

## Housing Health & Safety Indicators

Housing conditions vary considerably within the U.S. and globally. No singular list of indicators can account for the range of housing types and contexts seen by our programs which span the globe. What is important is that the places in which our students and employees stay take into account health and safety considerations, and that you can articulate how you have reviewed the suitability of the housing selected.

What is additionally important is that you advise students verbally and in writing of risks of which you are aware, and ways to mitigate those risks.

It is understood that certain indicators of health and safety may not be possible in your specific destination; for example, bugs will be present in lodging located in a jungle and mold may be endemic. By signing this document, you are affirming that you have considered these indicators when assessing the suitability of housing, and that where an indicator is not satisfied, risk mitigation strategies will be utilized. You will submit your specific assessment of housing in the "Housing Health and Safety Evaluation" form.

### Safety and health indicators

- Exits are clearly marked and unobstructed, and there are sufficient ways to exit in case of emergency
- Keys are not required to unlock doors to *exit* a room or building
- Sleeping rooms have a window to the outside large enough to use as a second means of escape should the door exit become untenable due to smoke or fire. The window must be able to be locked/unlocked.
- Sleeping room doors do not have a hasp or padlock which can be locked from the outside
- For properties over two stories in height, property has at least two stairways from each floor to ground level
- Meets local health and safety codes
- Located away from areas known or reputed to have violent crime
- Ground-level doors and windows have systems to help prevent unauthorized entry
- Reasonable outdoor lighting, especially at entrances/exits. The streets surrounding the housing well lit at night. If not possible in the circumstance, students have been advised to bring headlamps or flashlights.
- Hallways and common areas (if applicable) are illuminated
- Around the property, and inside the property, appears to be clean and well-maintained
  - No atypical evidence of mold, mildew or water damage
  - No evidence of rats, roaches or other pests which in the location suggest a dirty facility
  - Kitchen exhaust and surfaces are free of grease
- Electrical switches, outlets, wiring, cords and light fixtures (if present) work properly and appear to be used safely.
- Students are not permitted to use open-flame items (candles, etc.) nor smoke in sleeping areas
- Individual student rooms may be locked by the student, or if an individual room door cannot be locked, the student program fee includes the cost of purchasing a rubber door stop for each room.

- Clean drinking water is available (whether by original source, or through filtering)
- Housing is protected from extreme heat or cold

#### Additional indicators for homestays

- At least two students (or a student and UVM employee) are lodged in the same homestay.
- Host family is fluent in the local language and knowledgeable about the local area
- A trusted local contact has vetted hosts through a process determined by trip leader to take reasonable precautions regarding health and safety (interviews, references, background checks and/or past evaluations)
- If a pet is present, it is not aggressive.

#### Additional requirements for longer programs

The longer our students are on site, the greater their exposure to risks. And even if a smoke alarm (for example) is not standard in a given location, if we are there for a period of greater than two weeks, there is no reason that we would not invest in that equipment.

- Smoke detectors (which have been tested and are known to be properly functioning) are located in/near sleeping areas
- If the facility is heated or has cooking units powered by natural gas, carbon monoxide detectors (which have been tested and are known to be properly functioning) are located in/near sleeping areas
- Fire extinguishers (which have been serviced and are known to be properly functioning) are visible and accessible near cooking areas and in any other location where there is equipment which could cause a fire
- Course leader has completed the OIE-provided fire safety checklist

**After reviewing the above information, please complete the following questions.**

Other than individual homestays, I have visited all planned housing: **YES / NO**

**IF YES: Housing Health & Safety Evaluation (Visited Locations)**

1. I verify that all planned housing demonstrates *\*all\** UVM health and safety indicators. **YES / NO**  
If no, please record all exceptions needed *and* mitigation strategies that will be employed. Note: All mitigation strategies need to be approved by the Director of the Office of International Education in consultation with the International Travel Advisory Group.
2. We will be using homestays. **YES / NO**  
If yes, explain how you can affirm the health and safety indicators are in place in the homestays.

**IF NO: Housing Health & Safety Evaluation (Unvisited Locations)**

1. We will be using homestays. **YES / NO**  
If yes, explain how you can affirm the health and safety indicators are in place in the homestays.
2. I reasonable believe all planned housing demonstrate the health and safety indicators. **YES / NO**  
If no, please record all exceptions needed *and* mitigation strategies that will be employed. Note: All mitigation strategies need to be approved by the Director of the Office of International Education in consultation with the International Travel Advisory Group.
3. Provide the following for any planned accommodation that you have not visited:
  - a. Name of accommodation:
  - b. Type of accommodation:
  - c. Accommodation source of information: (e.g. name(s) of trusted local contact, references contacted, or - for typical commercial venues - online reviews and discussion with property owner. Please be as detailed as possible; budgets cannot be approved without this information.)

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**Other things to address:**

How to educate students about what has been checked – if something isn't common practice at the location which is a common practice in the U.S., faculty informs students during orientation.

If group is not staying together – method to communicate with other members of group, including trip leader (cellular service? Known location of lodging of trip leader?)

How are belongings safe when students are not with them? Communicate with students risk levels.

If door stops are being used, review at onsite orientation their role in preventing people from entering a room while sleeping, and the necessity of removing to get out in the event of a fire