

d) ***Stay with your group***

Do NOT head off anywhere on your own.

e) ***Avoid hiring unknown taxi drivers***

This is especially true at night when it is difficult to tell where you are and you can be quickly driven to a remote area and robbed. If you are stranded somewhere, call your Team Leader.

3. Culture shock and problems orientating

When you arrive at your overseas destination, you may experience “culture shock.” There may be hundreds of people milling about outside the airport. Taxi drivers and luggage handlers will try to carry your luggage in return for a fee. There will be unfamiliar sights, sounds, and scents. Traffic will often be chaotic – people don’t drive on the left or right, they drive in the shade; pedestrians cross the road when you least expect it; donkeys, cows, and goats mingle with cars, buses, motor bikes, and carts.

In one extreme, culture shock can keep you housebound and in the other extreme can leave you feeling tired and wanting to go home or can even lead you to condemn the country and its people. Neither extreme is helpful so take the following steps to minimize the risk of this happening:

a) ***Research as much as you can before your go***

Look for online articles and videos about the country, including local cultures, social values, religions, history, economic conditions, and climate. Ask your Team Leader for suggestions.

b) ***Actively participate in end-of-day sharing sessions with team members***

The best way to deal with impressions and emotions is to talk about them with your fellow travelers.

c) ***Ease into the culture and country***

During the first few days overseas, get lots of rest. Most importantly, bring a sense of humour and be grateful for all the things you have back home which will be waiting for you when you return.

4. Lost/Stolen money, passport, or possessions

The root of this risk is our lack of attentiveness that leads others into temptation. The risk can be minimized by being more careful about how we store and use our personal items. For example:

a) ***Never leave valuables unattended***

Should you lose valuables, you will need a police report to file a claim on your insurance policy. Getting the report in a developing country is often not worth the necessary time and energy, so don’t bring anything valuable enough that you would want to file an insurance claim.

Don’t take personal belongings (cell phone, cameras, wallets, watches etc.) with you when you don’t need them. These items have been stolen from volunteers while right beside them! Don’t leave cell phones, cameras, day packs etc. unattended in common areas. Wear them all the time or keep them locked in your room. Belongings in your room should not be in open view or easily reached from windows. Similarly, never leave pack sacks or valuables unattended in a vehicle.

b) ***Keep your passport safe***

If you choose to carry your passport with you, make sure it cannot fall out of your pack and don't keep it in your purse in case your purse is stolen or lost.

c) ***Always maintain the security of your guest home***

This includes keeping windows latched when you are not in your room, and keeping outside doors locked when you are not home during the day and even when you are home at night.

5. Alcohol consumption policy

Alcohol is viewed very negatively overseas in some Muslim and Christian circles, and consumption of it by volunteers would reflect badly on Lifewater and on anyone hosting us. Also, we want to ensure that a volunteer's judgment is never impaired so they stay safe and enjoy their visit. Therefore, Lifewater asks volunteers to avoid alcohol consumption while in any host country.

If you do not think this policy is reasonable, please do not travel overseas with Lifewater. If you come along and do not adhere to these rules, you will receive a warning with further violations likely resulting in you being released from the team and asked to return home at your expense.

6. Motor vehicle accident/breakdown

This is a noteworthy risk, due to the degree of traffic congestion on local roads, to many unskilled drivers, and to many poorly maintained vehicles. To reduce the chance of being in an accident, and minimize the impact if it does happen:

a) ***Always wear your seatbelt***

Whenever there is a working seatbelt available, wear it even when it is not required by local law or custom. Look for both ends of the belt before starting your trip – seatbelts have often slipped between the seats and can't be easily retrieved in crowded vehicles.

b) ***Do not sit on the side of pickup trucks***

If you are sitting on the side of the back box of a pick-up truck when it swerves or turns sharply, you can be thrown out and seriously injured or killed. If you must sit in the back, sit in the bed of the truck – with your back against the cab if possible, so it can support you during a crash. You should never ride on the roof of any vehicle.

