

Science Tokyo Guide to Safe Travel Abroad

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Institute of Science Tokyo

Office of Education

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	3
I. Preparing for Overseas Travel	4
II. Safety Management Guidelines of the Institute	5
III. Preparing for Departure.....	6
3-1. When you decide to travel abroad.....	6
3-2. Sharing contact information while abroad	6
3-3. MOFA's Tabi-Reg (たびレジ) and ORR Net (オンライン在留届) (For Japanese nationals).....	6
3-4. Enrolling in the risk and crisis management service	7
3-5. Enrolling in overseas travel insurance.....	7
3-6. Gathering information on the destination	7
3-7. Health Certificate	8
3-8. Vaccinations.....	8
3-9. Other points to note	9
IV. Precautions after You Arrive	10
4-1. What to carry with you at all times.....	10
4-2. How to handle emergencies	10
4-3. Understanding the medical situation in your destination.....	10
4-4. Use of overseas travel insurance and the risk and crisis management service	11
4-5. Other points to note	11
V. After returning home.....	12
5-1. What to do if you become unwell after returning home.....	12
[Appendix 1] Reference information for travelling abroad.....	13
A1-1. Risk Management and Response System for Studies/Research Abroad (Conceptual Diagram)....	13
A1-2. Security information on the destination	13
A1-3. Learn about criminal techniques and crime prevention measures	14
A1-4. Health management	14
[Appendix 2] Examples of problems and countermeasures.....	16
A2-1. Theft, fraud, robbery and other problems	16
A2-2. Conflicts, riots, coups and terrorism.....	17
A2-3. Casualty accidents	18
A2-4. Examples of problems Science Tokyo students have had.....	18
Reference 1 [If You Have a History of Illness (including allergies or mental illness)]	20

Introduction

This guide is designed to provide necessary information for the students of the Institute of Science Tokyo (hereinafter "the Institute") planning to go abroad for study, research or other activities.

Traveling abroad without adequate knowledge about the countries and regions you will be visiting is extremely risky. Thinking that what passes as common sense in Japan will serve you overseas can lead to sticky situations. To make your trip fun, safe, and meaningful, please use this guide to help you prepare before you travel and take safety measures while you are abroad. We also recommend giving a copy to your family members as well.

[Intended Audience for This Guide]

- Students studying abroad at partner institutions as part of the Institute's educational programs
- Students studying abroad at an overseas university or other institution through an overseas study program the Institute offers (including those offered by departments)
- Students taking a leave of absence from the Institute to study abroad at an overseas university or other institution, etc. (Privately-funded study abroad, etc.)
- Students staying abroad for the purpose of research, internship, participating in academic conferences, etc.

[On the publication of English version of the guide]

This book was originally intended to be written for Japanese students. Therefore, some of the contents may not apply to students from nationalities other than Japanese. Please be aware of that.

I. Preparing for Overseas Travel

Before you take any steps to travel abroad, please keep in mind the following three points as basic preparations for overseas travel. Read them carefully, especially if you are travelling abroad for the first time.

Remember that you are responsible for protecting yourself!

The key to avoiding incidents and accidents while abroad is to always be aware that you are responsible for protecting yourself. While abroad, there is a serious possibility that you will encounter dangers different than those in Japan. That said, you can avoid many incidents and accidents by studying the security situation and other details about your destination country in advance and by adopting a different mindset while outside of Japan. For this reason, gathering information beforehand is a vital part of avoiding trouble while abroad.

Stay Away from dangerous places

Some countries and regions are unsuitable for travel due to the extreme deterioration of the international situation or security situation in and around them. Since the most reliable way to ensure your safety is to stay away from such dangerous places, always gather information on the situation beforehand. If you are planning to study abroad, make safe travel plans by sticking to the principle of avoiding danger zones.

Being aware that this is not Japan!

Japan is one of the safest countries in the world, and the level of danger you face abroad is not the same as what exists in Japan. It is no exaggeration to say that you will be surrounded by incidents and accidents waiting to happen while abroad. The climates and lifestyles in foreign countries also differ from those in Japan, so it is easy to get sick or become stressed.

