



**GLOBAL  
BUSINESS  
TRAVEL**

# Duty of Care

Travel Management 101

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# INTRODUCTION

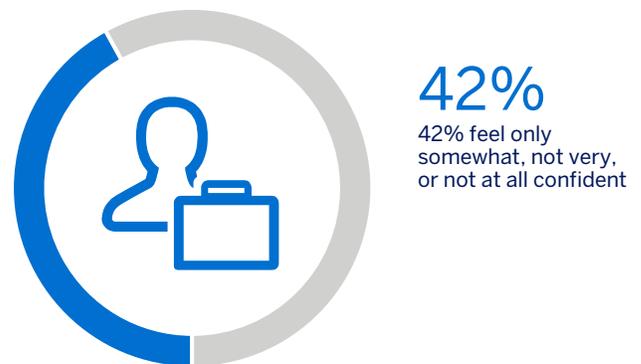
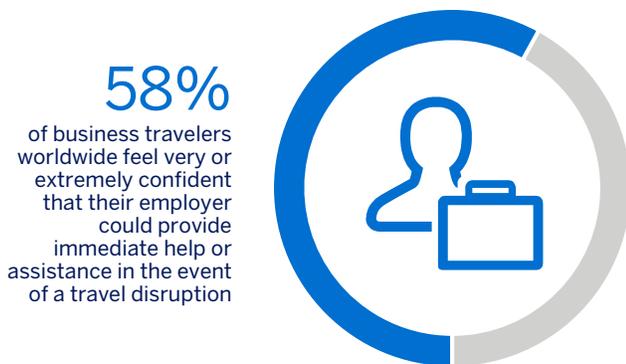
*Travel is a force for good, but it can still put your team at risk.*

Managing disruption is one of the core components of a good corporate travel program. The business travel sector has years of experience in dealing with unplanned disruptions. From epidemics and volcanic eruptions to inclement weather and geopolitical unrest, the only certainty is uncertainty. Being prepared for unpredictable situations is key to making your travel program effectively support duty of care in your organization.

The current state of uncertainty in the industry highlights the importance of risk management in caring for your team when they travel for work. There is no better time to review your program, asking yourself the questions:

- What steps does your business take to provide a safe working environment for travelers on flights, in hotels, and other locations?
- How do you share location-specific risk information related to local laws, health, culture, and etiquette?
- How will you locate and communicate with travelers in the event of a crisis?
- How will your travelers know how to contact your business in the event of an emergency?

For some companies, the answers to these questions are not well thought out. Lack of preparation does not go unnoticed with travelers. Recent research conducted by Ipsos Public Affairs on behalf of American Express Global Business Travel surveyed more than 1700 international business travelers. The data revealed that while **58%** of business travelers worldwide feel very or extremely confident that their employer could provide immediate help or assistance in the event of a travel disruption, **42%** feel only somewhat, not very, or not at all confident.<sup>1</sup> With this in mind, a well-designed duty of care program prepares your team to act quickly and effectively in an urgent situation.



<sup>1</sup> "2020 Traveler 360° research.", American Express Global Business Travel

# WHAT IS DUTY OF CARE?

Let's start with the basics. Simply put, duty of care is a fiduciary responsibility held by companies that requires them to live up to a certain standard of care. The standard of care incorporates, among other things, looking after the health, safety, and well-being of employees while they travel for work. This duty—which is both ethical and legal—requires companies to make decisions in good faith and in a reasonably prudent manner.<sup>2</sup>

In principle, duty of care is a straightforward concept: look after the health and safety of your team when they're at work. In practice, exact law and responsibilities vary across the world. In the U.S., for instance, many duty of care laws are enforced by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).<sup>3</sup> In the U.K., employee safety is protected by the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act.<sup>4</sup> Meanwhile, in Australia, employees are protected by the Work Health and Safety Act (WHS), which provides a framework to secure the health and safety of workers and workplaces.<sup>5</sup>

Since duty of care is a complex concept for every organization, the first step to building a program is to engage legal expertise to help understand your business's requirements for taking care of travelers. From there, you can start to identify gaps in your program and develop a plan of action.

## BEST PRACTICES

A strong plan goes a long way toward meeting duty of care needs. We have identified three best practices to help get you started.



### COMMUNICATE:

- Destination intelligence: be forthcoming with destination-specific information such as cultural norms, local laws and areas deemed unsafe.
- Hotlines: establish a team hotline or distribute hotline numbers for emergency assistance.
- Alerts: create text and email alerts to quickly send notifications across multiple devices.
- Training: encourage or require travelers to complete duty of care training before they set off on trips, so they have a better understanding of processes in place to aid them and what they should do should an issue arise. Prior planning can help minimize concerns.
- Relevant stakeholders: engage support from all relevant stakeholders including human resources, security, legal, and the executive team so that they are aligned on processes.

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<sup>2</sup> Kenton, Will. "Duty of Care." *Investopedia*, Investopedia

<sup>3</sup> "Occupational Health & Safety Administration: About OSHA."