c) ***Stop unsafe driving***

Safety comes before any job or schedule. If your driver is impaired, is driving dangerously or the vehicle is unsafe, insist that the driver stop and phone your Team Leader to arrange to get the vehicle and passengers home. Please note that if we rent a taxi or truck, we rely on the provider to maintain their vehicles in a roadworthy condition and we do not perform independent safety tests.

d) ***Stay with your vehicle***

If your vehicle breaks down, call your Team Leader and stay with the vehicle until repairs are made or alternate transportation arranged.

e) ***Avoid riding motorcycles and bicycles***

Motorcycles and bicycles can be a fast, fun way to get around. But they are also high risk because bad roads cause riders to fall off and there are frequent collisions with trucks. Talk to your Team Leader before riding any motorcycle or bicycle and always wear a helmet, long pants and a jacket.

7. Getting hurt or injured

This includes while drilling, fixing pumps, maintaining equipment, doing construction, or participating in activities organized by Lifewater. The risk of hurt or injury can be reduced by these initiatives:

a) ***Bring and wear safety gear***

Use the same equipment that would be required in Canada (hard hats, safety boots, safety glasses, work gloves, coveralls or long pants, welding shields, etc.)

b) ***Complete one job at a time***

This keeps you focused and your tools together. Clean up often to minimize tripping hazards.

c) ***Don't work faster than you feel safe***

If you run out of time, leave a job undone rather than rushing to finish before the end of the day.

d) ***Use the right tools for the job***

This is very important for scaffolding when working at heights, blocks when under vehicles, etc.

e) ***Ensure you are qualified to do the work***

Ensure you have the expertise to safely operate drilling rigs, welding machines, heavy tools, etc. Get training if you are using unfamiliar power tools. *If you don't feel safe, don't do the job!*

f) ***Be careful where you swim***

Do not swim in fresh water because it can be a source of many parasites and diseases. Swim with a buddy since the undercurrent can be strong and waves powerful. There can also be submerged rocks and hidden coral reefs where breaking waves can toss you onto sharp coral and there are sea urchins with large spines you can step on! Always wear footwear and, if in doubt about local conditions, just wade in, sit down, and float rather than trying to swim.

8. Personal activities not organized by Lifewater

If you participate during your overseas trip in activities in your free time that were not organized by Lifewater, Lifewater will not be responsible for your safety. Speak to your Team Leader before planning extra-curricular activities. Depending on the potential risks, the Team Leader may advise you to not do them or, if you are insistent, to first sign a liability waiver.

9. Pick-pocketed or mugged

These are usually crimes of opportunity. Methods of minimizing the risk include:

a) ***Don't look or talk "rich"***

Leave expensive looking watches and jewelry at home to avoid attracting thieves. Wear older clothing that is less noticeable; it will probably be more comfortable too! Also, keep mobile phones, cameras, GPS units, and other electronic items stored out of sight in a day pack. And don't talk about all the items that you have with you or that your host organization has in its compound.

b) ***Keep wallets securely stored***

Don't put wallets in back pockets because this is easy prey for trained pick-pockets. Never carry purses slung over shoulders since bags can be grabbed or straps cut.

c) ***Avoid crowds without a local team member***

This includes busy markets, shopping areas etc. If you must go to a market or other crowded area, travel in a group, preferably with one or more local people who know what to avoid.

d) ***Don't flash wads of money***

Carry only as much money as you need for the day. Put money in several envelopes stored in different places for separate planned transactions. Never pull out a wallet full of bills in public or even in a store. The bills may all be \$1 notes, but you will look wealthy. If you must carry a lot of money to make a big purchase, have other people with you to watch your back and pack.

e) ***Avoid using shared public transportation***

Avoid using local transportation where you are crowded against many unknown people. If you take a taxi, negotiate a fixed price on the condition that the driver not stop for additional passengers.

f) ***Keep your cell phone away from open windows***

When passengers in a vehicle are talking on a cell phone, make sure the windows are rolled up or the passenger is holding the phone with his/her hand facing inside the vehicle. Some volunteers have had phones snatched out of their hands while talking on phones facing an open window.

g) ***Never go anywhere by yourself or with friendly strangers***

Don't go off by yourself or with local friendly person(s) you have recently met. Ask your Team Leader if they are well known within the established social circle of people you are working with.

h) ***Be home by dark***

If you can't avoid travelling after dark, stay in a group with local hosts, stay in contact by phone with your Team Leader, and use vehicles and drivers arranged by Lifewater.

i) ***Keep visitors in designated meeting places***

People who appear friendly in the day may just be scouting you and your stuff out for later "acquisition" visits!

