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# Safety: Our Partnership

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Think about Safety: Have a Plan

Prepare for a safe experience abroad

Good preparation is critical for a rewarding, safe, and positive experience abroad. To help you make informed decisions and be safe on our program, we have a robust support system in our staff as well as policies, procedures, and plans for managing emergencies. We depend on you to follow those policies, exercise good judgment, and put into practice what you learn. The majority of UCEAP students will have safe experiences. However, even with the best-planned trips, things can go wrong.

Anywhere you go in the world, you will benefit from applying three basic principles:

1. Prepare. Learn about your destination, particularly cultural or legal differences. Discuss basic health and safety issues with your family and your UCEAP campus advisor before departure. Read and apply UCEAP’s safety information, pay attention to all security briefings, and think about what you will do if caught in a bad situation. Envision the scenarios and your reactions.

2. Prevent. Especially in unknown locations, avoid attracting attention and becoming a target for criminals. Be aware of your surroundings, take note of nearby exits, etc. Do not walk around with earphones, on the phone, or texting.

3. Act. Trust your instincts when in an uncomfortable situation and take immediate action. If something suspicious is happening, leave, run away, or seek safe shelter and call local law enforcement. Act under the assumption that you are on your own.

Your success depends on you

Although we will guide you on potential risks and necessary precautions abroad, your safety is ultimately up to you.

As a UCEAP participant, it is your responsibility to:

- Participate in required orientations.
- Carefully read all UCEAP pre-departure materials, including this guide, your Program Guide, the UCEAP website, risk-assessment documents for selected countries, and U.S. Department of State safe travel resources.
- Know who to call in an emergency and have a personal emergency action plan.
- Understand and comply with the UCEAP Student Agreement (in MyEAP), policies, and emergency procedures.
- Acknowledge that your behavior can impact not only your safety but that of others.
- Report concerns or incidents to the UCEAP on-site representative ready to provide assistance.
- Actively minimize risks and prepare for potential hazards.

UCEAP Cannot:

- Guarantee your safety or eliminate all risks from study abroad environments.
- Monitor or control all of your daily personal decisions, choices, and activities.
- Prevent you from engaging in illegal, unwise, or dangerous activities.
- Assure that U.S. standards of due process apply in overseas legal proceedings, or provide or pay for legal representation.
- Assume responsibility for actions or events, which are beyond UCEAP’s control and its partners, or for situations that may arise due to your failure to disclose pertinent information.
- Assure that home-country cultural values and norms or U.S. safety codes will apply in the host country.
Important Predeparture Steps

Discuss questions and concerns with UCEAP staff

Experienced staff in California and abroad are available to help you stay safe during your daily activities and emergencies. Before departure, you will be connected by email. For detailed contact information at your Study Center abroad, see your “UCEAP Network” section of the Program Guide.

If you plan to contact your family after arrival

Discuss communication expectations before the start of the program. Stay in touch with your family to reassure them of your safety and whereabouts. If you make plans to contact them at a certain time, follow through so your family does not worry unnecessarily. This is especially crucial when you first arrive.

Some programs take place in remote locations. It may be difficult to anticipate where you may be at all times. Discuss what types of communication may be feasible, alternate communication plans if there is an unexpected delay, and how often you will communicate. If your availability changes, notify your family so they don’t worry when you have not called as regularly as expected.

U.S. Department of State Resources

Register Your Trip before Departure

Register online with STEP (Smart Traveler Enrollment Program) if you are a U.S. citizen to receive the latest travel updates and information on any destination. Registration is free, easy, and voluntary.

- Make STEP part of your travel planning and security.
- Update your travel plans if you will be traveling to other countries during your UCEAP break. This will help the U.S. Department of State contact you if there is a family emergency in the United States or if there is an emergency where you are traveling. Also, registration helps if your passport is lost or stolen while you are abroad.

The U.S. Department of State offers a free Smart Traveler App. Find official downloads here.

Regularly monitor the U.S. Department of State’s Consular Affairs’ website for current Travel Warnings, Travel Alerts, and Country Specific Information.

Review the U.S. Department of State, “Traveler’s Checklist.”

Sign your passport and fill in the emergency information

Have a signed, valid passport and a student visa, if required, and fill in the emergency contact information page of your passport. Always keep it in a safe place. Ask the local UCEAP staff and/or partners whether you can carry a copy of your passport with you and leave your original in a safe place.

Make two copies of your passport and carry additional passport-size photos. Leave one copy of your travel itinerary, passport data page, and visas with family or friends so you can be contacted in case of an emergency. Take the other copy and extra photos with you.

If your passport is lost or stolen, report it immediately to the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate to help protect yourself against identity theft and to prevent someone else from using the passport.

Know how and when to contact the U.S. embassy during your travels

Refer to www.usembassy.gov or use your mobile phone to contact the nearest U.S. embassy anywhere in the world. The site is accessible on any Web-enabled mobile device: apps.usa.gov/find-your-embassy.shtml. Consular duty officials are available for emergency assistance 24/7, at U.S. embassies, consulates, and consular agencies overseas and in Washington, D.C.
**UCEAP 24/7 Assistance Resources**
During your program you have access to knowledgeable and experienced local faculty and staff and the support network of the UCEAP Systemwide Office. In addition, you have 24-hour access to emergency assistance services through the UCEAP student travel insurance policy.

Print and carry at all times the UCEAP insurance card.

**Develop a personal emergency plan**
To reduce risks to your health and safety, develop a personal Emergency Plan (EP) with your family and to be ready for any emergency.

Some examples for your personal EP can include:

1. Where to go first in an emergency and who to call.
2. Identify all emergency exists wherever you are.
3. Have emergency cash.
4. How to get safely to your destination.
5. A list of risks that are present at your destination and how you will manage them.
6. How to ask for help in the local language.

The more prepared you are, the better you can respond effectively to an emergency or crisis.

Leave a copy of your plan and emergency phone numbers with your family.

**Keep local emergency numbers**
Know how to contact local emergency services (e.g., the police, an ambulance). Store the numbers in your cell phone and write them down on an emergency contact card in case your phone is misplaced. Carry a copy of your UCEAP insurance card with you at all times.

**Learn the laws of your UCEAP host country**
When you are in a foreign country, you are subject to its laws. It is your responsibility to inform yourself about the legal system in your UCEAP host country and in any country you plan to visit. Local laws, regulations, and legal and administrative processes may differ significantly from those in the U.S. and may not afford the same protections.

