



Global Village Volunteer Handbook

You're on a Global Village team and ready to get going! In this orientation handbook, you'll learn the ins and outs of what it means to be part of the Global Village experience and how to prepare for your trip. You'll learn about payments, fundraising and travel arrangements, how to set your expectations, what the community life will be like, how to prepare for the build experience, risk management and returning home.

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Payments, fundraising and travel arrangements

Program donation

Each Global Village trip has a required program donation. You may think of program donation as the “trip cost”. The program donation varies by location and is based on the cost of expenses to host your group, a donation to Habitat for Humanity International and a donation to the Habitat host affiliate’s building program. Your program donation covers the majority of expenses that you’ll incur during the trip, including:

- All meals and double-occupancy accommodations for the duration of the trip (excluding alcohol).
- Transportation once you arrive at the airport through the day of departure.
- Cultural activities and community visits.
- Medical and evacuation insurance.
- Professional construction support and a translator for your group.
- For some trips, but not all- A portion of your team leader’s airfare and program donation.

Volunteer’s airfare to the build country and visa fees (if applicable) are not included in the program donation.

Payments

Your space on a team is not guaranteed until you submit your nonrefundable and nontransferable deposit. The remaining balance of the program donation is due at least 45 days before you depart for your trip. Find more specifics about payments refer to the Payment Policies and Procedures resource in the Habitat Trips community.

All Global Village trip payments are considered donations to Habitat for Humanity International. We are unable to refund donations but please refer to the “cancellations” section below about how your funds can be applied in the event of your cancellation.

Tax Deductibility

Habitat for Humanity International is recognized in the United States as a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization. For many U.S. citizens, the trip cost is tax-deductible. Please consult with a tax professional about the deductibility of your trip.

Cancellations

Once you join a Global Village trip, we hope that you’re able to build with us. However, unexpected events do come up. Make sure you purchase “cancel for any reason” trip insurance for each trip you participate in and if your plans change, please let us know right away.

If your trip’s departure is more than 45 days away:

You are welcome to join another Global Village team. Email gv@habitat.org or call 1-800-HABITAT to get started on joining another trip.

We will transfer your donations, excluding the deposit, to a team traveling with the next year. Your deposit will remain with your original trip.

If your trip’s departure is less than 45 days away:

Notify your team leader immediately. We invite you to join another Global Village team, but unfortunately, we are unable to transfer any funds. At this point, we have already committed your program donation to the team’s build project and to local businesses preparing to host your group.

Trip cancellation insurance

We strongly urge you to purchase “cancel for any reason” trip cancellation insurance to cover your travel expenses in the event you have to postpone or cancel your trip. Unexpected situations do arise- whether it's weather, security, or personal- and “cancel for any reason” trip cancellation insurance will ensure that you recoup your costs in the event of a cancellation. There are a variety of travel insurers available.

Fundraising

We offer several resources to help you fundraise to reach the required program donation for your trip. Whether you use our fundraising platform, share.habitat.org, to launch your fundraising campaign, organize events in your local community, or ask friends and family to help, you can find information on these ideas and learn more about fundraising in the fundraising handbook.

Not only will fundraising help you reach your program donation, it helps spread the word about Habitat's mission. Focus on the “why” of your choice to volunteer with Habitat for Humanity through Global Village as you ask others to support you financially on your trip journey.

While we're not able to issue refunds if you raise more money than the required program donation, any additional funds are program donation, they are allocated as an additional donation to Habitat for Humanity.

Travel arrangements

Team members are responsible for arranging and paying for their own transportation to and from the host country. Your team leader will let you know what airport to fly into and what day/time to arrive. Please do not purchase airfare before consulting with your Global Village team leader.

Once you have received information about how to arrange your arrival, finalize your reservations and travel itinerary as soon as you're able and forward a copy to your team leader. They will let the host coordinator know what time you'll arrive in order to prepare to meet you at the airport.

Passports & visas

Ensure your passport is valid for at least 6 months beyond the date you plan to depart the host country. Make sure you have retained the appropriate visa, if required for your location, with ample time before you travel.

Applications for new and renewed passports are available at most U.S. Postal Service offices. Passports and visas can be applied for in person or by mail, which can take six to eight weeks. In an emergency, a passport can be obtained in three days for a significant additional fee. To locate the passport office nearest you or to find more information about obtaining a passport or visa, visit www.travel.state.gov.

When traveling- carry with you a photocopy of your passport. Keep your passport in a safe place and do not bring it with you to the build site each day. Consult with your team leader and/or host coordinator if you have questions about where to keep your passport.

Expectations

Volunteering with Habitat through Global Village is about so much more than simply building houses. You'll be immersed in the community, spend nearly every moment with your team, and experience cultural differences. Hopefully you'll leave your host country with fond memories, new friends and an ignited passion for Habitat's work.

If this is your first Global Village trip, you may be feeling anxious. Questions are likely running rampant through your mind: What will the experience be like? Where will we sleep? Is the work difficult? What will my teammates be like?

Habitat trips have been organized for more than 30 years, yet each trip is a unique and exciting opportunity to experience something new. Each time you embark on a trip, take a moment to visit your own thoughts and expectations before you travel.

Consider your expectations

Start examining your expectations early in the planning process. These questions can help start the expectations reflection process. If the answers to your questions bring up any concerns, discuss them with your team leader during the initial call.