10. Inappropriate behaviour policy

Volunteers are to maintain courteous, Christ-like behaviour *at all times*. Inappropriate sexual relationships, alcohol use, profanity, uncontrolled temper and/or abuse of any kind won't be tolerated.

a) ***Sexual contact with anyone other than your spouse is strictly forbidden***

Anyone contravening this policy will be immediately asked to leave the team and return home. In the past, both male and female volunteers have been approached with offers of dates, marriage, or sexual favours. Engaging in such activity could seriously jeopardize team safety, could cause huge embarrassment for the participating individuals and for Lifewater, and could result in sexually transmitted diseases like HIV/Aids.

b) ***Profanity, uncontrolled temper, and any abuse will not be tolerated***

Abuse could include sexual innuendos, bullying, belittling comments, or criticizing anyone's religious views, sexual orientation, culture, ethnicity, etc. The Team Leader will ask the offending the volunteer is stop the unacceptable behaviour. If the volunteer is unwilling or unable to stop, he or she will be asked to return home.

11. Serious sickness or death of a loved one back home

If you need to return home in a hurry in response to a family emergency, talk to your Team Leader for help with the travel arrangements.

12. Physical Assault

Minimize the risk of assault, and respond effectively if it does happen, by following this advice:

a) ***Don't become responsible for the health of local people***

In particular, never give any local person prescription drugs or other medication because if the individual's medical condition worsens, you could be blamed for it. If you want to help someone get treatment in a medical clinic or hospital, pay a taxi to take them there and, if possible, have relatives travel with them. A volunteer once had his life threatened after bringing a sick woman to a hospital in a Lifewater truck because the woman's relative believed the volunteer had "cursed" her.

b) ***Avoid activities that put the team at risk***

If you are considering organizing activities during your trip that are outside the stated Lifewater trip goals, please discuss them with the Team Leader before tickets are purchased.

c) ***Don't antagonize local people***

Even if you are very angry for just cause, cool off before speaking. Yelling angrily at people, criticizing local helpers, accusing people of stealing, etc., can cause them to lose face. Local culture often forces them to retaliate to regain their honour. They might do so by physically harming you or other volunteers, or by stealing from you or the host organization.

d) ***If you feel threatened, call for help***

Protest loudly or call out to attract attention. Go into a brightly lit area or store, especially one that has a guard at the door. Forcefully but gently move yourself out of any isolated or poorly lit area. All cell phones provided will be pre-programmed with the number for your Team Leader and the local police. Phone as soon as you feel endangered.

e) ***Relinquish belongings or money for safety***

Assess your situation and priorities; your wallet or camera is not worth risking your life.

f) ***Seek medical aid immediately***

Your Team Leader will advise you of local hospitals and/or medical centres which are appropriate for use. Even small cuts and scrapes can become seriously infected in tropical areas.

g) ***Contact your Team Leader as soon as you are able***

Again, Lifewater cell phones will be programmed with the number for your Team Leader and local police.

h) ***Weapons strictly forbidden policy***

Lifewater strictly forbids volunteers from carrying, storing, or using guns. *Anyone contravening this policy will be immediately asked to leave the team and return home.*

13. Kidnapped or car-jacked

Discuss these issues with your Team Leader before buying tickets to travel overseas:

a) ***Lifewater does not carry kidnap insurance and has a “no-pay” policy***

Lifewater volunteers working overseas have never been kidnapped. The greatest risk is to local people who are working with us “rich white folks” and are assumed to be wealthy by association. If you are concerned, talk to your Team Leader, and if you remain uncomfortable, reconsider your decision to volunteer in an overseas country.

b) ***If you are kidnapped, protect yourself by cooperating with attackers***

Cooperate fully with attackers – allow the vehicle to be taken and provide no resistance to other demands. Do not fight back because this will result in your being further endangered. Your safety is more important than your property or Lifewater’s property.