Ignorance of local law will not free you of liability. The penalties you risk when you break the law in a foreign country can be severe. In many countries, even unknowing violations of local law result in arrest, imprisonment, or deportation. The U.S. government and University of California cannot intercede on your behalf, grant special privileges or rights, or issue loans for legal aid. Both the U.S. government and the University are limited by local law and international practices. However, the U.S. diplomatic staff can provide lists of local attorneys, even though they cannot serve as attorneys or give legal advice.

**If You are Arrested**
If you are arrested, your first statement to authorities should be a polite and calm request.

Ask to speak to a consular officer at the U.S. Mission if you are a U.S. citizen. It is your right under international agreements to receive assistance from your government. Be polite, respectful, and calm, but insistent, and keep asking until you are placed into contact with an American official. Do not be surprised if your requests for consular access are ignored.

Consular officers will do whatever they can to protect your legitimate interests and ensure that you are not discriminated against under local law. But, they cannot get you out of jail.

If you are arrested, even for a minor offense, you may be held in detention without bail for several weeks during the investigation and legal proceedings. A prison may not have beds or toilets. Inmates may be fed the minimum survival fare, if anything, and may be subject to treatment considered inhumane by Western standards.
Arrested individuals will go through the foreign legal process for being charged or indicted, prosecuted, possibly convicted and sentenced, and for any appeals process. Within this framework, U.S. consular officers provide a wide variety of services to U.S. citizens arrested abroad and their families.

If you are mistreated while detained, file a complaint. First, talk to the U.S. Embassy American Citizens Services to find out how you can report your complaint to local authorities.

After discussions, the U.S. American Citizens Services will insist that you be treated humanely and may be able to hold the country detaining you responsible if human rights are being violated.

Learn about road safety
One of the greatest causes of injury and death to Americans abroad is automobile accidents. Do not drive or rent a motorized vehicle abroad. As a pedestrian, exercise caution and be aware that driving practices are completely unregulated in some countries.

No matter where you are in the world, wearing a seat belt is critical; protect yourself and buckle-up at all times.

Do not operate vehicles abroad. In some countries, bad roads and careless drivers are considered top dangers. For information about road and traffic realities abroad, visit the Association for Safe International Road Travel website.

Pedestrian Safety
According to the U.S. Department of State, hundreds of U.S. citizens are killed and injured in road accidents. Many victims are bystanders or pedestrians. Danger for pedestrians is more acute in developing nations.

Using a mobile device as a pedestrian is a dangerous distraction that can lead to personal injury, or worse. Research shows that pedestrians, similar to drivers, are less aware of their surroundings and exhibit unsafe behavior when using their mobile phones.

Cell-phone related injuries while walking are most common among youths. Activities such as emailing, talking on the phone, texting, or listening to music have contributed to some people falling off walkways or bridges and walking in front of moving traffic. If a text message, call, or email cannot wait, step aside, let others go by, and respond before proceeding.

- Be predictable; follow the rules of the road and obey signs and signals.
- Walk on sidewalks whenever they are available.
- If there is no sidewalk, walk facing traffic and as far from traffic as possible.
- Avoid alcohol and drugs; they impair your abilities and judgment.

For more information, visit the U.S. Department of State, Road Safety Overseas.

Learn about water and swimming safety
Carefully consider the safety of any beach before entering the water. Follow these basic tips for keeping safe:

- Rip currents and undertows can kill. Rip currents are the leading surf hazard for all beachgoers. They are particularly dangerous for weak or non-swimmers. See the United States Lifesaving Association (USLA) website for survival tips on rip currents.
- Do not swim in unfamiliar bodies of water or at isolated beaches.
- Never swim alone.
- Never swim while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Never dive head-first.
• Check local information for details of tides, rip currents, and pollution. Tide changes can produce powerful currents.
• Many beaches do not have lifeguards or warning signs.
• Do not swim without lifeguards present.
• Check for possible hazards from jellyfish, sea urchins, coral, sea snakes, sharks, and venomous fish. Saltwater crocodiles live in coastal estuaries in many countries.
• Human sewage and animal feces make some beaches no-go areas for swimming or even wading.
• Be cautious around natural bodies of water including ocean shorelines, rivers and lakes, even if you do not plan on swimming.

Read security reports about your host country
For the latest security information, regularly monitor the U.S. Department of State’s Learn About Your Destination page and official news sources.

Learn how to ask for help in the local language
Get emergency vocabulary before you travel and memorize words for both medical and non-medical emergencies.

If you have a disability, learn specific vocabulary relating to your disability to communicate important needs during an emergency.
While on UCEAP

Required On-site Orientation
When you arrive at your host country, the required orientation will include a review of local safety and security guidelines, culturally appropriate behaviors and information on how to remain safe.

Check your Email Regularly
Email is UCEAP’s primary means of communicating with you. Update your local contact information through MyEAP. You are responsible for providing UCEAP with updated contact (telephone, address, and email) information in MyEAP and to be responsive to UCEAP officials and its partners from the time of application through the end of the program. Failure to respond to official communications may lead to dismissal.

Update your spam filters to ensure that you receive all UCEAP communications.

Use MyEAP to provide and update your local contact information
- Log on to your MyEAP account.
- Select Contact info from the left-hand menu under Student Information.

Add and/or update “Address Abroad While Participating in UCEAP.” If you do not have reliable Internet access, provide your local contact information in writing to the UCEAP local faculty/staff or liaison officer. Provide your family with accurate and updated local contact information, including country and city codes.

MyEAP Travel Signout
For your own welfare, if you will be away from your host city for more than 24 hours during the program, you must sign out. An emergency may arise abroad or at home that may require reaching you promptly. You are required to carry emergency phone numbers and a copy of your UCEAP insurance card with you at all times.

Know How to Use the Local Phone System
Know how to use the phone system in the country in which you are traveling. Do not wait until an emergency comes along to figure it out or rely completely on your cell phone.

Carry local contact information with you at all times
Have the UCEAP Study Center and/or host institution contact information.

UCEAP and emergency contact information is published in your UCEAP Program Guide.

Important to Safety: Cell Phones that Work with International Cellular Services
Communication is a key aspect that gets overlooked during personal planning stages. Inform yourself before departure. Using U.S. cell phones with a U.S. SIM card is expensive even if you purchase an international plan. If your U.S. phone and plan are not compatible with your destination’s network, your cell phone provider may be able to recommend how to get a compatible phone for your trip. Unlock your phone before departure with your carrier’s permission, if possible. Once unlocked, purchase a local SIM card. Some phones cannot be taken abroad at all—they simply aren’t designed to get service outside of the U.S. Purchase a local cell phone (and SIM card) upon arrival.

