



# Duty of care

an essential part  
of your business  
travel programme

Business travel expert Adam Knights explains why duty of care and risk management is relevant to all organisations



# Introduction

If your employees have to travel for business of any kind, it's up to you to ensure their safety as far as possible and communicate to them what to do in the event of an emergency.

However duty of care is not just about emergencies and major world events – it could be someone losing their passport, missing a flight or falling ill while abroad. It's also about those travel details that can improve your employees' wellbeing, like making sure they don't have to drive after a long-haul flight.

## What this insight will tell you

- Why duty of care is a priority for businesses
- Where duty of care fits in to travel management
- Key elements of a successful duty of care programme
- How a travel management company can help

## Adam Knights

Adam's early career was in business and leisure travel for American Express and Trailfinders. Now managing director of ATPI in the UK, he is also a board director of the Institute of Travel & Meetings (ITM) UK & Ireland.



# Why duty of care is a priority



## What is duty of care?

The perception and profile of duty of care has changed dramatically over recent years. Previously thought of as a concern for larger organisations, those with high risk travel (such as the energy and shipping sectors) or managing emergency travel situations – duty of care has now become a recognised essential for any travel programme.

## **A definition of duty of care\***

Duty of Care refers to the moral and legal obligations of employers to their employees, contractors, volunteers and related family members in maintaining their well-being, security and safety when working, posted on international assignments or working in remote areas of their home country.

In those circumstances, individuals and organisations have legal obligations to act prudently to avoid the risk of reasonable foreseeable injury or exposures leading to ill health. This obligation may apply both to acts and omissions.

In addition to that, the employers are due to build a broad culture within their organisation addressing the health, safety, security and well-being of their employees and other related collaborators to the business. To do so, they are expected to develop and deploy appropriate travel risk management approaches to protect people from possible harm.

\*Source: The International SOS Foundation



## Protection for everyday travel

Slow growth in the traditional economies of the West has led many businesses to look further afield – to the BRICs (Brazil, Russia, India and China) but also to emerging markets such as the CIVETS (Colombia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Egypt, Turkey and South Africa).

As companies explore developing economies, their employees are often required to go to riskier destinations where travel may not be so straightforward (for example West Africa).

Whilst managing travel to high risk or unfamiliar destinations is an important part of duty of care, it extends well beyond this and indeed just planning for travel emergencies. In fact the most common risks are road traffic accidents - people driving whilst on business, or pedestrians in busy cities such as London or Bangkok.

Additionally, in some countries employers also have a legal requirement to prioritise duty of care, for example the UK's Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007.



# Where duty of care fits in to travel management

## The importance of duty of care

Making sure that your employees feel safe and taken care of gives you a number of benefits. Firstly, simplifying travel and removing any nuisances makes it easier for your employees to get work done. Secondly, looking after employees is a good way of retaining the very best staff.

If you're branching out into new markets, you might find yourself sending employees to destinations where travel isn't straightforward. So it becomes even more important to put in place simple solutions for employees if they come into difficulty.

There's also a need to prepare your employees ahead of their trip, so that they can clearly understand necessary preparations and what to expect when they arrive.





## How businesses manage duty of care

The management of duty of care varies by organisation. Some businesses have an established, extensive duty of care programme with cross-functional teams spanning the travel department, HR, security, risk management and senior managers. Often these organisations have safety engrained in their culture such as those operating in the energy and offshore industries.

For example these companies will encourage employees to hold the hand rails when taking the stairs, mandate lids on hot drinks and often start meetings with a 'safety moment', including where the fire exits are.

In other organisations, often smaller, departments such as HR or senior managers are solely responsible for ensuring the safety of travellers. In some cases, there is no direct reference to duty of care in travel policies – and reasons behind maximum driving hours for example, are not explicitly explained as a safety initiative.

# Key elements of a successful duty of care programme

Through analysis of your travel programme, you can understand where your employees are travelling to and define the health and security measures according to the level of risk at that particular destination.

Organisations may define their 'high risk' destinations in different ways, some may use the guidelines provided by their medical and security providers – for others there are sites such as foreign offices or the European Commission which detail advice on travel to certain destinations and banned airline carriers.



Regardless of the size of your organisation, communication is vital. Travellers should be fully briefed before, during and after travel with necessary information and contact numbers – this includes familiarity with your travel policy. During travel it is important that employees have access to necessary information, such as who to contact in an emergency or specific high risk areas to avoid in their final destination.

The International SOS Foundation has created a 'Travel Risk Mitigation Toolbox' outlining the essentials organisations need to define health and safety risk measures for travellers.