6. MANAGING CHALLENGES OR RISKS AFTER RETURNING HOME

Once you are back from your trip, there can be issues that arise. Here are a few potential ones:

1. Malaria protection and unexplained illness

If you have visited an area where malaria is present, continue taking your anti-malarial medication for the prescribed time even after leaving the high-risk area to ensure you don't succumb to malaria after returning home.

Unexplained illnesses can include sustained gastro-intestinal problems, rashes, sleeplessness, or lack of energy. You may wish to:

a) *Pre-schedule a "Welcome Home" medical checkup*

Before you go overseas, schedule a full checkup for soon after you come home. Tell your health care provider you have been abroad and, if you were sick while you were away, explain:

- The countries you visited
- The medical care you received (blood transfusions, injections, dental care, surgery, etc.)
- If you were bitten or scratched by an animal while traveling

b) *See a medical professional if you become sick after coming home*

If you aren't feeling well after coming home, see your doctor. Emphasize that you have been travelling recently. If your symptoms persist, ask your doctor for a referral to a physician with tropical disease expertise. Malaria, for example, is a tropical disease with potentially long-term consequences. If you experience a fever or flu-like illness for up to one year after returning from a malaria area, seek immediate medical attention and tell the physician your travel history.

2. " Reverse Culture Shock" often happens after you come home

A combination of jet lag, returning to back-logged work and home tasks, and the ending of prayer coverage from supporters can leave you vulnerable to negative feelings. You may experience mild depression, feel like life in North America is meaningless and materialistic, be irritable and intolerant for anything smacking of commercialism, become impatient, etc. This includes feeling that your work is inadequate or feeling overwhelming guilt for having good food, warm showers, and an abundance of other creature comforts. Methods of coping with this include:

a) *Talk about your feelings with family, friends, and team members*

Share your feelings someone who has engaged in similar travel experiences. Seek out fellow team members by phone, text, email, or in person. Discuss your feelings openly with friends and family. When dealing with people who have never experienced the developing world and its challenges, be patient, kind, and understanding. Don't get angry with people when they seem uninterested in your story. Remember: they didn't experience what you did.

b) ***Don't make any radical decisions right after coming home***

Don't quit your job, sell all your belongings, and head back overseas right away! When you come home, you may be frustrated with all your possessions. Focus on being thankful for what God has blessed you with and move forward with future purchases as responsibly and aware as you can be.

c) ***Pray for the people you met and the country you visited***

It can be difficult coming home to an environment in which everything is in control whereas in Africa the people you were with depend on miracles every day and need God's care in their daily lives.

Take time out to rest, meditate, and pray. Don't underestimate the power of prayer in helping to process things. Also realize that feeling uncomfortable with your society or questioning how you are spending your time and money may be a good and Godly thing that could result in positive changes.

d) ***Continue debriefing, consider journaling, and seeing a professional counselor***

Continue debriefing with your fellow travelers and Team Leader after your return home. Consider starting a journal before you go overseas and keep writing in it after you come home. If depression or feelings of confusion and anger continue, consider seeing a professional counselor. Barnabus International is a non-government organization that provides spiritual care for missionaries and overseas volunteers: <http://www.barnabas.org/>

3. Ongoing requests from overseas for money and other support

People you met overseas may contact you at home with requests for money or other support. It can be very tempting to respond. But doing so can help to make every Lifewater volunteer and employee a potential target for similar appeals – while overseas and/or after returning home. These appeals can be very stressful for you and your family. You can reduce or eliminate the issue if you:

a) ***Establish a special email address for the overseas trip***

Give out this email address if people ask for it. If you start receiving requests for money or other support, you can abandon the email account. We strongly urge you not to give out your phone number. Doing so can subject you and your family to phone calls at 4:00 a.m.!