Why do you need a Cell Phone Abroad?
We strongly recommend you get a local cell phone. During emergencies, you may be unable to call local emergency services with a U.S. cell phone. Be safe and get a local cell phone upon arrival with a texting plan. It is critical for local UCEAP faculty and staff to be able to reach you during an emergency. In many countries, you can find an affordable local phone or SIM card for your existing phone. If your U.S. carrier is able to unlock your U.S. cell phone, ask local staff about local cell phone shops and buy a local SIM card and plan.
Communicate with UCEAP and your family during a crisis
In the event of a local or regional emergency (earthquake, flood, etc.), a UCEAP representative will contact you to determine your well-being and whereabouts, and to provide information, instructions, and advice. You may also be asked to call other students in your group if the UCEAP Study Center established a phone tree for emergencies.

Details on emergency protocols will be discussed during the on-site orientation; pay careful attention to those instructions. News about an emergency or disaster in your host country may be broadcast in the U.S. Contact your family and friends in the U.S. immediately to inform them that you are safe.

What to do and who to contact during a personal emergency
Carry local emergency numbers (police, ambulance, etc.) and program emergency contact information with you at all times. Depending on the seriousness of the situation, contact local emergency services first and then contact your UCEAP representative.

Let the UC Study Center/Representative know of any emergency before contacting your parents, guardians, or emergency contacts as local staff can respond immediately.

Always carry emergency contact information.

Keep separate emergency funds in case you are stranded or need to leave the country quickly.

Independent personal travel
- Do not hitchhike. Hitchhiking introduces risks for both men and women, and it is not a safe way to travel in most parts of the world.

Provide a detailed itinerary to the UCEAP Study Center and your family whenever you leave the UCEAP site for more than 24 hours. The itinerary should include your contact information, travel dates, and destinations.

How?
- Log on to your MyEAP account
- Choose Travel Signout under Participation

If you do not have easy access to MyEAP, provide information above in writing to the Study Center staff/faculty. If your family does not hear from you for a while, they might worry needlessly. If you have not signed out, UCEAP cannot reassure them.

Safety while Traveling
Know where you are, where you are headed, and how you are getting to your destination. Travel in groups; never alone.

UCEAP strongly discourages couch surfing and other accommodations offered through online networks that connect you to people who will let you stay overnight at their house. Safety is your primary concern and responsibility; regardless of where you stay, make sure someone knows where you are at all times. Always keep emergency phone numbers at hand and note where police stations are located in every city you visit.
Take Precautions Abroad to Reduce Risks

Crime is a problem worldwide, including the U.S. In any of the countries to which you travel, you can become a victim of crimes such as muggings, robberies, petty thefts, sexual assaults, and beatings. There is no way to protect yourself totally from crime. Be aware of your surroundings and avoid being a target of crime.

Risks upon Arrival:
Newly arrived travelers are often targets of crime because they:
  • Are unfamiliar with their surroundings
  • Might not speak the local language well
  • Are recognizable as foreigners
  • Attract attention by appearing to be affluent
  • Have not yet learned the social norms or unwritten rules of conduct
  • Are eager to get to know new people and the local culture
  • Are naive to the intentions of people around them
  • Are carrying all their valuables with them
  • Wear headphones or talk on cell phones when in public

Actions to Avoid:
Some factors that you can control, which may place you under greater risk, include:
  • Being out after midnight or even local curfew
  • Being alone at night in an isolated area (travel with someone whenever possible)
  • Being in an area known for crime or violence
  • Sleeping in an unlocked place
  • Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs
  • Carrying excessive amounts of cash and/or valuable property

Pay attention to your actions and appearance and try to adapt
Always be aware of your surroundings and practice risk avoidance techniques.
Understanding local culture will help you stay safe.

To succeed abroad, you will need to be resourceful, willing to learn from your mistakes, determined to stay, and flexible to change. Learn the norms of your host country and understand how your own culture relates to the local culture. Adapt your behavior to the customs and expectations of your host country. Be aware of local dress codes and customs and try to adapt accordingly. Be culturally sensitive without compromising your safety.

In your new surroundings, others may misinterpret or be offended by what you may consider normal dress and interaction. Social gestures that may seem innocuous in your culture may be interpreted in radically different ways in other societies. Make sure your appearance is respectful of local customs; do not risk drawing negative attention to yourself by wearing inappropriate clothing.

Prepare to live in an urban environment
Many UC Study Centers are in major international cities. You may experience conditions generally associated with dense urban living: increased crime, pollution, sexual harassment, and standards of living that are not comparable to life at UC. Practice the same safety tips you would in any place you are not familiar with. The more you learn now about these realities, the better prepared you will be to handle the challenges and rewards of studying abroad.
Safeguard your belongings from damage or theft

As on your UC campus, you are responsible for your personal property. You can safeguard your belongings from damage or theft by making sure that your room and windows are locked, and by securing money, travelers checks, and other valuables.

Review the personal property insurance benefits in the UCEAP Insurance Plan and determine whether they are adequate.

Fire safety

Plan ahead and stay calm

The importance of fire protection is often overlooked. According to the U.S. Fire Administration, almost 70 percent of all residential fire victims in the United States die of smoke inhalation, poisonous gases, or lack of oxygen—not severe burns.

Fire can pose a significant risk, especially in countries where there is no fire brigade, where buildings are not constructed to minimize fire hazards, and few people know about fire safety.

Fire safety standards differ drastically around the world. Many overseas locations do not meet U.S. standards in terms of fire protection and regulations (e.g., fire sprinklers, smoke alarms, fire extinguishers, etc.), means of escape, and fire-fighting capability. Some older buildings are constructed to minimal standards.

Although many fire departments around the world have equipment that can reach above a second floor, most do not have equipment to reach beyond a seventh floor. If you live in a multi-story building, request a room no higher than the seventh floor.

Fire safety can save your life. It is a shared responsibility between UCEAP (orientation and training of students), the community (well-trained and prepared emergency responders), and the individual student. You are ultimately responsible for your own safety during a fire. Know how to react should a fire occur.

Practice a fire escape plan and fire-safe behavior regularly.

During a fire, you may have less than one minute to get safely out of a building. Knowing what to do can mean the difference between life and death.

