



# Volunteer Trip Risk Management Handbook



for Lifewater Canada Volunteers

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# 1. THINK TWICE BEFORE YOU GO

Imagine a school bus full of children driving off a cliff to their deaths every twenty minutes, all day, every day. Would you repair that road, particularly if it could be done for just a few dollars and a few weeks of your time? That is the equivalent number of children who die from preventable water-borne diseases. In the many African villages, a full 15% of the children die before the age of five because of bad water!

Lifewater.ca is a small group of volunteers working from home who are doing something about this. We consider it a joy and privilege to donate time & money to help share the gift of safe drinking water, hygiene training and alternatives to open defecation. This is because we believe that all people are created in God's image and that the place you are born should not determine whether you live or die.

Although volunteers give generously, they often receive much back in return and are often powerfully affected by their participation on trips. It is indeed humbling to see how joyful people are despite their poverty while we, as an affluent people, often are focused on what we don't have.

But before you rush to sign-up for an overseas Lifewater trip, you should know that it can be scary to step out of your comfort zone and participate in projects where we lose the control that we are used to: where we will sleep, the safety of our food and drink, reliability of transportation, the availability of basic supplies, the temperature & noise when we sleep. These experiences are even more intense when you travel to countries ravaged by civil war, natural disasters, or years of neglect by selfish Dictators.

Before you commit, you should clearly understand that there are risks involved with volunteering in Third World countries. Issues that can arise include, but are not limited to: delay or inconvenience, program cancellation or curtailment, the loss of personal property, injury and, in the most extreme circumstances, even death.

All persons taking part in a Lifewater trip are required to accept these and other risks as a condition of their participation in an overseas trip. Lifewater Canada is a small organization run by volunteers and will not accept any liability for injury, death, loss, damage or expense sustained as a result of any person's participation in an overseas trip.

So please think twice before you go. If after reading this material you still want to go - Welcome Aboard!

Jim Gehrels



President



## 2. INTRODUCTION

Volunteering in 3<sup>rd</sup> world countries carries inherent risks due to the comparative laxity of laws and regulations governing society. Most communities are underserved with unreliable infrastructure, there is no potable municipal water and food is rarely refrigerated. Most people live in poverty and you stand out as a rich foreigner. There is often corruption, religious and/or social unrest, and potential political instability. Finally, it is physically demanding to work hard in hot, humid conditions.

With this in mind, experienced volunteers have identified potential risks that may be encountered overseas. They are accompanied by guidelines & policies outlining reasonable precautions that volunteers are expected to take to minimize these risks. The list is loosely organized according to the likelihood that risks may be encountered. Some extreme risks are included to ensure that potential volunteers are aware and prepared for worst case circumstances even though they have thankfully never been encountered on Lifewater.ca trips. Even so, the list is not exhaustive and no set of guidelines can anticipate all possible conditions that may arise.

This handbook doesn't replace common sense and good planning. Everyone is encouraged to do as much research & preparation as possible prior to going overseas. If in doubt, the guiding principles are:

- Don't do things that you would normally not do at home
- Don't do anything that would be against the law back home
- The priority is always "Safety First".

Before you commit to volunteering on an overseas trip, please carefully review all the risks and mitigation strategies discussed in this handbook. Also familiarize yourself with any travel warnings for the destination you plan to work in:

- Canadian government: <http://www.voyage.gc.ca/index-eng.asp>
- US government: [http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/travel\\_1744.html](http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/travel_1744.html)



### 3. MANAGING RISKS WHILE TRAVELING

#### 1. Losing key travel items and money

Key documents and items include your passport, a copy of your itinerary, boarding pass, printed plane tickets that are not e-tickets, wallet/purse and money. To mitigate the impact of such losses:

a) ***Scan colour copies of all important documents***

This includes your passport, visa stamps, drivers licence, credit card number (and cancellation number), medical insurance (phone & policy numbers), team member contact info (home phone, cell phone and e-mail) and local team phone/email. Leave a copy with someone at home, print a copy to take with you, and email a copy to yourself so you can access them if you lose everything.

b) ***Write key information inside your belt***

Write your passport number, embassy phone number and other important info inside your belt. In the improbable circumstance that you are alone and lose everything, you have this starting point!

c) ***Keep important documents in a money belt under your clothing.***

This will keep these documents out of view of potential thieves. In addition, have a small travel neck wallet which is more accessible, in which you keep the documents you need that day.

d) ***While packing, spread your money around***

Split up your money so you do not lose it all if your wallet/purse is stolen or your carry-on bag lost. Keep some money in your passport pouch or in a little pouch that clips to bra straps. Send yourself a email listing hiding places to avoid heart-stopping days searching if you forget where you hid it!

e) ***Keep your driver's licence separate from other identification***

Keep it in a separate location from your passport so that you always have access to photo ID.

