



## Health and Safety Considerations

EWH cares first and foremost about the health and safety of our Institute participants.

**Health:** Each student is required to submit to Engineering World Health a signed notification from a physician or nurse practitioner attesting to their physical and mental health sufficient to participate in the trip. Students receive a “prep” packet from EWH with information about vaccinations and medications (advising students to bring with them a full supply of any prescription medications) but, unless a country requires certain vaccinations (for example, some require a yellow fever vaccination) these decisions are made between the student and his/her medical provider. EWH provides each student with a small first aid kit containing over-the-counter medications for stomach upset and minor pain, mosquito repellent, sunscreen, etc.

Students are working in public hospitals, so in case of illness, medical assistance is close at hand. In the event of anything requiring more specialized care, our On-the-Ground Coordinators will see to it that the student receives treatment at one of the country’s best hospitals (in every case, there are private hospitals that cater to expats and wealthier local citizens). The student must pay out-of-pocket for treatment, which is significantly less expensive than similar treatment in the US. In some cases you may be able to submit the bill to your insurance provider for full or partial reimbursement. For this reason, we highly recommend maintaining one’s own health insurance throughout the Institute program.

In the extremely unlikely event that an illness or injury would be best treated in the student’s home country, EWH contracts with Cultural Insurance Services International (CISI) for medical evacuation insurance for each student, unless the student is covered by his/her university’s own service, which is similar to EWH’s. Details of the service specific to each program are provided to participants.

EWH’s policy covers up to US\$1,000,000 in evacuation costs, and can fly the student back to their country in a medically-equipped aircraft. Once back in one’s own country, the evacuation insurance no longer covers the costs. In the 18 years that EWH has sponsored over 1,100 students, we have needed to evacuate a student exactly once, for an injury sustained during a leisure-time activity that was not authorized by EWH. We have on occasion engaged the services of the insurer to arrange a consultation between a US or European doctor and the local physician.

### Site selection:

To the best of our ability, EWH selects countries and sites within those countries that are relatively free from crime, natural disaster, and civil unrest. Both before and during an



Institute, we monitor the travel advisories of several governments - the US State Department, Australia, UK, and Canada - and receive regular bulletins from a travel service, SOS International. We regularly consult with our local partners, and we alert the on-the-ground staff to any anticipated problems.

#### **On-the-Ground Coordinators, Local Support Staff, and US-based Staff**

EWH employs two types of staff in-country. Each Institute is staffed by at least one, usually two, On-the-Ground Coordinators. These individuals are either EWH full-time employees or have received training from EWH. Many are alumni of an EWH program. The On-the-Ground Coordinators are in regular communication with the staff of EWH in the US: The CEO, the Director of Student Programs, the Manager of Summer Institutes, and the Operations Coordinator of Student Programs. These individuals rotate so that someone is available 24/7 during the course of an Institute.

Students are each given a cellphone with a local SIM card. Each phone has enough prepaid airtime for emergency calls to the On-the-Ground Coordinator and at least one emergency call to their home country. Students may add prepaid time to this phone, and many bring their own phones as well.

In addition, EWH partners with a local institution - either a language school, a local educational institution, or an agency that specializes in logistical arrangements for volunteers and/or tourists. Staff members of these institutions often serve as "homestay parents" during the students' first month and are available subsequently in the case of any need or emergency. These institutions work with EWH to arrange airport pickup and transportation, and the several sightseeing trips EWH arranges for participants.

#### **On-the-Ground Acculturation and Safety Briefings for Students**

During their first week in-country, students receive briefings from our On-the-Ground Coordinators and our local partners on appropriate social behavior and safety. Our local partners will explain, for example, how to present oneself politely to local acquaintances, behave in the market, and access local transportation. Much of the safety advice is common to almost anywhere in the world: don't flaunt a cellphone or money out on the street, be mindful of belongings to avoid pickpockets, don't travel alone at night, stay sober, etc. Many homestays will impose a curfew, and students must abide by it. We make clear to students that these common-sense precautions must be observed. On-the-Ground Coordinators are in touch with the students throughout the Institute and monitor behavior. Only very rarely have we encountered a problem of dangerous behavior by a student and have, on at least one occasion, sent a student home who refused to abide by the rules and so endangered themselves.



Once again, EWH cares deeply about the health and safety of our Institute participants. EWH staff are available to answer any questions you may have. Please email us at [summerinstitute@ewh.org](mailto:summerinstitute@ewh.org).