Always consider fire precautions in any building you visit, particularly how to escape. Take the time to inspect your lodging for possible safety hazards, including lack of smoke detectors, exposed wires, and improperly operating heating and cooking equipment.

Identify Fire Hazards

- Identify potential fire hazards (see below for partial list) and take steps to minimize or eliminate hazards. Eliminating fire hazards associated with electricity, natural gas, and flammable liquids will go a long way toward reducing your fire risk.
- Smoking in bed or careless smoking. Careless smoking is known to be one of the primary causes of home fires. If you don’t discard a cigarette properly, loose embers that are hot can ignite when they come in contact with a flammable surface.

Other significant hazards include:

- Smoke alarms that do not work.
- Expired or inoperable fire extinguisher.
- No escape plan.
- Overloaded extension cord. Overloaded electrical outlets.
- Using a space heater that is not laboratory tested and approved.
- Frayed cord plugged into wall socket.
- Electrical cords under carpets or across high-traffic areas.
• Electrical appliances left on (hair iron, etc.)
• “Daisy-chained” power strips (one plugged into another).
• Power strip without circuit breaker.
• Flammables close to a source of ignition.
• Unattended candle, fireplace, or space heater.

For more information on fire safety around the world, visit the Fire Safety Foundation.

Prevention
Taking a few sensible precautions, you can help protect yourself, and others, from injury—or worse:

• Ensure you have a working smoke alarm and test it weekly. Smoke alarms with a vibrating pad or flashing light are available for people who are deaf or hard of hearing.
• If you smoke, never smoke in bed; when you finish a cigarette, put it out completely and make sure all cigarette ends are cold before emptying ashtrays into bins.
• Be aware of where fire alarms are located and fire equipment is kept.
• Draw an escape route. Plan and practice it with your housemates. If you use a walker or wheelchair, check all exits to be sure you can get through the doorways easily.
• Students with mobility disability are encouraged to have their bedroom on the ground floor and as close as possible to an exit.
• Keep a flashlight on hand to help guide you through smoke.

Living in Halls of Residence
If you have any concerns or questions about fire safety in residence halls (e.g., you’ve spotted a fire risk), speak to officials at your host institution and/or bring it to the attention of the UCEAP representative abroad.

If you have a disability and would need assistance during a fire, let the university or college health and safety officer know when you arrive.

You should also:

• check what the fire safety rules are, such as any ban on candles in rooms.
• pay attention to fire drills, if practiced, and never ignore alarms.

Living in Privately Rented Accommodation
If you live in a private house or apartment, make sure it’s fitted with smoke alarms on each level of the property and that they are tested regularly. If there are no smoke alarms, purchase one, and install it. If you cannot mount the alarm on a wall, place it on a high surface, with the top of the alarm not closer than 4 inches or more than 12 inches from the ceiling.

Check that your escape route is clear. For example, make sure there are no boxes blocking your exit in the hallway, and be aware of any windows that are barred.

If you are studying in England, you can request a home fire safety visit from your local Fire and Rescue Service. They may provide and fit a smoke alarm for free.

Fire Safety in Places of Assembly
Some of the deadliest fires in the United States have involved places of assembly: nightclubs, theaters, concert halls and auditoriums. The ability to exit quickly and safely is critical. Stay sober. In a packed arena or a club that is pushing the capacity limit, common sense and a calm demeanor can mean the difference between life and death.
Be observant: Know where the exits are. Walk around the club and check out exits firsthand and see what kind of doors they have. If it appears the show involves indoor fireworks, consider leaving. If a fire alarm goes off, stop what you are doing and get out.

Have an Exit Strategy: Share the location of that nearest exit with your group. Agree that at the first sign of trouble, you will all proceed to the exit without delay. Once the show begins, remain vigilant. If you think there’s a problem, LEAVE IMMEDIATELY. Do not delay if you are concerned about safety. Every second counts.

Is it too crowded? If it feels too crowded, then it is, and you should avoid it.

Have a Plan
Preparing and practicing a plan will help you, and others, act quickly if there’s a fire—it can save your life.

Locate Your Exits: Count the doors between your room and the nearest exit; this could be a lifesaver if you have to crawl low under smoke through a smoke-filled room or corridor.

Have a Fire Escape Plan: A free burning residential fire can double in size every 30 seconds. An escape plan will help you get out quickly. The residence will quickly fill with blinding, choking, thick black smoke, so practice evacuating the building blindfolded. Begin planning your escape from a fire when you move into your residence. Should a fire occur, you will be able to act efficiently and without panic.

Portable Fire Extinguisher: Fire extinguishers are valuable safety tools when you know how to use them. A 5-lb. fire extinguisher with a 2A-10BC rating is sufficient for most residential fires. Caution: a fire extinguisher is intended for use on small fires only. If you cannot extinguish the fire with one extinguisher, get out of the building immediately.

Fire Escape Ladder: A portable ladder may be helpful if your room is on a higher floor of a building. If you do not have a portable ladder, don’t jump. It would be safest to drop from a window.

Whistles: Have a key-ring loud safety whistle for any kind of rescue to attract attention.

Cell Phones: Have a reliable and charged cell phone. Enter the local emergency numbers (keep a hard copy of all numbers in your wallet).

Smoke Alarms: A properly installed and maintained smoke alarm is the only thing that can alert you to a fire. Since smoke and many deadly gases rise, installing your smoke alarms at the proper level will provide you with the earliest warning possible. Always follow the manufacturer’s installation instructions. If you cannot mount the smoke alarm on the wall, place it on a high surface since smoke and many deadly gases rise.

➤ Pack a portable, battery-operated smoke detector for use in private lodgings and/or hotel rooms while traveling during breaks. A smoke detector should be temporarily located as close to the ceiling as possible in a hotel room.

ACT
If a fire breaks out:
• Do not investigate the fire
• Immediately leave the building if you hear a fire alarm; do not second-guess the alarm.
• Crawl on the floor if there’s smoke (smoke is toxic and can kill you); the air is cleaner near the floor
• Use the stairwell or fire escape for evacuation. DO NOT USE ELEVATORS.
• Stay calm so you can take steps to protect yourself.
• Close all doors between you and the fire and stuff wet clothing, towels, etc., in cracks around the doors to keep out smoke. Wait at a safe window and signal/call for help.
Never open doors that are hot to the touch. When you come to a closed door, use the more heat sensitive back of your hand to feel the top of the door, the doorknob, and the crack between the door and door frame to make sure that fire is not on the other side. If it feels hot, do not open the door; use a secondary escape route if there is one available. Even if the door feels cool, open it carefully. Brace your shoulder against the door and open it slowly. If heat and smoke come in, close the door immediately, and make sure it is securely closed, and then use your pre-planned alternate escape route.

