

For Trip Directors and / or mission participants

Thoughts and plans prior to travel.—Things to take and do

1. Take VOSH name tags, cellophane tape for back of them—take extra holders and name tags to replace lost ones.
2. Wear name tags going through customs especially. Also helps team to know names quicker. Going through customs as a group is very helpful.
3. Take small notepad to make notes of patients, expenses, reminders.
4. Take string, clear strapping tape, nylon tape, knife, duct tape.
5. Have intro of team members early in game plan—where they are from, relationship to the team.
6. Confirm tickets 72 hours in advance of leaving each way.
7. Take magic markers, pens, extra medications for team (Pepto Bismol, Imodium, first-aid kit), rubberbands, paper clips, 3X5 cards for registering patients, towels, washcloths, lights for eye charts, small flashlights for getting around and for reading in dim lit room during exams (trial lens powers, lighting reading cards for patients, etc.)
8. Protect bags, purses, camera bags from pick pockets (one of our gals got her purse cut open and credit cards stolen and she never felt a thing)-- carry billfolds in front pocket as well as passport (if not in holder inside shirt).
9. Take extra batteries for flashlights and hand-held scopes, extra bulbs for scopes.
10. Take extension cords with multiple outlets to plug in handles at night or when not in use—be sure you have converters for their type of plug in—take several 3 to 2 prong converters.
11. Tie a colorful ribbon or yarn on each bag you have on the team (carry-ons, luggage, VOSH equipment, etc.) so it is easily recognizable coming off the plane along the conveyer belt.
12. Carry scopes, handles, trial lenses aboard with you if at all possible—be aware you can have only **ONE carry-on** per person—2 check-ins, one of which will be VOSH equipment or glasses. Check with travel agent as rules change.
13. Build into the mission fee an amount / per person (for example: \$25/mission participant) to cover repairs of equipment; you can leave this amount at home or take it with you as survival \$ in case of a surprise expense; optional—add an additional \$10 for International VOSH donation for dues so they can get international newsletter (one per family unit)—the newsletter lets them get to see what other VOSH teams are doing, where they are going, what is available for other trips they may wish to participate in.
14. Have the team send money for the trip cost to the state VOSH treasurer, written to VOSH as VOSH is a tax-deductible organization. Get this money to the mission director ahead of time and cash the check so you will be ready to convert \$ when you arrive at your destination—check with your host about ease of cashing travelers checks—often a hassle in small countries or communities. Split up the cash among several Doctors or team members so it will not be all in one spot. Be sure to check on exit fees from a country—may be \$20 - \$40—be sure you set this aside so it is not spent on other activities.

15. Have fun and be ready to roll with the punches as it will never go exactly as you plan—be prepared to hurry up and wait—oftentimes the pace is much slower in countries than you might be accustomed to. Keep your cool and smile! The frustrations you encounter will become the memories and the stories of the future!!
16. Optional: Take a small bottle of mouthwash to rinse after brushing your teeth.
17. PASSPORT info:
 - a. Stress to the team early on that they must have a current passport. Some countries now require the passport to be at least 3 months active beyond the dates of travel.
 - b. You can get a “rush job” or “emergency” passport if you get in a short-deadline situation but it still takes several weeks after application.
 - c. The mission director should carry a copy of each participant’s passport in case someone loses a passport. Stress to new travelers that the passport is like gold—protect and treasure it. If lost, the individual is in for a real hassle!
 - d. Stress that the passport should be on their person at all times when traveling. Men should keep the passport in a front pocket or inside the shirt (on a passport belt or around the neck).
1. Don’t forget to set back money for exit visa from the county. Your travel agent should be able to tell you what it will cost.
2. If a child is under legal age and going on the mission with only one parent, get a signed and notarized statement from the second parent granting permission for that parent to take the child outside the US borders and into the county (countries) of the mission. Some countries will make this an issue.