#### 2. Getting sick while travelling

This can happen due to jet lag, food at strange times, food/drink that may be unsafe, or due to medical conditions. To reduce the risk of this happening:

a) ***Get checked by Doctor and Dentist before you leave***

If you not feeling well, get a medical professional to examine you to ensure you are safe to travel.

b) ***Keep all prescription medications in your carry-on baggage***

Ensure it is kept in its original, labeled bottles to avoid having them confiscated by airport security. Have a Doctors letter for any narcotic or restricted medications.

c) ***Take food and hand cleaner on the plane***

Clean your hands and eat trail mix when you are hungry. This can really help if you are faced with unappetizing airplane food or if you are sleeping when meals are served.

d) ***Drink lots of water to stay hydrated***

Also, minimize intakes of coffee, tea and alcohol since they can dehydrate you.



## 4. MANAGING RISKS WHILE IN-COUNTRY

### 1. Getting sick or not feeling well

Always wash your hands after toileting and before eating, avoid dairy products and food that is not thoroughly cooked, and do not drink water from village sources. Diarrhea which lasts for longer than 48-72 hours, shows signs of blood or is concurrent with a headache or high temperature, should always be taken seriously. Seek medical advice promptly. To stay healthy, you should also:

#### a) ***Get all appropriate Shots & Drugs***

Before you go, make sure that you go to a travel clinic to get malaria pills and all appropriate immunization shots. Make sure you are protected by anti-malaria medication for your trip.

#### b) ***Recover from Jet Lag before Exerting Yourself***

Depending on your travel duration and number of time zones crossed, you may arrive feeling fresh and ready to go or tired and worn-out. Drink lots of water, get plenty of rest, and get acclimatized before getting busy. Talk to your Team Leader daily about how you are feeling.

#### c) ***Eat & Drink Safely***

Unsafe food and water are the leading cause of illness in travelers. Reduce the likelihood of suffering diarrhea by avoiding roadside stalls selling local food, decreasing the amount you eat, and staying hydrated. ***If you can't boil it, cook it or peel it, forget it!***

Before you go, buy and pack high protein power bars (like Clif, ProteinPlus or PowerBar). Bring 2/day for men and 1/day for women since you often don't feel like eating lunch in the hot tropics. Also bring along 1-2 tins of powdered Gatoraid/person/week to keep up your electrolytes when you are sweating.

#### d) ***Avoid Sunstroke & Heat Exhaustion***

Avoid sunstroke & heat exhaustion by staying hydrated, taking regular breaks when sweating hard, and by wearing a good hat, appropriate clothing and sunglasses. Take a basic first aid course before you go and familiarize yourself with the symptoms of sun stroke, heat exhaustion & dehydration.

#### e) ***Prevent Insect Bites***

Diseases like Dengue Fever and Malaria are spread through insect bites. Malaria is prevalent where Lifewater.ca works and can cause fever, chills, sweats, headache, body aches, nausea and vomiting and/or fatigue. Protect yourself and prevent insect bites by:

- Wearing lightweight long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and a hat outside, whenever possible.
- Using flying-insect spray (containing a pyrethroid insecticide) to quickly kill flying insects.
- Remaining in a screened or air-conditioned area during the peak biting period (dusk and dawn).
- Using bed nets (ideally treated with permethrin or deltamethrin) if you are not sleeping in an air-conditioned or well-screened room (bring window screen & duct tape to fix broken screens).
- Using insect repellent (bug spray) with 30%-50% DEET.





f) ***Avoid Direct Contact with Animals***

Do not touch or feed any animals, including dogs and cats, since veterinarian care is unavailable and even animals that look like healthy pets can have rabies or other diseases. Be sure you are up to date with tetanus vaccination. If you are bitten or scratched, wash the wound well with soap and warm water and go to a doctor right away. After your return home, tell your doctor if you were bitten or scratched and inquire about a rabies vaccination.

g) ***Always Wear Shoes***

To prevent fungal and parasitic infections, keep feet clean and dry. Never go barefoot in your guest house, in the shower, and especially on beaches where animals may have defecated.

h) ***Mandatory Medical Insurance Policy***

You must have Medical Insurance appropriate to your health. If you need medical assistance while travelling overseas, your private or provincial health plan will not provide enough coverage.

Employer health plans are often limited in scope and insurance plans that came with your credit card are not acceptable. Lifewater.ca will not cover medical bills you incur overseas.

Take your time and make an informed medical insurance purchase. Ask your Team Leader if there is a specific insurance carrier to use. Ask your insurance agent about exclusions, prepayment of medical expenses, and inclusion of emergency evacuation & repatriation. Ensure full coverage is in effect in countries that carry a travel advisory (insurance does NOT normally cover you for things warned about in travel advisories such as being hurt in a terrorist act for which there was a prior advisory). Read the coverage before you go so you know what is covered and what is not.

Always carry a copy of your insurance information. Let the Trip Leader know which provider you are with, the policy number and the emergency assistance phone numbers.

i) ***Consider Evacuation Services***

Companies like Global Rescue offer coverage for things like emergency evacuation during natural disasters, civil unrest, transportation to a hospital of your choice etc. You are encouraged to look into it and make an informed decision on the level of risk that you preferred to be covered for.

