



EPILOGOS
Charities Inc.

Epilogos Safety Protocol

When one travels to or lives in El Salvador, it is imperative to address the question of security and to adopt measures that seek to maximize the safety of groups and individuals visiting the country. Security measures that we all must observe are not only for our own protection but also out of respect for the safety of our Salvadoran partners. Although you are here for a short time, others will remain and we must ensure that our actions do not create problems in the future.

The following guidelines have been carefully developed and reflect our commitment to your safety.

Safety: Job One

Epilogos wants travelers to have a safe experience in El Salvador. Yet, each traveler and each group should know that any travel to a developing country poses risks from food, water, insects, crime, transportation, accidents and other such risk factors. While Epilogos takes safety seriously and will work with you to reduce risks, Epilogos can only manage risks; risks cannot be eliminated. This document provides some information to help you assess and manage risks. This focuses on safety related to crime.

Epilogos wants travelers to have a wonderful and open experience. That needs to be balanced with being smart, cautious and prudent.

Before the Trip

Get Informed: Inform yourself about safety issues--food, illness, accident and crime. Visit www.epilogos.org and read all of the volunteer information. Visit [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](http://www.cdc.gov) to learn the most up-to-date information regarding travel recommendations. Visit the State Department to read their reports on El Salvador http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1109.html

Decide: Each traveler and each group must make their own independent decision about whether to travel to El Salvador. Epilogos is glad to talk with you about your questions and concerns.

Plan: Plan your personal and group risk reducers. Example: Visit a travel clinic; establish group rules.

Travel: We request that you arrive during the day. Inform Epilogos of individual flight plans if you are not traveling to/from El Salvador with the group.

Transportation: Ensure you arrange transportation from and to the airport and for all other trips in El Salvador. Use drivers that are known to Epilogos. Travelers are not permitted to take public buses or ride in cars with unknown people.

Inform Police: Epilogos will inform the San José Villanueva police when groups are in town.

Waivers: Every traveler must sign a release that waives all liability for anything and everything that may or does happen. Additionally, every traveler must read and sign this safety protocol, and agree to abide by all requirements therein. In the end, each traveler is individually responsible for their own safety.

Revocation: If Epilogos or a group decides that a traveler is not acting with prudence, is not following safety requirement or is exposing themselves or others to risk, Epilogos or the group may revoke the travelers permission to be with Epilogos or the group. This could mean being sent home immediately. The traveler is responsible for any costs of being told to leave, example cost to change flights or find a hotel.

During the Trip

Retreat Center: Groups are strongly recommended to stay at the retreat center. We will require that all groups with members under the age of 18 stay at the Retreat Center if it is available. If it is unavailable we will evaluate each situation, and the Board, in consultation with Graciela, Mike and Susie will decide where the group may stay.

Volunteer House: Travelers may only stay at the volunteer house after discussing this option with Epilogos. Groups that stay at the volunteer house will be asked to acknowledge the potential risk and will be subject to a strict 8pm curfew.

Student groups: A 1:3 adult to student ratio will be required on all groups with high school students.

Security guard: All groups will be required to hire at least one private security guard for the week for approximately \$200. Epilogos will determine the number of guards needed based on the number of travelers and the projects chosen. Graciela will make arrangements for this service.

Cellphones: Groups and other travelers are required to have group cellphones while they are in El Salvador. Epilogos will arrange cellphones for groups with appropriate numbers programmed in the phone. Groups must pay for using the phone—a flat fee of \$20 per week per phone will be charged. As groups and travelers go out, they should always have a phone.

Location: Each day, group leaders should meet with Epilogos staff to review the day's schedule to ensure Epilogos knows where the groups will be during the day. Group leaders should maintain a list of who is at what location.

Stay together; look out for each other: Travelers must never walk alone. Groups should stay together. This can be a challenge on walks, but it is an essential safety requirement. Staying together matters at all times. Everyone in the group should be mindful of their own safety and the safety of others with them.

Be smart: Do not display cash or other valuables. You should not bring anything that would attract attention or anything that you don't want to lose. Be mindful not to publicly give cash or gifts to people in the village. Work with your group leader on when and how appropriate gifts can be shared.

Be mindful: Be mindful of your wallet, purse, and backpack. Make a copy of your passport and carry that with you. We suggest that passports be stored in the Epilogos office where there is less chance of theft.

Attire: Please dress conservatively. Long shorts, capris or pants and shirts with sleeves. No midriff or cleavage revealing tops. Tattoos may attract unwanted attention. If the staff of Epilogos thinks this may be so, we will ask that you cover the tattoo with clothing or a bandage.

Alcohol and Drugs: Travelers should not possess or use any illegal drugs. While alcohol is available, Epilogos does not permit high school travelers to drink. Epilogos has a zero tolerance policy for high school travelers; if you have illegal drugs or drink alcohol, you will be immediately sent home at your own expense. Those who are over 21 and decide to drink, should not drink to excess as this can impair good judgment and increase risk.

NOTE: Pages 1-3 of this document are for your review and to keep. Page 4 requires your signature and should be returned to Epilogos/group leader with all other volunteer documents.



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Acknowledgment and Signature

By signing below, I _____ understand the safety/security guidelines which are presented above. I recognize that these guidelines have not been established to limit my freedom, rather they are meant to insure the safety of myself, my peers, and those whom I will meet in El Salvador. Therefore, I agree with and will abide by these requests made of me. I am also aware that certain situations may arise which may require a change in our safety guidelines and procedures.

Participant's full name (printed)

Participant's signature

Date

If under 18 years old, both parents or a guardian must sign.

Parents or Guardian's full name (printed)

Parents' or Guardian's signature

Date

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