b) ***Realize it's okay to say "No"***

You can't reasonably be the financier for everyone who desperately needs money for education, to start a business, for medical needs, or just to buy rice and water. A polite "no" can still mean you sympathize deeply with their need. You can offer to pray for them and explain that you have run out of money after your expensive trip and need time to earn more before being able to give again.

c) ***Say "No" to focus on water***

You can also respond to requests by saying that because you have been faced with so many pressing needs, you have made the painful decision to focus on one overarching need – safe, accessible water – and providing it through Lifewater Canada. Again, offer to pray for people, and do so. Be onside with them in spirit even if you can't give.

d) ***Know when to take a break from giving***

Be as generous as you are able but know when to take a break from giving of your time, talents, and treasure. Even Jesus rested.

4. Have a “Plan to Plug-in” before you come home

While you are still overseas, visit one or more communities that still need safe, accessible, water. Take photos and write down stories. When you get home, channel your feelings of frustration with our material world and the desire for each day to be more meaningful by helping people in these overseas communities get water. “Plug into” your local community and contacts by giving talks and presentations, collecting donations, and raising support for more Lifewater projects. You will find some great fundraising suggestions in the “Get Involved” section of the Lifewater.ca website.

You can also ask your Team Leader for the names and contact information of existing Lifewater supporters in your area and offer to tell them about your trip. They will appreciate your dedication and commitment in going overseas and will usually be genuinely interested in your experiences. Let your passion encourage those who want to help!

7. VOLUNTEER PROFILE INFORMATION

First Name: _____ Middle Name(s): _____ Last Name: _____

**** Names must be filled in EXACTLY as they appear in your passport****

Street Address: _____

City: _____ Province/State: _____ Postal Code: _____

Home Phone: _____ Office phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____ Email Address: _____

PASSPORT INFORMATION

Citizenship: _____ Passport Number: _____

Place of Issue _____ Date of Issue: _____

Expiry Date: _____ Place of birth _____

Date of Birth: _____

**** Your passport must be valid for 6 months after your return ****

ALLERGIES

Food: _____

Medication: _____

Insects: _____

Other: _____

DIETARY Needs - Please identify any dietary restrictions (lactose intolerant, celiac, diabetic, etc):

Lifewater Canada respects the right of every volunteer to choose his or her dietary lifestyle. However, Lifewater Canada cannot guarantee that your specific food requirements can be met overseas. Please contact your Team Leader to discuss any dietary concerns you may have.

YOUR MEDICATIONS

YOUR MEDICAL CONDITION(S):

Please provide any information about any medical conditions you have which may be relevant to the Lifewater team leader for this trip. Please also note any medications for these conditions which you will have with you, and any precautions which you and the rest of the team may need to take while you are travelling. Please add pages as required.

Blood Type: _____

Frequent Flyer Numbers:

- Skyteam (Delta, Air France/KLM): _____
- One World (BA, American Airlines): _____
- Star Alliance (Air Canada, Lufthansa, United Airlines, US Airways): _____
- Westjet: _____

Date you would like to leave your home (if any preference): _____

Date you would like to return to your home (if any preference): _____

Special requests (meals, plane seating, stopovers, etc.): _____

MEDICAL INSURANCE/TRAVEL INSURANCE

Insurance policy number _____

Insurance policy company _____

Insurance company emergency phone number _____

Emergency contact information – Who we should contact if there is a problem?

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Province/State: _____ Postal Code: _____

Cell Phone: _____ Other Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

Contact List:

Please provide the names and email addresses of as many as 5 people you want to receive updates during the trip. If you have more than 5, please arrange to have the updates forwarded by someone on your list.

Contact 1: _____

Contact 2: _____

Contact 3: _____

Contact 4: _____

Contact 5: _____

PERSONAL BACKGROUND

When/where have you travelled in the developing world before, and what were you doing there?

What technical (mechanical, electrical, plumbing, construction, etc.) or administrative (accounting, computer, management, etc.) skills and experience do you have that would benefit Lifewater?

What other life experiences have prepared you to serve with Lifewater Canada?

What is attracting you to Lifewater?

Is there anything else you would like to add?