Use the information you gathered before departure to avoid crises and maintain your health, and stay alert by keeping your mindset in overseas mode. This means always being aware that you are in a place with a different culture, customs and environment than you are used to.

II. Safety Management Guidelines of the Institute

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA 外務省)'s Overseas Safety webpage provides four categories of travel advice and warnings as advisories on which countries or regions require special caution when traveling or staying in them because of deteriorating security situations, disasters, rioting or other emergencies, or an elevated risk of such emergencies (危険情報).

It also provides four categories of travel advice and warnings on infectious diseases such as new strains of influenza as advisories on which countries or regions require special caution when traveling to and staying in them (感染症危険情報).

When such advisories are issued, the Institute will decide whether to postpone or cancel the overseas study program, or recall you to Japan even during the program, based on a comprehensive consideration of Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT 文部科学省) guidelines, the environment of the host university, and other factors. Please follow any instructions from the Institute as soon as possible.

MOFA's Overseas Safety webpage

“Overseas Travel Safety Information” and “Travel Advice and Warning on Infectious Diseases”

Category	Description of Travel and Infectious Disease Risk information	Basic Policy of the Institute
[Level 1] Exercise caution	Japanese nationals traveling to and residing in the country or area are advised to stay alert to the security situation.	Implement or continue travel with caution
[Level 2] Avoid Non-essential travel	Japanese nationals are advised to avoid non-essential travel, and to stay alert to the security situation and to take appropriate safety measures should they decide to travel.	Postpone or cancel travel
[Level 3] Avoid all travel (Travel Advisory)	All Japanese nationals are urged to avoid all travel regardless of purposes. Japanese residents might be advised to consider the possibility of evacuation or to prepare for evacuation.	Cancel travel or return home if abroad
[Level 4] Evacuate and avoid all travel (Evacuation Advisory)	All Japanese nationals are urged to evacuate immediately from the country or the area and urged to avoid all travel regardless of purposes.	Immediately cancel travel or return home if abroad

< Reference >

・ MOFA's Overseas Safety webpage (危険情報、感染症危険情報)

<https://www.anzen.mofa.go.jp/riskmap/>

<https://www.anzen.mofa.go.jp/masters/tawinfectiousdiseases.html>

III. Preparing for Departure

3-1. When you decide to travel abroad

- **Students (Science and Engineering)**

Proceed with the necessary action refer to “Procedures for Study Abroad and Other Overseas Travel”.

<https://www.titech.ac.jp/english/international-student-exchange/students/abroad/procedures>

- **Students (Medical and Dental Sciences)**

Contact to Yushima study abroad support group for the necessary procedure.

Email: ossu@ml.tmd.ac.jp

3-2. Sharing contact information while abroad

Even if you’ve planned your study abroad experience after gathering sufficient information, it is quite possible that the security situation, etc. in your destination country or region may change drastically after your arrival. To be prepared for such a possibility, you must make your whereabouts known at all times while abroad.

Before your departure, inform the Institute (your academic supervisor, the department in charge of your program, etc.) and your family member of the followings:

- Itinerary, flight number
- Emergency contact (cellphone, host institute, insurance company, the risk and crisis management service, etc.),
- Passport number,
- Insurance policy number, etc.

3-3. MOFA’s Tabi-Reg (たびレジ) and ORR Net (オンライン在留届) (For Japanese nationals)

In an emergency such as a major incident or accident, terrorist attack or natural disaster, the local Japanese diplomatic mission will confirm the safety of and assist Japanese nationals based on the information registered in MOFA’s Tabi-Reg and ORR Net (Overseas Residential Registration Net). Be sure to register for MOFA’s Tabi-Reg before you go so that you can receive the latest information on overseas safety and emergency situations in real time.

(Students covered by the risk and crisis management service are automatically registered in MOFA’s Tabi-Reg. ORR Net is for those who intend to stay in a foreign country with a fixed address for three months or longer, and are submitted after establishing a residence in that country or region.)