<sup>4</sup> "Corporate Manslaughter." *HSE*, Health and Safety Executive

<sup>5</sup> "Work Health and Safety Act (WHS Act)." *Comcare*, Australian Government



### **REDUCE RISK:**

- Well-distributed travelers: limit the number of employees on a single flight or trip as a precaution to avoid clusters of affected team members in the event of an incident.
- Safe lodging options: consider the safety of the surrounding local area when booking lodging accommodations, not just the security of the site where your travelers will be staying. Additionally, strive to have lodging options available close to the work or meeting venue.
- Safe ground transportation: encourage that your team members book within platform and policy to help stay safe. Furthermore, have your team members make use of verified drivers with background checks. Additionally, if more than one employee is traveling, recommend carpooling for safety in numbers.



### **MAXIMIZE VISIBILITY:**

- Mandated travel policy: have a strong, authorized travel policy that can easily be viewed by travelers so that they are aware of the proper booking channels.
- Pre-trip approvals: implement trip approvals required before employees travel to be aware of when they leave, where they're headed, and when they are expected to return. Automate the process with flags triggered by certain destinations or employee roles.
- Central booking tool: use one central booking tool that logs all traveler trips in one place and makes them easy to locate.
- Up-to-date contact information: maintain the up-to-date contact information of your travelers and their emergency contacts.

## SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

While implementing your duty of care best practices, be mindful of these points to understand how technology, data security, non-traditional suppliers, and traveler well-being also come into play.



### **TECHNOLOGICAL SUPPORT**

One special consideration is technology. It can help integrate duty of care approaches into a business travel program in a snap. Technology can bolster policy compliance by supporting company travel rules with smart booking and audit tools. It can aid in risk management by fostering effective communication in a crisis with alerts, impact reporting, and location monitoring. Additionally, technology can encourage round-the-clock care by providing 24/7 support and communication to travelers experiencing disruptions with proactive trip monitoring and rebooking.



## **DATA SECURITY**

Another special consideration is data security. In recent years, data security has become a more prominent part of public conversation. A significant part of duty of care involves helping to protect personal information. Traveler data is particularly sensitive as it often contains credit card numbers, passport numbers, and other identifiable information. With that in mind, travel managers should strive to strike a delicate balance of supporting travelers with technology by simultaneously securing their data and not making them feel over-monitored.



## **DUTY OF CARE WITH NON-TRADITIONAL SUPPLIERS**

Similarly, duty of care with non-traditional suppliers is another important thought. Travelers have a variety of options for lodging and transportation accommodations outside of the traditional hotel and car services. Depending on preference, a traveler may wish to choose aparthotel, homestay, or rideshare options instead. Duty of care solutions should apply there as well. For instance, American Express Global Business Travel offers a fully integrated partnership with Lyft that offers access to ground content in one place, along with savings, safety, and compliance.

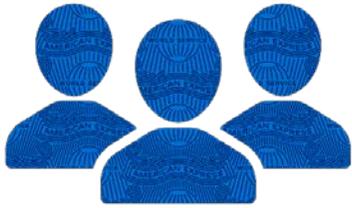


## **TRAVELER WELL-BEING**

Lastly, the effect of business travel on travelers' emotional and mental well-being should not be underestimated. An average of 75% of business travelers worldwide agree that their company is responsible for their personal well-being while they are traveling.<sup>6</sup> When looking at the end-to-end business trip, strive for a user-friendly booking experience. Make note of what options are preferred, recommended, and compliant. In addition, be cognizant of journey times. Do departure and arrival times allow the traveler time to sleep, relax, and prepare for meetings? Similarly, make sure that the traveler feels supported throughout the trip with regards to channels of communications, quality of accommodations, and emergency preparedness. Lastly, do your part to measure and report traveler wellbeing metrics. They can be tricky to quantify but wellbeing metrics are valuable in that they can help inform policy objectives and changes.

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<sup>6</sup> "2020 Traveler 360° research.", American Express Global Business Travel



## THE ROLE OF YOUR TRAVEL MANAGEMENT COMPANY

Given the best practices and special considerations mentioned previously, your travel management company (TMC) should play an important role in incorporating them to establish an effective approach to duty of care.

A proactive TMC supports your efforts to drive compliance with your company's travel policy. Compliance is key to providing duty of care within a travel program. Your TMC should help with obtaining and analyzing data to identify and rectify program leakage. One way to achieve this is by comparing travel data booked within the corporate booking tool with expense claims.

Likewise, a top-performing TMC should also be able to communicate with travelers when they are moving about via the most effective channels like in-app notifications, SMS, live webchat, phone or email. In the event of a travel disruption, the TMC should be able to locate and contact affected travelers. In addition, a forward-thinking TMC should be able to establish a benchmark program to create universal travel program standards.

## LEARN MORE

Learn how you can let duty of care lead your corporate travel program at [amexglobalbusinesstravel.com](https://amexglobalbusinesstravel.com).



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