8. PARTICIPATION CONDITIONS AND LIABILITY WAIVER

A. Your Trip and Assumption of Risk

Lifewater Canada operates in regions where standards of accommodation, transport, safety, hygiene, medical facilities, and other infrastructure may at times not be of the standard you are used to at home. By volunteering with Lifewater Canada, you acknowledge that participation in all trips and activities involves inherent risks that may not be part of conventional or less demanding tours, vacations, holidays, etc.

These risks include, without limitation, the possibility of injury or death, sickness, psychological trauma, loss or damage to property, inconvenience, and/or discomfort. The possibility of experiencing all or some of these risks is likely to be higher if participation in a Lifewater Canada trip involves visiting remote or unstable regions, or regions where there is dangerous wildlife.

It is your responsibility to acquaint yourself before the trip with the travel advice provided by the government bodies in the nations or regions you will visit plus the advice of your country of residency. By volunteering with Lifewater Canada, you acknowledge your decision to participate in the trip is made after due consideration of relevant travel information that may be made available at any time.

B. Exclusion of Liability

Where Lifewater Canada provides services, it will do so with due care and skill. However, Lifewater Canada is not responsible for the acts and omissions of others, including tour guides, airlines, and accommodation providers or for any loss, damage, death, injury, or expense (including loss of money paid in advance), which you may incur as a consequence of the acts and omissions of others.

You warrant that you have not relied on any representation made by Lifewater Canada. Lifewater Canada will not accept responsibility or liability if you contravene any law or regulation of any country or region visited. Any independent arrangements that you make that are not part of the Lifewater Canada trip (including pre-trip and post-trip accommodation) are entirely at your own risk and Lifewater Canada cannot and does not give you any assurance, representation, or warranty in connection with any such arrangements.

To the fullest extent permitted by law, and subject to the exception set out below, Lifewater Canada does not accept liability for any loss, damage, death, or injury however caused (including through negligence), which you may directly or indirectly suffer in connection with or arising from your participation in a trip, or in respect of any other conduct that Lifewater Canada undertakes in connection with a trip.

To the fullest extent permitted by law, and subject to the exception set out below, you also agree to release Lifewater Canada and its owners, officers, directors, employees, agents, contractors, and subcontractors ("Representatives") from all costs, liability, loss, and damage incurred by you in connection with your participation in any trip, and waive any associated claims that you may have against Lifewater Canada or its Representatives as a result of your participation in any trip.

C. Authority of the Team Leader

At all times, the decision of the Lifewater Canada Team Leader or Representative ("Lifewater Canada Leader") will be final on all matters likely to affect the safety and well-being of the trip. This includes any decision the Lifewater Canada Team Leader makes about your ongoing participation in the trip or certain activities that comprise part of the trip.

If you fail to comply with a decision made by a Lifewater Canada Team Leader, or interfere with the well-being of the group, the Lifewater Canada Team Leader reserves the right to order you to immediately leave the team and trip, with no right of refund.

D. Medical Insurance

Adequate and valid medical insurance is compulsory for all Lifewater Canada travellers. Your insurance must cover accidents, injury, illness and death, medical expenses, including any related to pre-existing medical conditions, emergency repatriation (including helicopter rescue and air ambulance where applicable) and personal liability.

Lifewater Canada also recommends coverage of travel issues (cancellation, curtailment and loss of luggage and personal effects). You must carry proof of insurance with you and produce it if reasonably requested by Lifewater Canada's Team Leader or Representatives.

Lifewater Canada reserves the right to cancel or suspend your participation on a trip or in certain activities that comprise part of a trip, at any time, including after the commencement of your trip, with no right of refund, if you are unable to provide proof of insurance when requested.

Many travel insurance companies will not cover you for threats listed in a travel warning issued by your government for the country you plan to visit. Because there are travel advisories or warnings for many of Lifewater Canada's destinations, it is your responsibility to ensure your policy provides full coverage in each of the countries visited.

E. Passports and Visas

It is the volunteer's responsibility to carry a valid passport and have obtained the appropriate visas when travelling with Lifewater Canada. Please ensure your passport is valid for 6 months beyond the duration of your volunteer trip.