SURVIVE

If your exit path is clear, crawl into the hallway. Stay close to the wall to avoid running into others or into rescuers. If there is smoke in the hall but no fire, crawl to the exit. Cover your mouth and nose with a wet washcloth in case the smoke becomes too thick for you to breathe.

When going down the stairs, hold the handrail for guidance. This will also help protect you from being knocked down by other people trying to escape. If you encounter heavy smoke in the stairwell, do not try to run through it. You may not make it. Turn around and walk up to the roof exit.

If you cannot leave the room, retreat to a place with an outside window remote from the fire, smoke, or emergency situation and scream for help if possible. Place an article of clothing (shirt, coat, etc.) outside the window as a marker for rescue crews. Do not leave the window open. Leaving it open can draw in fresh air and feed the fire. Sometimes opening a window will change the air pressure in the room and smoke may enter the room from the inside or the outside of the building. If smoke starts to enter the room through the open window, from around the closed door, or through vents, immediately close the window.

If you really must get out of the window, look for a ledge; if there is a ledge, you can get yourself out onto the ledge facing the building. Always face the building structure when exiting a window on an upper floor.

Protect yourself from smoke inhalation when inside. Take a shirt or a rag and get it wet. Place it over your nose and mouth. This will only buy you a minute or so, which is not a lot of time, but it does help to filter those products of combustion which lead to smoke inhalation. Smoke inhalation causes people to become disoriented and can even render a person unconscious.

If your clothing catches on fire: STOP, DROP, and ROLL: If you are caught in smoke, do not stand upright; crawl or keep low to the floor to avoid smoke and odorless carbon monoxide. Practice staying low to the ground when escaping. Smoke rises, so stay close to the floor where the air will be less toxic. The “safety zone” of breathable air is about 12 to 24 inches above the floor.

Active Shooter

Active shooter situations can be encountered anywhere in the world, including the U.S. There is no set profile for an active shooter. It is an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined and/or populated area. Generally, active shooters use firearms and select victims at random.

Active shooter situations are unpredictable and evolve quickly. Typically, the immediate deployment of law enforcement is required to stop the shooting and mitigate harm to victims. Active shooters usually will continue to move throughout a building or area until stopped by law enforcement, suicide, or other intervention.

If you suspect a potential active shooter situation, you must quickly determine the most reasonable way to protect your own life and that of others. If there is an accessible escape path, attempt to evacuate the premises.
How to Respond

1. Run – If it is safe to do so and if there is an accessible escape path. Leave all belongings behind.

2. Hide – If safe evacuation is not possible, hide in an area out of the shooter’s view. Block entry to the hiding place and lock doors. Silence any cell phones or mobile devices.

3. Fight – As a last resort, and only when your life is in imminent danger, attempt to incapacitate the shooter. Whether you are alone or working with a group, act with physical aggression, yell, and throw items at the active shooter.

Encountering Racism While Traveling

You may encounter racism while traveling. Depending upon the location, there may be common misperceptions, benign curiosity, and even specific stereotypes of people of a certain race. You will always have a choice about how to deal with these situations. Among other things, you can report racism to a relevant authority, educate people on your own, or try to ignore it and enjoy your travels. Whatever you do, make sure that you do not compromise your own health and safety to tackle racism while traveling. For more information refer to the Student Life chapter in this guide.

Avoid demonstrations and events that may become unruly

Abide by the regulations of the host institution and laws of the country. Although strikes and demonstrations may occur in your host country, you may be arrested and/or deported if you participate in local political activities, including peaceful demonstrations. The local constitutions of many countries around the world prohibit political activities by foreigners.

▶ If you are involved with a protest, demonstrations, riots or incursions, the UCEAP insurance policy will not provide coverage.

Avoid demonstration areas and be cautious within the vicinity of any demonstrations. Seek shelter immediately. Anti-American sentiments may be expressed at some political events. Demonstrations that are intended to be peaceful can sometimes turn violent.

Participating in an illegal demonstration or strike could lead to physical harm, arrest and deportation. It may also damage UC’s relationship with the host institution or country.

UCEAP Emergency suspension and contingency plans

Planning in the event of an emergency is crucial while you are abroad. Safe evacuations and/or relocations are not easy and can be a deeply unsettling and chaotic experience to many students.

The UCEAP emergency management plan is a dynamic process that begins well before any critical event and extends beyond its conclusion. It follows a multi-level response. An evacuation plan is one way to protect UCEAP students, faculty, and staff and reduce their exposure to a risky situation. The goal of the evacuation plan is to provide a reasonably less dangerous environment for all students.

Any evacuation is unpredictable and can occur at any time. Every stage before, during, and after an emergency situation and/or evacuation will present different challenges and will require UCEAP to implement different strategies for effective management.

As a crisis develops, the on-site faculty/staff, host institution, and staff in California will constantly assess the nature and extent of the emergency. Evacuations are a team effort. University of California first responders will strive to minimize UCEAP students risk exposure first. This responsibility may, at times, appear in conflict with a student’s personal preference; there is no autonomy or independence when it comes to following UCEAP instructions during an emergency. In matters relating to personal safety, the authority of the University of California or a local government will supersede any individual wishes.
While everyone responds to and deals with emergencies in a different way, and you may disagree with UCEAP decisions, the University does not negotiate the handling of an emergency or crisis. You must quickly follow all UCEAP instructions and respond in a mature, respectful, and responsible fashion. UCEAP decisions made during a crisis will vary depending on the nature of the event.

**Security Evacuation**

A UCEAP-required security evacuation will override any host institution or local U.S. Embassy voluntary departure of U.S. citizens on U.S. government-arranged flights that require U.S. citizens to sign a promissory note with the government.

The security evacuation of UCEAP students, managed by UCEAP, is covered by UCEAP insurance (there is no cost to the student). UC students are required to follow UC safety directives in the event of an evacuation.

If a local situation requires increased caution, shelter in place, or a program suspension and evacuation of participants, UCEAP will activate its contingency plans for any unfolding situation. For security reasons, contingency plans are not public and cannot be shared with anyone except UCEAP faculty and staff.

**UCEAP Program Suspension Policy**

If the U.S. Department of State or the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issues a Travel Warning after the start date of the program term, UCEAP may suspend the program.