## **2. Getting Lost or Stranded**

Getting back to the guest house is hard if you don't know where you are or if you have no working vehicle/driver. To mitigate these risks:

a) ***Have local Lifewater workers drive and guide you***

Only drive a vehicle after first clearing it with the Team Leader. You need to come with an International Licence if you are interested in this.

b) ***Always take a GPS unit with you***

Make sure that your guest house coordinates entered as "home"

c) ***Always have a cell phone with you***

This is to phone the Team Leader, other volunteers or local workers if you need logistical support.



d) ***Stay with your group***

Don't head off anywhere on your own.

e) ***Avoid hiring unknown taxi drivers***

This is especially true at night when it is hard to tell where you are and you can be quickly driven to a remote area and robbed. If you are stranded somewhere, call your Team Leader.

### **3. Culture Shock and Problems Orientating**

When you arrive at your destination, you may experience what is called "Culture Shock". There may be hundreds of people milling about outside the airport; taxi drivers and luggage handlers will try to grab your luggage to secure your employ. There will be unfamiliar sounds, sights and scents. Traffic is often chaos – people don't drive on the left or right, they drive in the shade; pedestrians cross the road when you least expect it, donkeys, cows and goats mingle with cars, buses, motor bikes and carts.

In one extreme, culture shock can keep you housebound and in the other extreme can leave you feeling tired and wanting to go home or can even lead you to condemn the country and its people. Neither extreme is helpful and you should take the following steps to minimize the risk of this happening:

a) ***Read as much as you can before your go***

Look for books and articles on the country, local cultures, social values, the history, economic condition, climate etc. Ask your Team Leader for Suggestions.

b) ***Actively participate in end-of-day sharing sessions with team members***

The best way to deal with impressions & emotions is to talk about them with your fellow travelers.

c) ***Ease into the culture and country***

For the first few days get lots of rest. Most important of all, bring a sense of humour and be grateful for all the things you have back home which will be waiting for you on your return.

### **4. Lost/Stolen money, passport, or possessions**

The root of this risk is our lack of attentiveness leading others into temptation. These risks can be minimized by being more careful about how we store and use our things. For example:

a) ***Never leave valuables unattended***

Should you lose valuables, you will need a police report in order to claim on your insurance policy. This is often not even worth the time and energy trying to do in a developing country. So don't bring along anything valuable enough that you would want to file an insurance claim.

Don't take personal belongings with you when you do not need them (cell phone, cameras, wallets, watches etc.) These things have been stolen from volunteers who were sitting right beside them! Don't leave cell phones, cameras, day packs etc. unattended in common areas. Either wear them at all times or keep them locked in your room. Things in your room should not be in open view or easily reached from windows. Similarly, never leave pack sacks or valuables unattended in a vehicle.

b) ***Keep your passport safe***



If you choose to carry your passport with you, make sure it cannot fall out of your pack and don't keep it in your purse in case you lose it somewhere.

c) ***Always maintain the security of your guest home***

This includes keeping windows latched when you are not in your room, keeping outside doors locked when you are not home during the day and even when you are home at night.

## **5. Alcohol Consumption Policy**

Some host organizations ask that volunteers consume no alcohol while in their country. This is because alcohol is viewed very negatively in some Muslim & Christian circles and they want to ensure that a visitor's judgment is in no way affected so they can stay safe and enjoy their visit. It is therefore **the recommendation and preference of the Lifewater.ca Board that volunteers refrain from any alcohol consumption while in any country.** However, we recognize that volunteers are mature adults who are paying their own way and that for some, a beer at the end of a long hot day is an important part of a positive trip experience. If you are one of these people, we ask that you adhere to the following rules:

a) ***Keep alcohol out of your guest house***

Abstain from storing or drinking alcohol in your guest house unless cleared by the Team Leader first. This is because we are guests and many host organizations have policies banning alcohol possession and/or consumption on their premises. We ask that you respect all local rules and customs like this.

b) ***Abstain from alcohol consumption if asked to do so by the Team Leader***

Moderate consumption of alcohol by some can inadvertently lead to recovering alcoholics "falling off the wagon". If alcohol poses a problem for anyone, everyone will be asked to refrain from drinking alcohol while in country. If this happens, please support your fellow volunteers by not glossing over the severity of such addictions or by sneaking off for a "quick drink".

c) ***Limit your consumption to just one beer at the end of the day***

This is because drinking more than one beer has occasionally led to intoxication in the past, resulting in volunteers saying things that are hurtful to local people or team members, doing things that put themselves or others at risk, and generally negatively affecting team dynamics.

d) ***Do not purchase alcohol for others***

Your decision to drink or refrain is your responsibility and it should not be influenced by others. Local workers are under social pressure to accept drinks offered by visitors and this has led to drinking & driving and even alcohol problems developing after volunteers have gone home. Buy non-alcoholic drinks if you want to buy a beverage for fellow volunteers or local workers.

e) ***Do not drive if you have had alcohol within the previous 4 hours***

Although you will not get drunk on one beer, drinking when dehydrated or on an empty stomach can lead to unexpectedly strong physical reactions. Also, if you are in an accident and authorities smell alcohol on your breath, there are no road side analyzers and you may be subjected to "guilty until proven innocent". This could result in loss of your freedom and cost thousands of dollars and



weeks of extended stay in country to resolve. If you choose to drive after drinking alcohol within the previous 4 hours, Lifewater will not be responsible for any resulting complications.