F. Health, Fitness, and Age Limits

It is your responsibility to advise Lifewater Canada of any pre-existing medical conditions and/or disabilities that might reasonably be expected to increase the risk of you requiring medical attention, or that might affect the normal execution of the trip and enjoyment of other trip members.

You may be required to provide an assessment of your medical condition from a qualified medical practitioner if requested by Lifewater Canada, which also reserves the right, at its reasonable discretion,

to cancel your booking and refund the money paid by you, less any unrecoverable costs. Lifewater Canada also reserves the right to cancel your participation in a trip at any time, including after the commencement, with no right of refund, if your medical condition and/or disability could have been reasonably expected to affect the normal execution of the trip and enjoyment of other trip members.

All travellers 70 years and over will be required to complete a special Lifewater Canada health and fitness questionnaire to assess their suitability for the trip being planned. Travellers 75 years and over may also be asked to provide a letter from a certified medical practitioner that confirms the individual's suitability for the planned trip.

Lifewater Canada reserves the right, at its discretion, to cancel your booking and refund the money paid by you, less any unrecoverable costs. We generally do not allow volunteers or travellers under age 18 to participate in Lifewater Canada trips and itineraries. However, we will occasionally make exceptions for under-18s travelling with their legal guardian(s). The decision about whether a person under 18 can participate in a Lifewater Canada trip and itinerary is at the absolute discretion Lifewater management.

F. Publicity

You agree that Lifewater Canada may use images of you taken during the trip without recourse to you and without compensation to you for whatever purpose and through whatever medium Lifewater Canada chooses.

You also agree to give Lifewater Canada an electronic copy of all photographs and videos taken by you during your volunteer trip. You retain exclusive ownership of these materials and have the sole right to use them for personal economic gain. However, you agree to waive payment, explicit credit, or the requirement of Lifewater Canada to have received specific authorization to use these images to document trip activities, report to donors on projects, and create promotional materials.

G. Privacy

To serve you effectively, Lifewater Canada must collect personal information from you. The information may be disclosed to, or collected on our behalf by, our service providers to enable the necessary services to be provided. But the information will not be used by them for any other purpose.

H. Trip Planning Handbook for Lifewater Volunteers

By signing below, you acknowledge having read the "*Trip Planning Handbook for Lifewater Canada Volunteers*" in its entirety and confirm that you understand everything discussed in it. Your signature also means you agree to abide by the policies, rules, and guidelines in the handbook, and implied by it.

I. Governing Law

This agreement will be governed by and construed in accordance with the law of Thunder Bay, ON, Canada (where Lifewater Canada is headquartered) and each party agrees to submit to the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of Thunder Bay as regards any claim or matter arising under this agreement.

IN CONSIDERATION OF PARTICIPATION IN THE TRIP, MY SIGNATURE ON THIS FORM INDICATES THAT I HAVE, ON THE DATE SHOWN, READ AND UNDERSTOOD THE ENTIRE CUSTOMER AGREEMENT IN THIS HANDBOOK AND I ACKNOWLEDGE THAT IT AFFECTS MY LEGAL RIGHTS AND AGREE TO BE BOUND BY ITS TERMS.

MY SIGNATURE ALSO SIGNIFIES MY INTENTION TO RELIEVE AND INDEMNIFY EACH OF LIFEWATER CANADA, THEIR OWNERS, OFFICERS, DIRECTORS, EMPLOYEES, AGENTS, CONTRACTORS AND SUBCONTRACTORS FROM ANY LIABILITY FOR PERSONAL INJURY, PROPERTY DAMAGE OR WRONGFUL DEATH WHICH I/WE MIGHT SUFFER DURING MY/OUR PARTICIPATION IN THE SCHEDULED TRIP.

Volunteer Signature

Volunteer Name (clearly spell, first/middle/last)

Witness/Notary Signature

Witness/Notary Name (clearly spell, first/middle/last)

Place signed

Date signed

PLEASE EMAIL A COMPLETED COPY OF THIS HANDBOOK TO LIFEWATER CANADA AT lifewatercanada@gmail.com