

TRAVELING WITH PRIDE:

LGBTQ+ SAFETY ESSENTIALS



Traveling as a member of the LGBTQ+ community comes with unique challenges—and these challenges vary widely from country to country. Safety and acceptance of LGBTQ+ individuals can greatly vary depending on the destination's culture, legal framework, and prevailing social attitudes. Awareness of these risks and proactive planning are crucial for safe travel.

PRE-DEPARTURE PLANNING & RESEARCH

Researching a destination's legal and social environment is essential for LGBTQ+ travelers to understand potential risks and legal challenges. Travelers do not necessarily have to avoid certain locations, but they should be aware of local laws and cultural attitudes that could affect the LGBTQ+ community in their destinations of interest. While local laws might permit LGBTQ+ identities, societal attitudes could still pose significant threats. Before the trip takes place, travelers should inquire about the local laws and societal attitudes of their destination before departure:



What are the legal rights and protections for LGBTQ+ people in the destination?



Are there any visible signs of LGBTQ+ presence or activism?



Are there any laws that criminalize or restrict LGBTQ+ identities, expressions, or behaviors?



What are the social and cultural attitudes towards LGBTQ+ people in the destination?



Are there any laws that recognize or support LGBTQ+ rights, such as marriage equality, anti-discrimination, or hate crime laws?



Are there any previous reports or incidents of violence, harassment, or discrimination against LGBTQ+ people or travelers?



How do the local authorities and the general public react to incidents of violence, harassment, or discrimination?



How can LGBTQ+ travelers avoid incidents of violence, harassment, or discrimination??



LOCAL LAWS

Understanding local laws is crucial, as some regions may enforce laws against LGBTQ+ expressions or falsely prosecute individuals under public indecency laws. In many countries, identifying as LGBTQ+ is illegal. In certain destinations, individuals can be barred from entering a country or face arrest if they are suspected of engaging in or promoting certain behaviors.

SOCIETAL ATTITUDES

Travelers should be aware that local laws and societal attitudes are not the same. Although identifying as LGBTQ+ may be legal in a specific country, it could still be frowned upon. Displays of affection considered innocent in some locations, like touching or holding hands, may be against cultural or religious practices (even for heterosexual couples) in other countries.

Real-World Examples:

- Members of the LGBTQ+ community have been detained for waving the LGBTQ+ pride flag at events.
- Others have been entrapped by local law enforcement, and even blackmailed, for using LGBTQ+ dating apps.

In some countries:

- Identifying as LGBTQ+ is not illegal by law, but individuals could still be prosecuted under indecency charges.
- Due to threat of legal action, some hotels may require LGBTQ+ couples to book a room with two beds.



TRAVEL DOCUMENTATION & MEDICATION

Transgender travelers face additional risks if their documents do not align with their presentation, potentially leading to travel disruptions. Prior to travel, all documents should be up to date with the traveler's gender and name. If two documents vary in information, there may be increased difficulties and stops/checks at security points. If a passport shows an "X" in the sex field, especially when crossing international borders, it may result in impediments by immigration officers.

If a traveler is carrying medication that may correlate with reassignment therapy, it is advised to discuss alternative explanations for the medication with a doctor prior to travel. The medication may be questioned while abroad in certain countries.



OTHER LGBTQ+ SAFETY BEST PRACTICES

- Stay aware of your surroundings
- Be mindful of accepted dress codes
- Remain discreet (*considered the safest universal option*)
- Opt to use a Virtual Private Network (VPN)
NOTE: the use of such technologies may be deemed illegal in some countries
- Be very careful of any information uploaded to social media
- Use discretion when disclosing personal information

ADDITIONAL TRIP PLANNING RESOURCES

The International Gay & Lesbian Travel Association (IGLTA) is a trusted LGBTQ+ professional association, representing travel and hospitality providers on six continents. IGLTA's approved members include LGBTQ+ friendly accommodations, transport, destinations, service providers, travel advisors, tour operators, events, and travel media in over 75 countries around the world.

OPEN DIALOGUE

Risk management professionals should establish confidential channels where travelers can express concerns and seek guidance, ensuring they feel supported throughout their journey. Establishing such channels can encourage LGBTQ+ individuals to ask questions and address concerns prior to their travels. Furthermore, organizations should leverage liaisons with a travel risk management partner who is available to assist LGBTQ+ travelers, should they feel unsafe abroad.

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

On Call's Global Security Team can provide your travelers with explanations of societal norms, laws, and restrictions towards members of the LGBTQ+ community for any destination in the world—we also offer pre-travel consults and individual briefings where travelers can ask questions and receive in-depth advice tailored to their specific trips and situations.

Want even more travel risk management resources and planning tips? Subscribe to our [quarterly e-newsletter](#) and contact us at trmsolutions@oncallinternational.com.