**The checklist includes:**

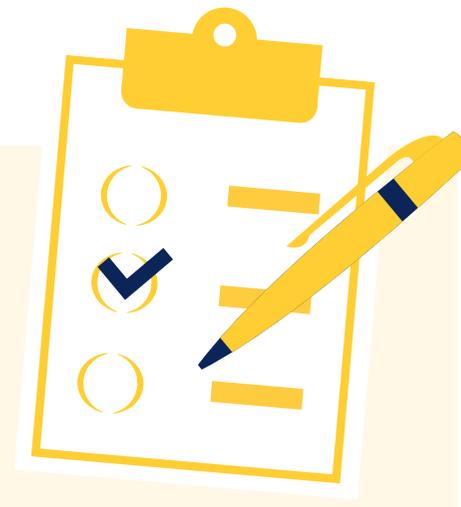
- Pre-travel, what to implement from a preparation, information and compliance perspective
- During travel, how to deal with travel-related issues and ensure compliance
- Post-travel, what to review and improve in the travel risk and emergency management system

**It covers legal and social responsibilities of the organisation:**

1. Health and safety policy
2. Risk assessment for identifying risks and hazards
3. Organisation, planning and implementation
  - a. Information and advice
  - b. Competence and training
  - c. Fitness to travel, including travel health consultation
  - d. Travel health and security kits and supplies
  - e. Medical or security emergency management
  - f. Tracking and communicating

The Travel Risk Mitigation Toolbox is supported and promoted by the IOE (International Organisation of Employers) – [click here to read the full brochure](#).

To find out more about travel risk mitigation, [visit the International SOS Foundation's website](#).



# How a travel management company can help

As experts in business travel, your travel management company is ideally placed to advise and guide you on the right tools to manage traveller safety and security – and how to deliver a best practice duty of care programme.

As per the checklist set out by the International SOS Foundation in their Travel Risk Mitigation Toolbox, a key element is assessing risk, organisation and strategic planning.

At this stage your travel management company should provide consultancy – analysing the current situation, understanding your business travel and recommending improvements before implementation.

Your travel management company should support travel managers and travellers at each step of their journey - before, during and after. Support needs to be 24/7, real-time, ensuring that travel managers have the ability to react immediately and appropriately as required.



## Before travel

- Pre-trip reports – providing globally consolidated information on travel itineraries, particularly any booked to high risk destinations or out of policy
- Travel alerts – keeping travellers and travel teams up-to-date with any potential disruptions or global events
- Traveller profiles – key to any duty of care programme is ensuring that traveller profiles are current, including emergency contact numbers or records of any health issues

Best in class travel management companies will also have strategic alliances with leading medical and security providers, meaning that travel data can be seamlessly passed between the two organisations. This delivers a comprehensive, consolidated duty of care programme where travel managers can manage risk

## During travel

- Employee tracking system – tools that enable the travel or safety manager to understand where their travellers are at any one time, based on ticketed itineraries
- In-house 24/7 services – not just for emergencies but to deliver support at any time of the day and night, be that changing itineraries or asking for advice when travel is delayed
- Major emergency response management – should the worst scenario occur, having support from your travel management company in regards to emergency response teams and planning is a necessity so you can react quickly and efficiently

## Post-travel

- Post-trip reports – delivering visibility of trips planned vs trips undertaken, and any deviation from travel policy will enable you to further manage policy compliance or put in place stricter measures as required

# Conclusion

Duty of care and travel risk management may be engrained in some organisations policies and processes, whilst for others it seems like a daunting task to manage.

Wherever your organisation is on this scale, ensure you engage with your travel management company - they can help with putting a duty of care plan together or ensuring the one you have in place remains best practice, including the latest travel tools. Key to a successful programme is having endorsement from senior management and ensuring clear, regular and relevant communication to all employees at every stage of their journey.



## About the expert

Adam's early career was in business and leisure travel for American Express and Trailfinders.

He then joined Seaforths Travel in 1998, which went on to become part of the ATPI Group. Adam was instrumental in diversifying the business from a successful, independent UK agency with specialisms in oil and gas to the multi-sector, global agency that ATPI is today.

Adam has been part of the ATPI Group since 2002 and has played a key role in its expansion and reputation of the Group internationally. Formerly group sales and marketing director, Adam has recently taken on the newly created position as managing director for the combined ATPI and Griffin operation in the UK. He is also a board director of the Institute of Travel & Meetings (ITM) UK & Ireland.

## Want to know more?

For examples of case studies and more how-to guides, visit the [ATPI Knowledge Hub](#).





ATPI is among the world's leading travel management companies. Our dynamic and innovative approach to savings and service has earned us one of the highest client retention rates in the industry.

With over 100 offices worldwide, the company has successful operations in corporate travel, corporate event management, online travel technology and specialist travel management for a number of key industries.