**If you want to discuss this issue in more depth, please talk to your Team Leader prior to buying your ticket. If you do not think this policy is reasonable, please do not travel overseas with Lifewater.ca. If you come along and do not adhere to these rules, you will receive a warning with further violations likely resulting in your being released from the team and being asked to return home.**

## **6. Motor vehicle accident/breakdown**

Given congestion on local roads, many unskilled drivers and many poorly maintained vehicles, this is a noteworthy risk. To reduce the chance of being in an accident and minimize its impact if it does happen:

### **a) *Always wear your seatbelt***

Whenever there is a working seatbelt available, wear it even when it is not demanded by local law or custom. Look for both ends before starting your trip - seatbelts have often slipped between the seats and not be easily retrieved in crowded vehicles.

### **b) *Do not sit on the side of pickup trucks***

If the truck swerves or hits a pot hole, you can be thrown and seriously injured or killed. If you must sit in the back, sit on the bed of the truck, if possible with you back against the cab to support you during a crash. You should never ride on the roof of any form of transport.

### **c) *Stop unsafe driving***

Safety comes before any job or schedule. If your driver has been drinking, is driving dangerously or the vehicle is unsafe, get the driver to stop and phone your Team Leader to arrange how to get the vehicle and passengers home. Please note that if we rent a taxi or truck, we rely on the provider to maintain their vehicles in a roadworthy condition and we do not perform independent safety tests.

### **d) *Stay with your vehicle***

If your vehicle breaks down, call your Team Leader and stay with the vehicle until repairs are made or alternative transportation arranged.

### **e) *Avoid Riding Motorcycles and Bicycles***

Motorcycles and bicycles can be a fast, fun way to get around. But they are also high risk because bad roads cause riders to fall off and there are frequent collisions with trucks. Talk to your Team Leader before riding any motorcycle or bicycle and always wear a helmet, long pants and a jacket.

## **7. Getting Hurt or Injured**

This includes work drilling, fixing pumps, maintaining equipment, doing construction or participating in activities organized by Lifewater. The risk of this occurring can be reduced by taking action such as:

### **a) *Bring & wear safety gear***

Use the same equipment as would be required in Canada (hard hats, safety boots, safety glasses, work gloves, coveralls or long pants, welding shields etc).

### **b) *Complete one job at a time***



This keeps you focused and your tools together. Clean-up often to minimize tripping hazards.

c) ***Don't work faster than you feel safe***

If you run-out of time, leave a job undone rather than rushing in order to finish before your flight.

d) ***Use the Right Tools for the job***

This is really important for scaffolding when working at heights, blocks when under vehicles etc.

e) ***Make sure you are qualified to do the work***

Ensure you have the expertise to safely operate drill rigs, use welding machines and heavy tools. Ask for training if you are using unfamiliar power tools. If you don't feel safe, don't do the job.

f) ***Be careful where you swim***

Do not swim in fresh water as this can be a source of many parasites and diseases. Swim with a buddy since the undercurrent can be strong and waves powerful. There can also be submerged rocks and hidden coral reefs where breaking waves can toss you onto sharp coral and there are sea urchins with large spines that you can step on! Always wear footwear and, if in doubt about local conditions, just wade in, sit down and float rather than trying to swim.

## **8. Personal Activities not Organized by Lifewater**

If you partake in activities in your free time during a trip, we emphasize that these activities are not part of the Lifewater trip, Lifewater makes no representations about the safety of the activity or the standard of the operators running them; and Lifewater cannot guarantee your safety when doing these activities. Speak to your Team Leader before planning extra-curricular activities. Depending on potential risks, the Team Leader may advise you to not do them or, if you are insistent, to sign a liability waiver first.

## **9. Pick-Pocketed or Mugged**

These are usually crimes of opportunity. Ways to minimize this risk include:

a) ***Don't look or talk rich***

Leave expensive looking watches, rings, and earrings at home as they may attract thieves. Older clothing is not only more comfortable, it reduces your expensive "off-the rack" look. Keep camera's, GPS units and other electronic items stored out of sight in a day pack. Don't talk about all the stuff you own or that your host organization has in their compound.

b) ***Keep wallets securely stored***

Don't put wallets in back pant pockets since this is easy prey for trained pick-pockets. Never carry purses slung over shoulders since bags can be grabbed or straps cut.

c) ***Avoid crowds without a local team member***

This includes busy markets, shopping areas etc. If you must go, travel in a group, preferably with one or more local people who know what to look out for.

