Business Travel to Dangerous Destinations Safety Policy



The killing of the notorious drug cartel boss known as “El Mencho” triggered an outburst of random violence and shootings across Mexico. Among the civilians caught in the crossfire were the thousands of Canadians traveling to the country on business when the mob war began. These events should serve as a wake-up call for companies that send their employees on business trips to not only Mexico but any country experiencing political instability and civil unrest. In addition to the lives and safety of your employees, business travel to hazardous destinations exposes your company to liability risks under Occupational Health and Safety, Workers’ Compensation, negligence, and other laws.

The key to managing the risk is to get out in front of it by implementing a policy establishing safety procedures and ground rules for business travel to potentially dangerous destinations. Here’s a template policy that you can adapt either as an addendum to your current business travel policy or as a freestanding policy to supplement it.

Business Travel To Mexico & Other Dangerous Locations

1. **PURPOSE**

In light of the recent cartel-related violence in Mexico City, ABC Company has adopted this Addendum to establish mandatory risk management requirements for all Company employees and contractors traveling to Mexico City, as well as other politically unstable or dangerous foreign locations posing a high risk of violence (referred to collectively as “Hazardous Locations”). This Addendum supplements ABC Company’s Business Travel Policy and broader Workplace Violence Prevention Policy and OHS Program.

2. **SCOPE**

This Addendum applies to:

- All employees who travel to Hazardous Locations for ABC Company business purposes.
- All ABC Company-sponsored travel, including but not limited to conferences,

client meetings, site visits, and training.
- All travel segments, including transit to and from airports, hotels, restaurants, and meeting venues.

This Addendum **does not** cover personal travel extensions unless those extensions are expressly approved.

3. **PRE-TRAVEL RISK ASSESSMENT**

All travel to Hazardous Locations requires special advance approval. No such approval will be granted without a mandatory documented destination-specific risk assessment that is completed at least 14 days prior to departure and that includes:

- Identification of the specific region, country, city, neighbourhood(s), and meeting locations.
- Review of recent incident reports and current Government of Canada travel advisories pertaining to the above.
- Review of the security profile of meeting locations.
- Assessment of proposed transportation arrangements and providers.
- Confirmation of medical, evacuation, and security insurance coverage.
- Assessment of necessity of in-person attendance versus virtual alternatives.

Failure to complete and document the pre-travel security assessment invalidates any authorization to travel to the destination. The pre-travel security assessment and related records must be retained in accordance with ABC Company Records Retention Compliance Policy.

4. **TRAVEL RISK CLASSIFICATION & APPROVAL CONTROL**

Travel shall be classified according to current Government of Canada advisory levels pertaining to the proposed destination:

- Level 1: Routine Risk – Exercise normal security precautions
- Level 2: Elevated Risk – Exercise a high degree of caution
- Level 3: Restricted Risk – Avoid non-essential travel
- Level 4: Prohibited Risk – Avoid all travel

Level 3 or Level 4 travel requires:

- Executive approval
- Written justification of business necessity
- A documented mitigation plan.

Level 4 travel requires extraordinary executive authorization supported by legal review.

5. **PRE-TRAVEL SECURITY BRIEFING**

Before departing for approved business travel to Hazardous Locations, employees must receive a pre-travel briefing covering:

- The safety controls and protocols set out in Section 6 below.
- The current regional risks.
- Areas to avoid.
- Local emergency procedures.
- Canadian embassy contact instructions.
- Curfew recommendations, if any.
- Kidnap and extortion risks.

- The planned contact, check-in, and communication procedures and timetables.
- Incident reporting obligations.

Employees must sign an acknowledgement that they received and understood the pre-security briefing and agree to comply with all safety controls and protocols respecting the trip. Records of the briefing and acknowledgement shall be retained.

6. **Business Travel Security Controls & Protocols**

The following controls and protocols must be implemented when employees take business trips to Hazardous Locations:

6.1 Transportation Controls

The following controls and restrictions governing transportation and transit must be implemented:

- All transportation must be pre-arranged and furnished by transportation providers vetted by the Company.
- Street-hailed taxis may not be used.
- Routes must be planned to avoid identified high-risk zones.
- Restrictions apply to discretionary travel after dark in elevated-risk districts.
- Travel itineraries may not be publicly disclosed.

