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# Field Expertise: How to Create an Effective Travel Risk Policy

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## FIELD EXPERTISE
## HOW TO CREATE AN EFFECTIVE TRAVEL RISK POLICY:

Aaron Clevenger, Assistant Provost, Dean of International Programs, and Senior International Officer at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, has worked within higher education for 17 years. After a mudslide accident where student and faculty travelers may have been nearby, the President of the university called Clevenger's office to find out traveler locations. Not having the ability to answer his questions, Clevenger wanted to ensure that in the future, he had a better answer than "I don't know."

Through conversations with other experts in the field, Clevenger discovered there were few comprehensive sources available with advice on how to author a travel policy. In 2019, a group of international educators was asked to present their travel policies at the annual NAFSA conference. It was then that they came together to create the following lists as a source of information for all who are interested in developing travel policies.

**First, we must consider why a travel policy is important:**

- Defines the scope of responsibility for the university, traveler, and stakeholders
- Sets expectations for travelers and promotes good decision-making on safety
- Sets parameters for acceptable risk and expected mitigation on sponsored travel
- Provides a structure when risk changes during travel

**Even though cataclysmic events often start risk management discussions, waiting for an event to occur may mean it's too late. To ensure better preparedness for traveler safety, the following should be considerations for policy development:**

- Identify the needs
- Identify the policy leader
- Assemble relevant stakeholders and gain their perspectives
- Identify the scope and requirements, which can include types of travel and types of travelers
- Develop an efficient way to determine who your travelers are, both as an assessment and measurement
- Gather disparate policies that currently exist
- Draft policy
- Finalize policy
- Communicate and implement policy
- Consider that you may need more than one policy for your institution

**While you're forming your travel policies, here are some suggestions:**

- Cover all travel you can control, but avoid over-broad policies that pretend to control what you can't
- Allow or restrict higher-risk travel based on mission/academic/institutional need
- Manage risk with appropriate mitigation measures
- Set realistic expectations of travelers and the institution based on who makes travel decisions and how resources are allocated
- Make risk information available and promote its use, even for travelers not covered by the policy

*These lists are adapted from Del Rossi, E., Clevenger, A. D., Rhodes, G., & Morgan, P. (2019, May 30). Global Partner Session: Impact of Technology on University International Travel Policies. Lecture presented at NAFSA Annual Conference and Expo in Walter E. Washington Conference Center, Washington D.C.*