d) ***Don't flash wads of money***

Only carry as much money as you need for the day. Put money in several envelopes stored in different places for separate planned transactions. Never pull out a wallet full of bills openly in



public or even in a store. The bills may all be \$1 notes, but you will look loaded. If you must carry a lot of money to make a big purchase, have other people with you to watch your back and pack.

e) ***Avoid using shared public transportation***

Avoid using local transportation where you are crowded against many people. If you need to take a taxi, negotiate a fixed price on the condition that the driver not stop for additional passengers.

f) ***Keep your cell phone away from open windows***

When passengers in a vehicle are talking on a cell phone, make sure either the windows are rolled up or that they are holding the phone with their hand facing inside the vehicle. Some volunteers have had phones snatched out of their hands while talking on phones facing an open window.

g) ***Never go anywhere by yourself or with friendly strangers***

Don't go off by yourself or with local friendly person(s) you have recently met. Ask your Team Leader if they are well known within the established social circle of people you are working with.

h) ***Be home by dark***

If it can't be avoided, stay in a group with local hosts, stay in contact by phone with your Team Leader and use vehicles/drivers arranged by Lifewater.

## **10. Inappropriate Behaviour Policy**

Volunteers are expected to maintain courteous, Christ-like behaviour at all times. Inappropriate sexual relationships, profuse profanity, uncontrolled temper or abuse of any kind will not be tolerated.

a) ***Sexual contact with anyone other than your spouse is strictly forbidden.***

Anyone contravening this policy will be immediately asked to leave the team and return home. In the past, both male & female volunteers have been approached with offers of dates, marriage, or night time companionship. Such activity could seriously jeopardize team safety if relatives take offense, could result in huge embarrassment and/or divorce, and has an extremely high chance of resulting in sexually transmitted diseases like HIV/Aids.

b) ***Profuse Profanity, Uncontrolled Temper and any Abuse will not be tolerated***

This can include things such as sexual innuendo's, bullying, constant belittling comments or attacking anyone's religious views, sexual orientation, culture, ethnicity etc. The Team Leader will ensure that the volunteer is aware of their unacceptable behaviour. If they are unwilling or unable to control it, they will be asked to return home.

## **11. Serious Sickness or Death of a Loved One Back Home**

If you need to get home in a hurry, talk to your Team Leader, phone your travel agent and visit the local airline office.

## **12. Physical Assault**

The threat of being beaten or attacked usually arises from inciting anger in others, causing them to lose face, or because they think you have physically harmed them or their loved ones. Ways to minimize this risk and to respond if it does happen are listed below.



a) ***Don't become responsible for the health of local people***

In particular, never give out pills or prescription drugs since this could be perceived as having exacerbated illness or having caused death. If you want to help someone get treatment in a medical clinic or hospital, pay a taxi to take them and, if at all possible, have relatives come along. This is because a "Good Samaritan" volunteer had his life threatened after bringing a sick woman to a hospital in the Lifewater truck because a relative believed he had cursed her.

b) ***Avoid activities that put the team at risk***

If you are considering organizing activities during your trip that are outside the stated Lifewater trip goals, please discuss them with the Team Leader before tickets are purchased.

c) ***Don't antagonize local people***

Even if you are very angry for just cause, go and cool off before speaking. Yelling angrily at people, firing local helpers, accusing people of stealing etc can cause them to lose face. Local culture often forces them to retaliate at some point in the future in order to regain their honour, either by taking items of value or by causing you or your friends physical harm.

d) ***If you feel threatened, call for help***

Protest loudly or call out to attract attention. Go into a brightly lit area or store, especially one that has a guard at the door. Forcefully but gently move yourself out of any isolated or poorly lit area. All cell phones provided will be pre-programmed with the number for your Team Leader and the local police. Phone as soon as you feel endangered.

e) ***Give-up Stuff or Money for Safety***

Assess your situation and act accordingly, for example give up your camera rather than fight for it.

f) ***Seek medical aid immediately***

Your team leader will advise you of local hospitals and/or medical centres which are appropriate for use. Even small cuts and scrapes can become seriously infected in tropical areas.

g) ***Contact your Team Leader as soon as you are able***

h) ***Weapons Strictly Forbidden Policy***

Lifewater.ca strictly forbids volunteers from carrying, storing or using guns. ***Anyone contravening this policy will be immediately asked to leave the team and return home.***

### **13. Kidnapped or Car-Jacked**

Discuss these risks with your Team Leader before buying tickets

a) ***Lifewater does not carry kidnap insurance and has a "no-pay" policy***

Lifewater.ca Volunteers working overseas have never been kidnapped. The greatest risk is to local people who are working with "rich white folks" and are assumed to be wealthier by association. If you are concerned, talk to your Team Leader, and if this still makes you too uncomfortable, you should reconsider your decision to volunteer in an overseas country.

b) ***If you are kidnapped, protect yourself by cooperating with attackers.***



Cooperate full, allowing the vehicle to be taken, providing no resistance and cooperating with the attackers. Do not fight back or attack as this will result in your being further endangered. Your safety is more important than our stuff.