< Reference >

- MOFA’s Tabi-Reg (たびレジ)

<https://www.ezairyu.mofa.go.jp/tabireg/index.html>

- MOFA’s ORR Net (オンライン在留届)

<https://www.ezairyu.mofa.go.jp/RRnet/index.html>

3-4. Enrolling in the risk and crisis management service

Even if you take all possible precautions while abroad, you may encounter unforeseen accidents or situations. You may also encounter situations that include the need to seek medical attention. To be prepared for such situations, students who travel abroad for education or research purposes are enrolled in the risk and crisis management service (Japan IR&C corp.) at the expense of the Institute.

If you are involved in an emergency overseas, contact the risk and crisis management service first.

<Main contents of the risk and crisis management service>

- Call center (IR&C Support Desk) 24 hours 365 days to provide a variety of consultation services, e.g. support for accidents, incidents and everyday problems, hospital appointments, etc. (English available)
- Provide latest safety information on the destination via smartphone app.
- Confirm safety in case of emergency accident or incident via smartphone app.

3-5. Enrolling in overseas travel insurance

Hospitalization or surgery overseas can lead to massive medical bills. Travel costs can also be high if a family member needs to visit you in hospital multiple times. To prepare for such situations, students who travel abroad for education or research purposes are required to enroll in the overseas travel insurance designated by the Institute (which covers more than 30 million yen for medical/rescue expenses and 100 million yen in personal liability coverage).

In the event of an emergency, please check your insurance coverage before departure and be prepared to take a printed insurance policy with you. Please give copy of insurance policy to your family member as well.

3-6. Gathering information on the destination

To ensure safe travel and study abroad, please be sure to gather information on your destination country. The following information are recommended to be collected:

- The international situation and security situation in the destination country or region
- Crime trends specific to the destination country or region and crime prevention measures that should be taken
- Culture and etiquette of the destination country or region
- General knowledge about the destination country or region (e.g., whether or not tap water is drinkable) to ensure health and safety
- Medical system of the destination country or region

< Reference >

- MOFA's Overseas Safety webpage

<http://www.anzen.mofa.go.jp>

3-7. Health Certificate

Depending on your host institute, you may be asked to submit a health certificate. Even if you are not required to submit one, we recommended that you have a medical checkup before your departure so that you are aware of your health.

If you have a history of previous illnesses or are receiving medical treatment, please ask your doctor to determine if you can tolerate living abroad, etc. In addition, please bring a medical certificate for any illnesses you suffer from (in English; see [Reference 1](#)), a medical referral letter (also in English), and an explanation of your prescription medications (also in English) to your destination country or region. As part of preparing for possible medical emergencies, please submit the above documents to the department in charge of your program, and if necessary, inform your host institute of your medical situation as well.

Dental care is generally not covered by overseas travel insurance and is often more expensive than in Japan, so be sure to have a dental check-up and any necessary treatment before you leave.

3-8. Vaccinations

It is important to check the website of the quarantine station of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW 厚生労働省) to see if vaccinations are required for your destination country/region, if there are any infectious diseases (yellow fever, dengue fever, malaria, rabies, etc.), and what precautions you need to take to stay in good physical condition. Take the necessary measures in advance. Depending on the type of vaccine, it may be necessary to administer several doses of a vaccine, with an interval of about four weeks between doses. If you plan to travel overseas, please consult with a medical institution or quarantine station that offers outpatient travel services as soon as possible (at least three months before departure) about the type of vaccines needed and the vaccination schedule. In addition, it is essential to collect information on local medical facilities so that you can respond quickly to sudden injuries or illnesses.

< Reference >

- MHLW Quarantine Information Office (厚生労働省FORTH)
<http://www.forth.go.jp>
- List of Japanese Society of Travel and Health Travel Clinics (日本渡航医学会)
<http://jstah.umin.jp/02travelclinics/>
- List of Japanese Society of Travel Medicine Certifying Physician (日本旅行医学会)
<http://www.jstm.gr.jp/summary/>
- Science Tokyo Student Healthcare Center (保険管理センター)
<https://www.isct.ac.jp/en/001/about/organizations/student-healthcare-center>