If time and local security conditions permit, UCEAP will consult with the UC Study Center Director, U.S. Department of State regional and security analysts, University of California Office of Risk Services, University of California security provider and insurance carrier, other organizations that offer programs in the same country, and area experts to determine the appropriate time frame for suspending the program and/or the departure of the students from the host country.

When possible, UCEAP will assist students in completing their academic program while minimizing adverse financial consequences.

**In the Event of a Local Emergency**

There are many types of disasters and emergencies: floods, fires, earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoses, civil unrest, etc. No region or country is immune. Being prepared can reduce fear, anxiety, and losses.

Communication lines usually break down during a major local emergency. Discuss all the ways you and your parents can connect—via cell phone, text (which sometimes works even when cell networks are jammed or down), email, online social networks, land lines, and through UCEAP. It is critical to provide your local contact information to your parents, UC campus officials, and the Study Center Director or host institution. The Systemwide Director will contact you and the other UCEAP participants immediately to ascertain everyone’s welfare and to provide information, instructions, and advice. You are advised to contact your parents/guardians or other emergency contacts. Depending on the emergency, the UCEAP Systemwide Office will post a message on the UCEAP website, [www.eap.ucop.edu/911](http://www.eap.ucop.edu/911), and provide email updates to your emergency contacts and parents. Make sure you enter your parents’ email address in MyEAP.

Regardless of the nature and extent of a crisis, it usually has an impact on everyone in the UCEAP community. Local staff, host universities, parents, families, friends, and UCEAP staff in California may be profoundly affected by every tragedy, emergency and unforeseen crisis that could occur during your UCEAP experience. The host country nationals and local students in your classes, faculty, and staff are just as deeply touched and impacted by the local events and will require emotional support and stress relief.
Avoid illegal drugs and excessive or irresponsible consumption of alcohol

Never feel pressured into drinking alcohol or using illegal substances. Read the UCEAP Substance Abuse Policy.

Obey local laws and regulations, especially those pertaining to drug and alcohol use. Excessive alcohol consumption and unruly behavior can lead to serious problems with local authorities. Disturbing the peace, lewd or indecent behavior, littering, drinking on the street or on public transportation, etc., may be considered criminal activities by local authorities. Every year, many American students are arrested abroad on drug charges or because of their behavior under the influence. Ignorance of the law is no excuse, so be informed.

Local laws can impose harsh penalties for violations that would be considered minor in the United States. Having U.S. citizenship will not exempt you from prosecution under the local criminal justice system.
Avoiding Scams and Other Crimes
Prevent being a victim by being alert and knowing how to identify scams

Many students have been victims of scams, but you can minimize your risk.

Credit Card Skimming
Skimming is one of the most widespread methods of card fraud. It involves illegally data copying a bank card for theft. Fraudsters can obtain your PIN-code using a fake PIN pad or hidden video camera. Hidden video cameras could be disguised as marketing materials or as an element of an ATM.

Recommendations to Protect Yourself:

• Ensure that your bank card is used only for known purposes and that a third party is not able to use a portable device, at times hidden under clothing, for copying it.
• Do not share your number and/or PIN with anyone.
• Be vigilant and careful when using an ATM. Pay attention to unusual design elements. For instance, a fake keypad may visibly project over an ATM case or easily be removed from it. Often part of the original keypad can be seen under it.
• Pay attention to the established micro video cameras at the ATM that can be mounted in the visor of an ATM or disguised as accessory items, such as information materials.
• Try to minimize the usage of bank cards in suspicious or unreliable areas.
• Withdraw money from one and the same ATM and possibly memorize its outlook.
• Carefully look at the slot for the card reader. If you notice some strange elements or frame of the slot coming out you may gently press them with a finger. If it is a fake element it will fall out.
• Dial your PIN code quickly and preferably using several fingers; it will help disguise the buttons you press. Cover the keypad when entering your PIN code with your free hand.
• Activate the SMS- and email alert service from your bank for quick reporting of any illegal withdrawals from your account.
• Inform your bank about changes of contact information.
• Monitor your bank accounts online regularly to ensure proper billing.
• Always verify that charges are correct before signing for any purchases.
• Keep all receipts.

Beware of Offers for “Free” Drinks
Unfortunately, some UCEAP students have been victims of spiked drinks. Designer drugs are being used in many parts of the world to take advantage of unsuspecting victims. Some of the drugs used are: Rohypnol, GHB, Ecstasy, Ketamine, Burundanga, etc. Drinks of any type can be spiked, including water, coffee, sodas, and alcoholic beverages. You may not be able to see, smell, or taste if your drink has been spiked—the drug may be colorless, odorless, and may not affect the taste of your drink, or it may taste salty. The effects of Rohypnol can be felt within 30 minutes of being drugged and can last for several hours. GHB takes effect in about 15 minutes and can last 3 or 4 hours. It is very potent. Ketamine is very fast-acting. You might be aware of what is happening to you, but unable to move. It also causes memory problems. If you are drugged, you might look and act like someone who is drunk. Most victims don’t remember being drugged or assaulted.

Warning signs include: feeling dizzy or faint, feeling sick or sleepy, feeling intoxicated or confused—even if you’ve only consumed a little alcohol—passing out, and waking up feeling uncomfortable and disoriented with memory blanks about the night before.
To minimize your risk:

- Watch your drink and watch out for each other’s drinks.
- When in bars or clubs, always get your drink directly from the bartender and do not take your eyes off the bartender or your order.
- Do not accept open drinks. Open your own bottle or container.
- Never leave your drink unattended.
- Do not share drinks.
- Do not drink from punch bowls or other common, open containers. They may already have drugs in them.
- Keep your eyes and ears open; if there is talk of date rape drugs or if friends seem “too drunk” for what they have ingested, leave the party or club immediately.
- If you think your drink tastes funny, discard it. If you leave it lying around, someone else may drink it. Do not listen to anyone if they challenge your better judgment, for instance by telling you things like, “That salty taste is normal.” GHB can give your drink a salty taste.

Rental Scams

Past UCEAP students have been scammed.
The FBI has released a statement about a Craigslist rental scam, in which con artists target renters in the U.S. and try to collect rental deposits on homes they do not own. The number of fake rental scams on Craigslist and other online classifieds continues to grow, with new aliases appearing daily. They use most major email providers and they also post ads under anonymous Craigslist addresses. They use photos stolen from legitimate property advertisements or from home furnishing catalogues or hotel websites. Scammers will quote extremely low prices to attract your attention. If you show interest, you will receive a lengthy email detailing why you cannot inspect the property in person, typically because the owner is out of the country.