## 5. Managing Risks after Returning Home

Once you are back from your trip, there can be a number of issues that arise relating to you having been overseas away from home. There are a few common risks we wish to draw your attention to:

### 1. **Malaria Protection and Unexplained illness**

If you have visited a malaria-risk area, continue taking your anti-malarial drug for the prescribed after leaving the risk area. This is easy to forget but necessary to ensure that you do not succumb to malaria after you return home.

Unexplained illnesses can include things like sustained gastro-intestinal problems, rashes, sleeplessness or lack of energy. Options you can take include:

#### a) ***Pre-schedule a “Welcome Home” Check-up.***

Before you leave for your trip, schedule a full checkup for soon after you come home. Tell your health care provider that you have been abroad and, if you were sick while you were away, tell them:

- The countries you have visited
- The medical care you’ve received (e.g., blood transfusions, injections, dental care, or surgery)
- if you were bitten or scratched by an animal while traveling.

#### b) ***See a Medical Professional if you become sick after coming home.***

If you are not feeling well, go back to a Doctor. Emphasize that you have just been travelling. If possible, obtain a reference to someone with tropical disease expertise if symptoms persist. For example, Malaria is always a serious disease and may be a deadly illness. If you become ill with a fever or flu-like illness for up to one year after you return from a malaria-area, you should seek immediate medical attention and should tell the physician your travel history.

### 2. **Reverse Culture Shock often happens after you Come Home**

A combination of jet lag, returning to back-logged work and home tasks and the ending of prayer coverage from supporters leaves you vulnerable to negative feelings. You may experience a mild depression, feel like life in North America is meaningless and materialistic, be irritable and intolerant for anything smacking of commercialism, become impatient etc. This includes feeling that your work is inadequate or feeling overwhelming guilt for having warm showers, good food, and an abundance of creature comforts. Ideas on how to cope with this include:

#### a) ***Talk about your feelings with family, friends and team members***

We suggest you speak to someone who has engaged in similar travels to share your feelings. Seek out team members by phone or in person. Discuss it openly with friends and family.

As for dealing with those who have never done this kind of travel, be patient, kind and understanding. Don’t be angry with people when they seem uninterested in your story. Remember: they did not experience what you did.



b) ***Don't make any radical decisions right after coming home***

Don't quit your job, sell all your stuff and head back overseas right away! When you come home, you may be frustrated with all your possessions. Focus on being thankful for what God has blessed you with and move forward with future purchases as responsibly and aware as you can be.

c) ***Pray for the people you met and for the country***

It can be hard coming home to an environment in which everything is in control whereas in Africa the people you were with Depend on miracles every day and need God's care in their daily lives. Take time out to rest, meditate and pray. Don't underestimate the power of prayer in helping to process things. Also realize that feeling uncomfortable with your society or questioning how you are spending your time and money may be a Godly thing.

d) ***Continue Meeting & See a Professional Counselor***

Continue debriefing with your fellow travelers and Team Leader after your return home. Consider starting a journal before you go and keep writing in it after you come home. Make an appointment with a professional counselor if confusion or feelings start to overwhelm you. Consider contacting Barnabus International, a NGO that provides spiritual care for missionaries and overseas volunteers: <http://www.barnabas.org/>

**3. On-going requests for support & money**

The way you approach requests for contact information and money in country shapes pressures you receive when you are back home. On-gong requests for help can become a huge stress for you and your family. This problem can be reduced by:

a) ***Set-up a new email address for the trip***

Give out this email if people ask for it. If requests become a problem, just abandon the account. We strongly encourage you not to give out your phone number... if you do, expect your family to be disturbed by phone calls at 4 AM once you return home!

b) ***Know that it's okay to say "No."***

You can't reasonably be the financier for everyone who desperately needs money for education, to start a business, for medical needs, or just to buy rice & water. A polite "No" includes sympathizing deeply with their need, offering to pray for them etc but explaining that you've run out of money after your expensive trip and that you need time to earn more before you can consider giving again.

c) ***Say "No" because of Lifewater***

Say that with so many needs, you've made the painful decision to sharpen your focus on just ONE ...safe water. Offer to pray for them...be on-side with them in spirit, even if you can't give.

d) ***Know when to take a break from giving***

Be as generous as you are able, but also know when to take a break from giving. Even Jesus rested.



#### **4. Have a Plan to Plug-in Before you Come Home**

Visit some communities that need water before you leave the country. Take photos and write down stories. When you get home, channel your feelings of frustration with our material world and the desire for each day to be meaningful by helping get them water. Give talks and presentations, collect donations and raise support for these projects.

Ask your Team Leader for the names of existing Lifewater Supporters in your area, and take time to go visit them. They will appreciate your dedication and commitment in going and will usually be genuinely interested in your experiences. Let your passion encourage those who want to help!