3-9. Other points to note

- Students planning to go abroad for education or research purpose, be sure to attend the overseas safety orientation by the Institute around May or June every year. (*All presentations are in Japanese language.)
- Regarding travel to and from your study abroad destination, please plan your travel itinerary well in advance. Include sufficient leeway in your schedule and arrange for safe transportation. Try to avoid taking flights or local trains, buses, etc. that arrive or depart at night (after 8 p.m.) or early in the morning. If you have to take a flight arriving at night, please arrange for a trustworthy person to meet you at the airport or arrange to stay at a secure hotel in or near the airport before traveling the next day.
- If you will be arranging for your own accommodations rather than staying at a room arranged by host institute, please find an apartment, hotel, etc. in a safe area.
- Before departure, prepare an ID photo and other documents necessary for reissuing your passport at the destination.
- Bring a copy of this guide to your destination and give it to your family member.

IV. Precautions after You Arrive

4-1. What to carry with you at all times

- **Emergency contacts**

In preparation for the possibility of an incident, accident, natural disaster, or other life-threatening situation while abroad, carry a document listing your passport number, its date of issue, contact information for the Institute (your academic supervisor, the department in charge of your program, etc.), host institute, nearest Japanese diplomatic mission, insurance company, risk management service company, etc., when you go out.

Inform the relevant parties at the host institute of your emergency contact information. If your contact information changes, share it immediately.

- **Insurance policy**

In the event of sudden illness or injury, depending on the country you are traveling to, you may not be able to receive treatment unless it is confirmed that medical expenses can be reliably collected, so we strongly recommend that you carry your overseas travel insurance policy with you at all times. When making a cashless payment for medical expenses, the hospital may ask you to present the insurance policy.

4-2. How to handle emergencies

First of all, ensure your own safety as a priority. Once safety is ensured, take the steps detailed in “**Risk Management and Response System for Studies and Research Abroad (Conceptual Diagram)**” (see [Appendix 1](#))

- Contact the local police or Japanese diplomatic mission and follow their instructions. You should especially request assistance from a diplomatic mission in situations that threaten life or limb.
- Contact your host institute.
- Contact the Institute, your family member, and the risk and crisis management service. If you are unable to contact them yourself, have the diplomatic mission, your host institute or another party contact them.

4-3. Understanding the medical situation in your destination

Be prepared for the possibility of becoming seriously ill or injured while abroad. Find out where the hospitals are, whether you need to make an appointment, whether you can use insurance, where you can buy medicine, how to call an ambulance, and so on. If you have a chronic illness, find a doctor to care for you.

You should also confirm where the health and wellness facilities of your host institute are, how to use them, and other information as soon as you arrive in your destination country or region.

When visiting a local hospital

When visiting a hospital, we advise contacting the risk and crisis management service and asking them to make an appointment at a hospital that offers cashless treatment. Unlike Japan, in many countries it is not

possible to visit a large hospital without an appointment. If you become ill or injured while abroad and the local hospital determines that it is unable to provide care, you may consult the risk and crisis management service to arrange emergency transportation to a hospital that can treat you.

In case of contracting an infectious disease or being hospitalized, be sure to contact the risk and crisis management service as well as the Institute (see [3-1](#)).

4-4. Use of overseas travel insurance and the risk and crisis management service

The following situations can be considered as cases where travel insurance can be used;

- Go to hospital due to an accident or illness (medical expenses/ emergency transportation)
- Damage merchandise in a store (personal liability)
- Valuables are stolen (compensation for theft of personal belongings)

If an incident occurs that may be covered, contact the risk and crisis management service (IR&C Support Desk) immediately and obtain the documents needed to file a claim. Some of these documents can only be obtained locally, so be sure to check which documents are required while you are there.

Driving cars or motorcycles

Avoid driving cars or motorcycles while study abroad. Traffic conditions and the way accidents are handled overseas are very different than in Japan. If you cause a car accident, you will not be covered by the personal liability of your overseas travel insurance. You will be responsible for paying compensation at your own expense.

4-5. Other points to note

- At your host institute, be sure to attend the orientation to gather information on crisis management in your destination country or region, including information on emergency response and communication systems. The orientation will also inform you about the security situation, crime trends and criminal tactics, laws and customs, and religious restrictions in the country or region.
- If you enrolled in insurance after arriving on the instructions of your destination country/region or host institute, etc., let the department in charge of your program and your family member know.
- Regularly contacting the Institute and a family member can also assist you in preparing for an emergency. If you go to a country or region while abroad that you had not originally planned to visit, or if your contact information changes, please let them know.