To minimize your risk:

- Seek advice from someone trustworthy.
- Use common sense and trust your instincts. If someone offers a well located apartment/room/studio at an extremely low price, then be aware.
- Never, under any circumstances, wire money at the request of any prospective “landlord” via Western Union, Moneygram, or any other wire service—even if they tell you to wire the funds to a friend or relative’s name “to be safe.” It is unlikely you will recover money sent by wire transfer by the time the fraud is discovered. It’s never a good idea to send money to someone you’ve never met in person for an apartment you haven’t seen. Wiring money is the same as sending cash — once you send it, you have no way to get it back. Ask the landlord if he/she accepts other ways of payment.
- Never send a scan of your passport or other ID. Do not provide your date of birth, details about your trip, or U.S. address to someone you do not know. These thieves will use your identity to scam others.
- Independently verify the company or agency is legitimate. Do not just go by the website or phone number. Find some other way of verifying they exist.
- Ask for a copy of the utility bills and ask if you could visit the accommodation. Do not trust the housing opportunity if the landlord refuses this or makes excuses (he/she is on vacation, on a business trip or his/her relative is sick).
Phone extortion and express or virtual kidnapping

“Express kidnappings” have become increasingly popular among criminals in many locations. Abductors often force victims to make purchases or to withdraw as much money as possible from ATMs, often at gunpoint.

Phone extortion is an attempt to extort money from vulnerable targets (parents, family members, friends, associates, etc.). It often begins with a call (or email message). Criminals usually get an adequate amount of public information about the victim through Internet searches.

Common Elements

Phone extortion takes various forms. The caller may call you, and/or your relatives in the U.S. to say that you were kidnapped or arrested and in need of a lawyer, etc. The caller may demand quick payment of a ransom. Sometimes cries can be heard in the background, supposedly from you, the kidnapped person.

To minimize risk:

1. Share your travel plans and contact information only with a small circle of trusted individuals (e.g., close family, your university officials).
2. Limit your use of online social networks—such as Facebook, Tumblr, or Twitter—to announce your plans.
3. Do not share personal information online; it is neither safe nor secure.
4. Watch your email activity. Unexpected emails asking you to verify your account could be phishing for your personal or financial information. Don’t take the bait. Make it a policy never to respond to emails or pop-ups that ask for your personal or financial information, click on links in the message, or call phone numbers given in the message. Do not cut and paste a link from the message into your Web browser, either; phishers can make links look like they go one place, but then actually take you to a look-alike site.
5. Leave a detailed itinerary and contact information with a trusted person.
6. Do not share personal information with unknown callers.

If You Receive This Type of Call

If you or someone in your family receives this type of call:

1. Remain calm and do not provoke the caller. In the majority of cases, it is a show in order to create fear. Criminals are aggressive and demand immediate action.
2. Do not share any personal and/or financial information if you get a call. Get as much information as possible.
3. Do not transfer funds to any given account.
4. Ask to talk about the alleged victim or have the caller answer a proof of life question from the victim (first grade school teacher, favorite color, first pet, etc.)
5. Hang up as soon as possible. After the call, immediately try to find the alleged victim.
6. If he or she does not answer and you cannot communicate with the person, call the emergency phone numbers for the UCEAP representative abroad and/or the UCEAP Systemwide Office in California so they can help locate the alleged victim.
Sexual Harassment & Sexual Violence

Identify sexual harassment and report issues to UCEAP

UCEAP is concerned about students facing sexual harassment abroad. Knowing how to identify harassment—whether it is between you and another student, professor, teaching assistant, homestay family member, or dorm authority, etc.—and where to report an incident can help to maintain a safe, harassment-free environment. Sexual Harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment is conduct that explicitly or implicitly affects a person’s employment or education or interferes with a person’s work or educational performance or creates an environment such that a reasonable person would find the conduct intimidating, hostile, or offensive. Sexual harassment may include incidents between any members of the University community. The University will respond to reports of any such conduct in accordance with the Policy. Read the UCEAP Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence Policy.

Harassment issues may be particularly difficult to identify abroad, where cultural norms are often very different from those in the U.S. A fair rule of thumb is to assume that sexual harassment consists of any unwanted sexual advances and behavior of a verbal, visual, written, or physical nature in living arrangements or in educational or work environments.

Note that the U.S. description of sexual harassment may differ from the host country description. In such a case, you are encouraged to discuss these issues, if you feel comfortable, with the Study Center or Liaison Office administrator to determine an appropriate course of action.

Trust your judgment and intuition. If a situation makes you uncomfortable, it needs to be addressed. Never ignore sexual harassment. Ignoring it will not make it go away; most likely it will just make it worse. Both males and females can be sexually harassed, and the perpetrator can be male or female and of the same or opposite gender. Seek help from UCEAP and on-site personnel, who can provide counseling and advice and act on your behalf to remedy a problem.

If You Experience Sexual Harassment

- Trust what you are feeling.
- Many people feel ashamed or humiliated because of the harassment. It is not your fault and you do not have to endure it.
- Take one step at a time—it is easy to feel overwhelmed. If possible, talk to the harasser.
- Clearly and firmly tell the harasser that you want the behavior to stop. If you can, tell the harasser how the behavior makes you feel.
- Let the harasser know that you will take further action if the harassment does not stop.
- Keep records. It is very important to write down dates, times, places, and witnesses to what happened.
- If you receive any notes, emails, or written letters from the harasser, keep them. You can use documented information to support a complaint.
- Report the incident to the UCEAP Study Center or Liaison Office. They can help you resolve the issue and provide counseling and guidance. If you need further assistance, or if you do not feel comfortable with the Study Center or Liaison Office, contact the UCEAP Regional Director for your program. Refer to the following contact information or contact your UCEAP Title IX Sexual Harassment Officer, Inés DeRomaña, at (805) 893-7936 or by email to leave a confidential message. When you establish contact, indicate that you are being sexually harassed and leave a phone number and a good time to return your call. All messages are confidential.
What to Do if You Are Accused of Sexual Harassment

If you are told that your behavior is inappropriate and/or offensive, you must immediately stop the behavior. People perceive certain behaviors, jokes, and gestures, etc., differently. What may be acceptable to you may be extremely offensive to someone else. Sometimes due to the difference in culture you may not think your comment(s) or behavior is offensive. Nevertheless, you should try to understand the other person’s feelings and concerns and respect his or her request to stop the sexual harassment.