## 6. Volunteer Profile Information

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Middle Names: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\* Names must be filled in EXACTLY as they appear in your passport\*\*\*\*

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Province/State: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Office phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

### **PASSPORT INFORMATION**

Citizenship: \_\_\_\_\_ Passport Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Place of Issue \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Issue: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Place of birth \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\* Your passport must be valid for 6 months after your return \*\*\*\*

### **ALLERGIES**

Food: \_\_\_\_\_

Medication: \_\_\_\_\_

Insects: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**DIETARY Needs** - Please identify any dietary restrictions (lactose intolerant, celiac, diabetic etc):

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*Lifewater Canada respects the right of every volunteer to choose their food life style. However, Lifewater Canada cannot guarantee that specific foods or food life style requirements can be met in country. Please contact your Team Leader to discuss any food related concerns you have.*



**MEDICATIONS YOU TAKE**

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**MEDICAL CONDITION(s):**

Please provide any information about any medical conditions that you may have which may be of note to the Lifewater team leader for this trip. Please note any medications for these conditions which you will have with you and any precautions which may need to be taken while you are travelling. Please add pages as required.

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Blood Type: \_\_\_\_\_

**Frequent Flyer Numbers:**

- Skyteam (Delta, Air France/KLM): \_\_\_\_\_
- One World (BA, American Airlines , Cathay Pacific, Qantas): \_\_\_\_\_
- Star Alliance (Air Canada, Lufthansa, United Airlines, US Airways): \_\_\_\_\_

Date you would like to leave home (if any preference): \_\_\_\_\_

Date you would like to return to your house (if any preference): \_\_\_\_\_

Special request (meals & seats on plane, stopover requests): \_\_\_\_\_

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**MEDICAL INSURANCE/TRAVEL INSURANCE**

Insurance policy number \_\_\_\_\_

Insurance policy company \_\_\_\_\_

Insurance company emergency phone number \_\_\_\_\_

Next of Kin Contact Information – Who we should contact if there is a problem

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Province/State: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_

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Day time Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Evening phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact List:

Please provide the name and email addresses of up to 5 people you would like to receive updates of the trip. If you have more than 5 contacts please arrange to have the updates forwarded by someone on your list.

Contact 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact 3: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact 4: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact 5: \_\_\_\_\_



## 7. Participation Conditions & Liability Waiver

### A. YOUR TRIP AND ASSUMPTION OF RISK

Lifewater Canada operates trips in regions where standards of accommodation, transport, safety, hygiene, medical facilities and other infrastructure may, at times, not be of the standard that you are used to at home. By volunteering with Lifewater Canada you acknowledge that participation in all trips involves inherent risks that may not be present in the case of conventional or less demanding tours, vacations, holidays, etc. These risks include, without limitation, the possibility of injury or death, psychological trauma, disease, loss or damage to property, inconvenience and discomfort. The possibility of experiencing all or some of these risks is likely to be higher if participation in a Lifewater Canada trip involves visiting remote or unstable regions, or regions where there is dangerous wildlife.

It is your responsibility to accustom yourself with the travel advice provided by the government bodies in those areas, as well as that of your country of residency, before commencing the trip. By volunteering with Lifewater Canada you acknowledge your decision to participate in the trip is made after due consideration of relevant travel information that may be made available at any time.

### B. EXCLUSION OF LIABILITY

Where Lifewater Canada provides services it will do so with due care and skill. Lifewater Canada is not responsible for the acts and omissions of others, including tour guides, airlines and accommodation providers or for any loss, damage, death, injury or expense (including loss of money paid in advance), which you may incur as a consequence of the acts and omissions of others. You warrant that you have not relied on any representation made by Lifewater Canada.

Lifewater Canada will not accept responsibility or liability if you contravene any law or regulation of any country or region visited. Any independent arrangements that you make that are not part of the Lifewater Canada trip (including pre- and post-accommodation) are entirely at your own risk and Lifewater Canada cannot and does not give you any assurance, representation or warranty in connection with any such arrangements.

To the fullest extent permitted by law and subject to the exception set out below, Lifewater Canada does not accept liability for any loss, damage, death or injury however caused (including through negligence), which you may directly or indirectly suffer in connection with or arising from your participation in a trip, or in respect of any other conduct that Lifewater Canada undertakes in connection with a trip. To the fullest extent permitted by law and subject to the exception set out below, you also agree to release Lifewater Canada and its owners, officers, directors, employees, agents, contractors, and subcontractors ("Representatives") from all costs, liability, loss and damage incurred by you in connection with your participation in any trip, and waive any associated claims that you may have against Lifewater Canada or its Representatives as a result of your participation in any trip.



## **C. AUTHORITY OF THE TEAM LEADER**

At all times the decision of the Lifewater Canada Team Leader or representative ("Lifewater Canada Leader") will be final on all matters likely to affect the safety and well-being of the trip. This includes any decision that the Lifewater Canada Leader makes about your on-going participation in the trip or certain activities that comprise part of the trip. If you fail to comply with a decision made by a Lifewater Canada Leader, or interfere with the well-being of the group, then the Lifewater Canada Leader reserves the right to order you to leave the trip immediately, with no right of refund.