V. After returning home

5-1. What to do if you become unwell after returning home

If you experience symptoms such as a high fever within one month of returning to Japan, you may have been infected with an infectious disease.

We strongly recommend that you immediately visit an infectious disease hospital designated by MHLW (厚生労働省), bringing with you a record of your travel history, vaccination history, and health condition. If you become infected while abroad and begin treatment within 30 days of returning home, you may be covered by the insurance. (For influenza and COVID-19, treatment must begin within 72 hours of returning.) For more detail, please contact E-CALLs Inc. (Insurance agency)

If you are found to have contracted an infectious disease as defined by the School Health and Safety Act (学校保健安全法), report it to the Institute as soon as possible.

- **Student Healthcare Center (保険管理センター) (For student of Science and Engineering)**
<https://www.titech.ac.jp/student-support/students/health/infection>
- **Student Healthcare Center (保険管理センター) (For student of Medical and Dental Sciences)**
<https://www.tmd.ac.jp/hsc/absence/influe/>

< Reference >

- ・ School Health and Safety Act (学校保健安全法)
<https://www.mhlw.go.jp/stf/shingi/>

A1-3. Learn about criminal techniques and crime prevention measures

It is not uncommon for Japanese people to get caught up in incidents and accidents even in relatively safe countries or regions for which no travel advice or warnings have been issued. Taking basic measures regarding how you manage your valuables or carry your luggage will largely prevent crimes such as pickpocketing and luggage theft. The MOFA's Overseas Safety webpage compiles basic safety data on each country to tell Japanese citizens traveling or staying in these countries/regions what they need to know to avoid trouble, such as becoming a victim of crime.

We also recommend that you refer to **Examples of problems and countermeasures** (see [Appendix 2](#)) which shows actual examples of damage travelers suffered as a way to mitigate overseas travel risks.

< Reference >

- MOFA's Overseas Safety webpage (安全対策基礎データ ホーム>国・地域別海外安全情報(タブ)>(国・地域を選択)>安全対策基礎データ(タブ))
<https://www.anzen.mofa.go.jp/>
- MOFA's Overseas Safety webpage (海外法人事件簿)
https://www.anzen.mofa.go.jp/jikenbo/jiken_index.html

A1-4. Health management

The most common causes of a decline in physical condition while abroad include climate and time zone differences, public hygiene and mental stress. Poor physical condition can weaken your immune system, which will make you more susceptible to local infectious and endemic diseases. It can also affect your attentiveness, making you more likely to be involved in an accident or become a victim of crime. Diet, exercise and rest are the three pillars of good health. It is essential to eat a balanced diet, exercise in a way that suits your fitness and lifestyle, and get enough sleep. When in an unfamiliar environment, you should pay even more attention than usual to your physical condition.

When you become accustomed to living abroad, you may experience mental stress due to the cultural differences between Japan and other countries. Find ways to deal with this stress, whether this means engaging in appropriate exercise or finding a friend you can talk about your feelings with. If you feel that persistent mental stress is affecting your daily life or studies, be smart and consult with the Institute (your academic supervisor, in charge of your program, Student Healthcare Center (see [5-1](#)), or another source of support.

Food and beverages

Please remember the following and try to eat a well-balanced diet.

Water	It is safest to drink bottled mineral water. Avoid untreated water or tap water. You should also be wary of the ice in shakes and drinks (even in restaurants).
Seafood and Meat	Avoid raw and partially cooked seafood or meat.
Vegetables	Avoid vegetables that have not been cooked.

Dairy and Eggs	Avoid dairy and egg products that have not been thoroughly cooked. If too much time has passed since they were prepared, do not eat them.
Fruit	Avoid eating fruit that you did not peel yourself. Do not eat peeled pre-cut fruit.