6.2 Accommodation Controls

All proposed accommodations must be pre-approved via the ABC Company travel authorization process in accordance with the following criteria. Proposed accommodations must:

- Be located in business districts or areas assessed as lower risk.
- Maintain 24-hour controlled access.
- Provide on-site security personnel.
- Not be short-term rental properties.

6.3 Communications Protocol

Employees traveling to Hazardous Locations must:

- Register their full itinerary prior to departure.
- Furnish real-time contact information.
- Confirm their safe arrival.
- Maintain periodic contacts or check-ins as directed.
- Immediately report security incidents, threats, or significant disturbances.

Failure to maintain required contact may trigger emergency escalation procedures.

6.4 Prohibited Conduct

While in Hazardous Locations on Company business, employees must not:

- Travel to regions or areas identified as high-risk in the risk assessment.
- Engage in unsanctioned travel outside approved areas.
- Go to or attend events in areas where recent incidents of violence occurred.
- Deviate materially from their approved itinerary without authorization.

7. **VERFICATION OF INSURANCE**

Prior to departure, Risk Management or other ABC Company personnel must review pertinent insurance policies and, if necessary, get written confirmation from brokers to confirm:

- The validity of medical coverage in the Hazardous Location.
- Security evacuation coverage.
- Supplemental kidnap and ransom coverage.
- Repatriation coverage.
- Policy exclusions or limitations.
- Territorial exclusions.
- Coverage activation thresholds.

Written documentation of the above review and confirmation must be retained.

8. **INCIDENT RESPONSE**

In the event that employees traveling in Hazardous Locations experience or face the imminent risk of violence, lockdown, arrest, detention, abduction, or medical emergency, employees must:

- Prioritize and immediately seek their personal safety.
- Immediately notify their emergency contact.
- Follow the instructions of the Company Crisis Response Team.

9. **CRISIS MANAGEMENT**

In the event of an emergency involving an employee traveling to a Hazardous Location, the Crisis Response Team must immediately assess the need for evacuation and the need to engage insurance providers and/or the Canadian Embassy. All incidents must be documented and reviewed to determine whether additional controls are required.

10. **POST-INCIDENT SUPPORT**

Employees exposed to violent incidents or credible threats while traveling for Company business to Hazardous Locations will be offered:

- Immediate debriefing
- Access to Employee Assistance Program services
- Medical or psychological support

11. **MONITORING OF BUSINESS TRIPS**

Security conditions shall be monitored continuously when employees are traveling on Company business to Hazardous Locations. If during approved trips advisory levels escalate, significant incidents occur, or risks of violence otherwise escalate:

- HR shall reassess the need for ongoing travel.
- Travel may be suspended or curtailed.
- Employees may be instructed to relocate or return.

12. **POST-TRAVEL REVIEW**

Following completing business travel to Hazardous Locations, employees may be required to report:

- Security incidents encountered
- Near misses
- Control failures
- Recommended safety improvements

13. **EMPLOYEE RIGHT TO EXPRESS SAFETY CONCERNS**

ABC Company will not require employees to travel to Hazardous Locations against their will.

Employees who feel like they are being forced to undertake dangerous travel may invoke their OHS right to refuse dangerous work. When properly initiated, ABC Company will investigate and make a determination on such refusals in accordance with applicable OHS laws and regulations and the Company's OHS Work Refusal Policy.

Employees asked to travel on Company business to Hazardous Locations also have the right and shall not be subject to reprisal for expressing safety concerns. Where such concerns are raised, HR or other Company officials will conduct a documented reassessment of the need for travel and availability of virtual and other alternatives.

14. **DOCUMENTATION & RECORDS RETENTION**

The following records must be retained for at least the minimum periods prescribed by OHS regulations. Where no minimum retention periods are specified, such records will be retained for at least two years after the business travel to the Hazardous Location ends:

- Hazard assessments
- Approval documentation
- Briefing acknowledgments
- Insurance confirmations
- Incident reports
- Reassessment decisions.