## **D. MEDICAL INSURANCE**

Adequate and valid medical insurance is compulsory for all Lifewater Canada travellers. Your insurance must cover accidents, injury, illness and death, medical expenses, including any related to pre-existing medical conditions, emergency repatriation (including helicopter rescue and air ambulance where applicable) and personal liability. Lifewater Canada also recommends it covers travel issues (cancellation, curtailment and loss of luggage and personal effects). You must carry proof of insurance with you and produce it if reasonably requested by Lifewater Canada's Team Leader or Representatives. Lifewater Canada reserves the right to cancel or suspend your participation on a trip or in certain activities that comprise part of a trip, at any time, including after the commencement of your trip, with no right of refund, if you are unable to provide proof of insurance when requested.

Note that many travel insurance companies will not cover you for threats listed in a travel warning issued by your government for the country you are visiting. As many of the Lifewater destinations carry travel advisories, it is your responsibility to ensure your policy will give you full coverage in each of the countries visited.

## **E. PASSPORT AND VISAS**

It is your responsibility that you carry a valid passport and have obtained the appropriate visas when travelling with Lifewater Canada. Please ensure that your passport is valid for 6 months beyond the duration of your volunteer vacation.

## **F. HEALTH, FITNESS AND AGE LIMITS**

It is your responsibility to advise Lifewater Canada of any pre-existing medical condition and/or disability that might reasonably be expected to increase the risk of you requiring medical attention, or that might affect the normal conduct of a tour and the enjoyment of other trip members. You may be required to provide an assessment of your medical condition from a qualified medical practitioner if requested by Lifewater Canada. Lifewater Canada reserves the right, at its reasonable discretion, to cancel your booking and refund the money paid by you, less any unrecoverable costs. Lifewater Canada also reserves the right to cancel your participation in a trip at any time, including after the commencement of your trip, with no right of refund if your medical condition and/or disability could be reasonably expected to affect the normal conduct of the trip and the enjoyment of other trip members.





All travellers seventy years and over will be required to complete a special Lifewater Canada health and fitness questionnaire to assess their suitability of the tour in question. Travellers seventy-five years and over may additionally need to provide a letter from a certified medical practitioner that confirms the suitability for the specific tour. Lifewater Canada reserves the right, at its discretion, to cancel your booking and refund the money paid by you, less any unrecoverable costs.

Generally, we do not allow travellers under the age of 18 years on Lifewater Canada's scheduled itineraries. However we will occasionally make exceptions for under-18s travelling with their legal guardian. The decision for any person under 18 years of age to travel on our scheduled itineraries is at the absolute discretion of the management of Lifewater Canada.

## **G. PUBLICITY**

You agree that Lifewater Canada may use images of you taken during the trip without recourse to you and without compensation to you, for whatever purpose and through whatever medium it chooses.

In addition, you agree to give Lifewater Canada an electronic copy of all photographs and videos taken by you during your volunteer trip. You retain exclusive ownership of these materials and have the sole right to use them for personal economic gain. However, you agree to waive payment, explicit credit or the requirement of Lifewater to have received specific authorization to use these images to document trip activities, report to donors on projects and create promotional materials.

## **H. PRIVACY**

In order to be able to supply a service to you, Lifewater Canada will need to collect certain information from you, some of which may be of a personal nature. The information may be disclosed to, or collected on our behalf by our service providers to enable the services to be provided, but will not be used by them for any other purpose.

## **I. VOLUNTEER TRIP RISKS AND LIABILITY WAIVER HANDBOOK**

By signing below you acknowledge having read the Lifewater "*Volunteer Trip Risk Management Handbook*" and that you understand everything discussed in it. You will abide by the policies, rules and guidelines included in it and implied by it.

## **J. GOVERNING LAW**

This agreement will be governed by and construed in accordance with the law of Thunder Bay, Ontario Canada and each party agrees to submit to the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of Thunder Bay as regards any claim or matter arising under this agreement.



IN CONSIDERATION OF PARTICIPATION IN THE TRIP, MY SIGNATURE ON THIS FORM INDICATES THAT I HAVE, ON THE DATE SHOWN, READ AND UNDERSTOOD THE ENTIRE CUSTOMER AGREEMENT AND I ACKNOWLEDGE THAT IT AFFECTS MY LEGAL RIGHTS AND AGREE TO BE BOUND BY ITS TERMS. MY SIGNATURE ALSO SIGNIFIES MY INTENTION TO RELIEVE AND INDEMNIFY EACH OF LIFEWATER CANADA, THEIR OWNERS, OFFICERS, DIRECTORS, EMPLOYEES, AGENTS, CONTRACTORS AND SUBCONTRACTORS FROM ANY LIABILITY FOR PERSONAL INJURY, PROPERTY DAMAGE OR WRONGFUL DEATH WHICH I/WE MIGHT SUFFER DURING MY/OUR PARTICIPATION IN THE SCHEDULED TRIP.

\_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer Name (Clearly Spell, First/Middle/Last)

\_\_\_\_\_

Witness/Notary Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Witness/Notary Name (Clearly Spell, First/Middle/Last)

\_\_\_\_\_

Place signed

\_\_\_\_\_

Date signed