Travel, sleep and rest

The cumulative fatigue that results from traveling to numerous locations over short periods of time is apt to leave you vulnerable to illness. It is crucial to plan a reasonable itinerary that suits your physical condition. Getting enough rest and sleep is also vital to avoiding illnesses in areas where different kinds of communicable diseases exist.

Infectious (communicable) diseases and endemic diseases

Tropical regions present a risk of infectious diseases such as malaria and dengue fever. To avoid infectious diseases while traveling abroad — including epidemics as well as endemic diseases specific to the region — you should gather information through the website of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare Quarantine Information Office (FORTH) (<http://www.forth.go.jp>) both before departure and after arrival, and take measures appropriate to the nature of each disease.

< Countermeasures >

- If you cannot get vaccinated before departure (e.g., the vaccines for the disease[s] in question are not available in Japan), you should do so as soon as you can after arrival.
- Take steps to avoid infectious diseases carried by animals and insects, such as by using mosquito nets and bug spray and wearing clothing that does not expose your skin. Avoid touching animals as well, since they may carry a range of infections and diseases that can be transmitted to humans.
- Avoid tap water and raw food, and eat only at establishments with good hygiene control. Rigorous precautions are especially necessary when communicable diseases are prevalent.

Mental health

Living in a different culture can be more difficult than you imagine, and stress can build up before you realize it. If you are not feeling like your usual self, don't hesitate to consult with mental health consultation services below or the risk and crisis management service (IR&C Support Desk).

< Reference >

- Science Tokyo Student Healthcare Center (保険管理センター)
<https://www.isct.ac.jp/en/001/about/organizations/student-healthcare-center>
- Science Tokyo Student Support Center (学生支援センター)
<https://www.isct.ac.jp/en/001/about/organizations/student-support-center>
- Tokyo English Lifeline
<http://telljp.com/>

[Appendix 2] Examples of problems and countermeasures

Japanese nationals have faced a wide variety of problems while traveling abroad, including property crimes such as theft, fraud and robbery, problems caused by a lack of understanding of local laws, culture or social norms of the destination, drug-related crimes, and sexual violations.

MOFA publishes a compilation of case studies online (海外安全虎の巻 *Kaigai Anzen Tora-no-Maki* (in Japanese)). Please cross-reference these case studies with the Overseas Safety Information by Country/Region available on the MOFA's Overseas Safety webpage (海外安全ホームページ *Kaigai Anzen Homepage* (in Japanese)) to avoid becoming a victim yourself.

< Reference >

- MOFA's Overseas Safety webpage (海外安全虎の巻 四、ケーススタディ集～トラブル事例と対策～)
<https://www.anzen.mofa.go.jp/pamph/pdf/toranomaki.pdf>
- MOFA's Overseas Safety webpage (海外安全ホームページ ホーム>国・地域別海外安全情報(タブ) >(国・地域を選択))
<http://www.anzen.mofa.go.jp>

A2-1. Theft, fraud, robbery and other problems

Criminals outside of Japan are often armed. If you encounter a potentially violent criminal, do not resist unless absolutely necessary. Put saving your life above anything else.

If you incur property losses due to theft, fraud or a similar event, first notify the police of the facts and obtain a police report. You will need the police report for insurance claims, to have your passport reissued, and for other procedures. If the damages, losses or injury are serious, you should contact the nearest Japanese diplomatic mission for guidance, advice and assistance. You should also contact the risk and crisis management service to find out what documents you need to file an insurance claim.

If you are assaulted, drugged, or are otherwise violently victimized, you may suffer lasting effects even if the symptoms seem mild at the time. Do not try to diagnose yourself. Seek medical attention at a nearby hospital immediately.

To avoid being a target

Thieves, fraudsters and other criminals look for easy targets who present a low risk of danger and a high chance of success. To reduce your chances of being a target, make a concerted effort to take conspicuous precautions.

- Not wearing flashy clothes and accessories.
- Walking quickly and paying attention to your surroundings while on the move.
- Holding your backpack in front of you in crowded places.