For More Information

Please refer to the UCEAP Sexual Harassment Policy.

Contact information for UCEAP’s Title IX Sexual Harassment Officer, Inés DeRomaña:

- Office phone: (805) 893-7936
- Mobile phone: (805) 451-1704
- Email: ideromana@eap.ucop.edu

In addition, all UC campuses provide sexual harassment education materials online, including information on applicable laws, where to go for help, etc. Most UC campuses have a dedicated Sexual Harassment/Title IX Office and Officer whom you can contact for help as well.

Facts about rape and sexual assault

College and university campuses around the world face problems with violence, rape, and sexual assault. The problem is widespread, yet many misunderstand what sexual assault is and how they can protect themselves from it.

Sexual assault is defined as any unwanted sexual contact. It may include touching of breasts or genitals; anal, oral or vaginal sex; and penetration with a foreign object.

Staying sober will protect you from many situations that lead to assault. However, even when under the influence of drugs or alcohol, assault is still assault. If someone cannot hear, respect, or understand someone trying to say “No,” or if a person is incapable of giving consent, the sexual activity constitutes rape.

Sexual assault can occur with someone you know, and it can occur even when some sexual activity is consensual. Despite common feelings of guilt or shame on the part of survivors, assault is never warranted.

What Is Consent?

Consent is a verbal “yes” or an affirmative, clear, and conscious decision by all parties involved to engage in mutually agreed-upon sexual activity. Silence does not mean consent. Consent is voluntary and revocable. A current or previous sexual encounter or relationship does not constitute consent. Consent must be ongoing throughout any sexual encounter. Once consent is withdrawn, the sexual activity must stop immediately.

If you are sexually assaulted

If you have been sexually assaulted while abroad, proceed to a safe place and consider talking to a friend and/or to the relevant UCEAP staff/faculty representative abroad as soon as possible.

If you find yourself in a situation where you cannot make it home for the night, be sure you are in a safe and secure environment. Call the UCEAP local representative for help.

Consider getting medical attention. Your medical care is covered by UCEAP travel insurance.

Reporting the incident to law or university officials is completely up to you. Understanding that reporting is an intensely personal process, and is considered empowering and therapeutic for some yet emotionally draining and unsatisfactory for others, the University respects your right to decide whether or not to report.
The UCEAP insurance policy provides an Emergency Reunion Benefit to pay for the travel expenses of one family member to join you while abroad. Covered expenses include a roundtrip economy airline ticket and food and lodging expenses not to exceed $500 a day for up to 10 days. Benefits will not be paid unless the insurance carrier authorizes all expenses in advance and services are rendered by United Healthcare Global, the UCEAP travel assistance provider.

**Reporting Sexual Assault, Rape, Sexual Harassment to UCEAP**

Rape and sexual assault can happen to women and men of all ages and backgrounds. While most UCEAP students abroad do not experience sexual assault, UCEAP officials are becoming more aware of students being sexually assaulted while abroad because students are choosing to report.

Sexual assault is a traumatic experience—whenever and wherever it happens—but it may be more difficult to deal with when it happens in an unfamiliar setting. UCEAP officials in California and abroad and UC host institution officials will be as helpful and responsive as possible with you if you choose to report rape or sexual assault, or attempted rape or sexual assault.

**The UC Study Center Representative**

Cultural and social attitudes toward rape and sexual assault victims may vary greatly in different countries. The support you receive from law officials and others, in addition to the resources available to you, will vary from country to country. In the United States, for example, if you tell a medical professional that you have been raped, he or she is legally required to report your name and situation to the police. However, you have the legal right to refuse speaking with the police. Laws in other countries may provide you with more or less decision making power. Therefore, it is important to consult with UCEAP staff/faculty abroad.

**UCEAP Title IX/Sexual Harassment Coordinator**

If you have been the target of a sexual assault, including rape, you may request an administrative investigation with or without filing a police report.

Contact Inés DeRomaña at ideromana@eap.ucop.edu

**Reporting to the police**

If you decide against reporting the incident to the police, it is still a good idea to have a medical exam to see if you were injured and to check for sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy. Be aware, though, that some countries will require the attending physician to alert the police. You may receive an exam and avoid legal involvement by not disclosing the sexual assault to the medical professionals if you do not want to report the assault to the police.

**Care after sexual assault**

Different people react to the trauma of sexual assault in different ways. As a survivor, you might feel angry, ashamed, frightened, or guilty. You may have different feelings at different times. You may have some of these feelings soon after the attack and some may develop later on, even years later. This is normal after such trauma and you should consider getting help and advice from a counselor or support group whenever you feel you need to. UCEAP can provide you with information on what professional and legal help is available to you—both locally and in California.

**Myths/Truths**

**MYTH:** Rape is uncommon.

**REALITY:** According to United States Department of Justice document, *Criminal Victimization in the United States*, there were overall 191,670 victims of rape or sexual assault reported in 2005. Only 16 percent of rapes and sexual assaults are reported to the police (*Rape in America: A Report to the Nation*, 1992).

Worldwide, a United Nations statistical report compiled from government sources showed that more than 250,000 cases of male-female rape or attempted rape were recorded by police...
annually. The reported data covered 65 countries. For additional worldwide statistics, visit Nationmaster.com

**MYTH:** There are many false rape reports. Many women make false rape accusations because they changed their mind after having sex, or in order to get revenge on someone.

**REALITY:** False rape reports are very rare and are not more common than for any other felony crime. In reality, sexual assault is the most underreported violent crime in the U.S. 84 percent of rapes are never reported to the police.

**MYTH:** Sexual assault is an impulsive crime of passion and lust.

**REALITY:** Rape is not sex. Sexual assault uses sex as a weapon to dominate, humiliate, and punish victims. Perpetrators plan most sexual assaults in advance. Sexual violence is not just an individual or relationship problem, but stems from institutional sexism, racism, heterosexism, and other forms of oppression.

**MYTH:** Only young, attractive women are sexually assaulted.

**REALITY:** Sexual assault is a crime of power and control, not sexual attraction, and perpetrators often choose victims whom they perceive as vulnerable. Sexual assault survivors include people of all ages, gender identities, sexual orientations, races, classes, etc.

**MYTH:** Men cannot be raped.

**REALITY:** Men represent 13 percent of sexual assault survivors.* Typically, the perpetrator is a heterosexual male. Being sexually assaulted cannot “make someone gay.”

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