- Move away if you see a suspicious person or group of people approaching. Be wary if you are suddenly approached by a stranger.
- When riding the subway, avoid standing near the doors.
- Only take your wallet out when necessary. Consider keeping the paper money you carry in several locations or carrying a small wallet no larger than a coin purse.
- Always keep bags containing valuables close to your body. Place your bags so they can't be taken from you even while you are busy eating or talking.
- Always lock the door when you leave your room, even in a student dormitory.
- Store your bicycle indoors whenever possible. When parking your bicycle, be sure to lock up wheel and frame with two different types of locks, such as a sturdy chain lock or a U-lock.

A2-2. Conflicts, riots, coups and terrorism

The key point for avoiding emergency situations is to stay away from dangerous locations. When you decide to travel, develop an interest in the international situation. If you are aware that risks exist at places you will visit, do not go there or leave immediately once you become aware of the risks.

Even in countries or areas where security is considered comparatively good, there are instances in which terrorism, street protests, riots and other incidents occur abruptly and cause public safety to deteriorate. Seek out information in notification emails from the local Japanese diplomatic mission TV, radio, Internet and other sources at your travel destinations to stay informed.

To handle emergencies

- ① Handling emergencies while out and about
 - If you encounter a terrorist incident, riots or other emergency while out and about, expect the area to be quite chaotic. Remain calm, stay away from crowds, and get to a safe place as soon as possible.
 - If you are in a taxi or other vehicle, instruct the driver to turn around and head to a safe place.
 - Never participate in riots or other public disturbances or protests, or take any actions that might be seen as such.
- ② Handling emergencies at the hotel, etc.
 - If you hear about an emergency from local officials, the news or other sources, you should first notify the nearest diplomatic mission of your presence by phone. If you are unable to inform them of your situation for reasons such as the phone lines being down or busy, it is best to stay put where you are if possible.
 - While waiting at the hotel, avoid taking potentially dangerous actions such as looking out of the window. Instead, stay safe by remaining in a secure location and closing all windows, turning off lights, etc.

A2-3. Casualty accidents

While abroad, there is an increasing number of cases of casualties, such as water accidents at sea or in rivers, accidents being hit by a car, or falling off a bicycle. If you are involved in such an accident, your first priority should be to ensure your own safety and help the injured person if any, then contact the local police, emergency services, the diplomatic mission and follow their instructions. The risk and crisis management service, the Institute and family members should also be contacted. If you are unable to contact them yourself, ask the diplomatic mission or the host institute to contact them.

Traffic accident

If you are involved in a traffic accident, negotiating by yourself directly may cause more trouble. It is crucial to immediately contact the police, emergency services, etc., and to avoid discussions among the parties directly involved.

A2-4. Examples of problems Science Tokyo students have had

Here are some examples of problems Science Tokyo students have had while abroad, including illness and injury. Please always keep the potential for danger in mind.

Theft and fraud

- My wallet was snatched while I was waiting for a train. I had my credit card, visa, student ID and cash in my wallet.
- While I was away from my dorm room during the day, my computer, watch and keys were stolen.
- I was about to board a train with my bicycle in Italy. It was out of my sight for a moment and was stolen.
- I was using my cellphone on the metro at night. Just as the door was about to close, a man reached from outside the car, took my phone, and ran away.
- My computer was stolen on my return flight. The PC was clearly visible in the bag, which I had left at my feet. The PC was likely stolen while I left my seat to use the restroom.
- While traveling in Berlin with a friend, two men on the street struck up a conversation with us. We shook hands at the end and before I knew it, they had stolen my watch.
- While visiting a friend's house, I locked my bike up to a telephone pole. When I left, I only found the lock.

Illness and injury

- Due to the stress of classes and the short daylight hours, I developed insomnia and could only sleep for about one to two hours every day.
- The strong air conditioning made me feel ill. Then I contracted a local infection and had to be hospitalized for nearly a week.
- After eating at the local market, many of the students participated in the program developed fevers, nausea, and vomiting.
- I caught a cold right after arriving in Finland. The insurance company referred me to a hospital and paid for all the treatment.

- I fell while riding my bicycle and chipped my front tooth. In Denmark, medical expenses are free if you have a residence permit, but you have to pay for dental care. Since it was recognized as an injury caused by an accident, the insurance covered the cost of the treatment.
- I experienced diarrhea, abdominal pain, and vomiting due to a case of food poisoning. The insurance company referred me to a nearby hospital and paid for my treatment directly.
- I was bitten on the finger by a stray kitten. Fearing rabies and other diseases, I went to the hospital and got a tetanus shot. I took antibiotics for about two weeks after that.
- I had a sore throat and couldn't sleep at night because I couldn't stop coughing. I called my insurance company and they made an appointment at a hospital for me. I underwent a bacteriological examination and other tests, but I was diagnosed with just a cold.
- I caught influenza the night before my return and postponed my flight by four days. I contacted the risk and crisis management service and asked them to arrange hospital appointments, a different flight, and so on.

Reference 1 [If You Have a History of Illness (including allergies or mental illness)]

● Procedures for issuing medical certificates in English

Since every patient's condition is different, only the primary doctor who has examined him/her over a period of time will understand what to watch for. As a rule, please have your primary doctor issue certificates about any treatment you are currently receiving. If you are taking medicine, have your doctor write the common English names of the medication, not the domestic brand names.

● Content of medical certificates in English

There is no standard format. The minimum information that should be provided is as follows:

1. Medical institutions' addresses, contact information, and seals

These are required for when local physicians overseas need to contact your primary doctor in Japan directly for additional information. Contact phone numbers are written in a format that begins with the +81 country code. Bearing time differences in mind, please also include fax numbers and email addresses. It is probably also a good idea to include official seals, since more importance is usually placed on these seals in China, Taiwan and South Korea.

2. Names of conditions

It is probably best to have your primary doctor confirm that everything is written correctly in English, because names of conditions that doctors think are English are in many cases German, French, or Japanese transliterations of English.

3. Information about medications

Make sure that medications are written in the names commonly recognized worldwide, not just their brand names. To avoid overdoses, there is also a need to note their strength (for example, 30 mg per tablet) along with the dosage and frequency (for example, one tablet per day following breakfast). Please also describe the categories of pharmaceuticals, because medicines developed by Japanese pharmaceutical companies might not be available in overseas locations.

4. Medical history and allergies

Information about allergies is vital. Please have your primary doctor write about types of medicine and food separately. State clearly that a person has no allergies if the person has none, because in the United States' litigious society if this item is not included it can be seen as indicating a lack of active medical treatment.

5. Other kinds of medical treatment

Detailed descriptions are required in the case of treatments involving meals or exercise, including details pertaining to kilocalories and salt restrictions, along with exercise amounts and methods. It is best to obtain prior guidance in line with local fare because dietary customs also differ overseas.

6. Attending physician's name and signature

These are required for medical certificate authorization. Personal signatures are typically required in Western countries.

Sample of English Medical Certificate

<p>○○○ Clinic</p> <p>① 2-12-1, Ookayama, Meguro-ku, Tokyo, 152-8550 Japan Tel: +81-○○○-○○○ Fax: +81-○○○-○○○ Email: ○○○@○○○.jp</p>	<div style="border: 1px dashed gray; width: 100px; height: 100px; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"><small>(Official seal)</small></div>
<p style="text-align: right;">Date: _____</p> <p>Name: _____ Gender: _____ Birthdate: _____ Passport number: _____ Address: _____</p> <p>To whom it may concern: _____</p> <p>This is to notify you of the above person's health status and illnesses or conditions for which that person is now receiving treatment.</p> <p>② Health status (names of current conditions)</p> <p>③ Medications above person is currently taking (Caution: Write the common name of medicines, not their brand names.)</p> <p>④ Past medical history (Serious illnesses contracted previously) Allergies (Food or medicines that cause allergic reactions)</p> <p>⑤ Comments (Fill in required items, including how conditions have elapsed, points to note, and other important information)</p> <p style="text-align: right; margin-top: 20px;">⑥ <i>Certified by</i> _____ (Doctor's name) <i>License number</i> _____ _____ (Doctor's signature)</p>	

Note: Primary doctors prepare medical certificates in English for each patient. There may be changes in the details provided depending on the illnesses that currently affect the patient.

Source: May 2005, JATA Communication, Japan Association of Travel Agents