1. What is your purpose for volunteering on a Global Village team?
2. What do you expect emotionally?
3. What do you expect from your team members? What about your team leader?

Setting realistic expectations

While each trip is different, there are commonalities and expectations that you can set to prepare you for the experience. Review these key aspects of a Global Village trip and ensure that you have prepared the right attitude to participate.

While setting realistic expectations are important to a positive Global Village experience, if ever you have concerns preparing for travel or after you've arrived, please talk with your team leader about how to problem solve for any issues that arise.

Accommodations

Most teams stay double occupancy in local hotel rooms. There are instances in which alternate accommodations are prepared for the team- such as a communal guest house.

Habitat serves rural and urban communities. Your accommodations can range anywhere from 5 to 55 minutes away from the build site. While the commute may be long, families living along the fringes of the community are in need of safe, decent housing as much as those who live close by. Having a servant's heart can help you see opportunity where others may find discontent.

Meals and transportation

Breakfast is typically taken at your hotel. Lunch is usually on the build site and provided by local churches, community groups, private citizens or catered. Dinner is taken as a group either at your hotel or a nearby restaurant.

Local transport is by private bus or van, and arranged in advance by the host coordinator. Luggage should be limited, try to pack in just a carry on.

Host staff and the build site

Host staff spend a lot of time and energy to prepare for your team's arrival. They hand select each hotel and restaurant and visit the build site and host community to ensure everything is ready. Ask yourself these questions to make sure you're prepared for the build aspects of the trip:

- Are you prepared to leave an unfinished house at the end of the week?

Global Village teams do not typically complete a house in one week's time. Your donation will help ensure that construction staff remain even after you've left, to complete the housing solution.

- Are you flexible enough to allow the construction staff to take their full lunch break, even if you're ready to get back to work?

Time is viewed differently in other cultures. While you or your teammates may be ready to get back to the build site after a quick 20-minute lunch break, be courteous of the masons and construction staff and wait until they are ready to start again instead of making them cut their break short. A great alternative activity is to engage with the rest of the community. Children are often nearby, or get to know the homeowners more.

- How will you react if homeowners are not able to build alongside you for the week?

While in many locations homeowners are able to visit the worksite and work on their future home with the team, there are many scenarios in which that just isn't possible. Homeowner families often have work and school obligations. Hosts will try to organize alternative plans in order for you to meet the homeowners and community.

Volunteer code of conduct

Becoming a Habitat volunteer comes with great rewards and responsibilities. Volunteers like you are representatives of Habitat for Humanity and its ministry. When you accept a volunteer role with Habitat, you are committing to act in a way that promotes Habitat mission, respects the local community, and ensures the safety of all participants. In addition to complying with all laws, regulations and Habitat policies, all volunteers are expected to follow the volunteer code of conduct.

Each volunteer has acknowledged the [volunteer code of conduct](#) as part of your trip registration.

Community life

Each Global Village trip and host country offers a unique experience. Most importantly, approach your trip with an ideal of flexibility. A flexible attitude will ensure that you are ready for any experience. This section reviews what you may encounter when you interact with the community on your trip.

Culture shock

Whether you are traveling to another state or crossing an ocean, the host community can be vastly different from what you are accustomed to at home. From the language or accent, to your accommodations, to how people dress and act. People might greet each other in unusual ways and even be mildly offended by your clumsy, yet well-intentioned, attempts to demonstrate friendliness. You will be exposed to new customs and unfamiliar food. You'll spend time with people you don't yet know.

Culture shock can be confusing and difficult to deal with. We don't all react to or recognize culture shock in the same way. Some people withdraw; others become overly energetic trying to fit in. Some can become angry and resentful toward their hosts' different ways, but most Global Village volunteers find ways to turn the negatives into positives.

A good way to counteract culture shock is to open your eyes, ears, and mind, put on your sense of humor and a smile, and be prepared to laugh at your own blunders. Attempt to learn the local language, at least the basic courtesies: hello, goodbye, good morning, etc. Question your hosts about the area, their way of

life, their family and experiences. Show as much interest and respect toward your hosts, as they undoubtedly will show to you.

Open the lines of communication. When you become confused or border on information overload, discuss your dilemma with your team; seek a better understanding from your hosts; write your experiences and observations in a journal or record them on film. Becoming immersed in a new experience is an exciting opportunity that promotes both personal and spiritual growth for you and those around you.

The host community

Global Village teams reflect the mission and purpose of Habitat for Humanity: bringing people together to build homes, communities and hope. We help to develop communities through shelter. Although you are making a significant contribution of time and money, Global Village team members are still guests in the host community they visit. It is imperative that the actions of team members reflect the values of Habitat's mission.

In addition to the [volunteer code of conduct](#), we expect Global Village volunteers to adhere to these ethics while in the host community:

- Team members are expected to respect the ethics and morals of the area in which they visit. Equally important to the team's physical labor in construction is their expression of love through humility and respect toward the future homeowners, community, Habitat staff and each other.
- Clothing should be appropriate for the work site or after-work event. Team members should dress comfortably, yet modestly. Many times the dress code in your host community is much different from how you might dress at home. Before you travel, you'll receive recommendations for dress in the country you are visiting.
- Travel in a spirit of humility and with a genuine desire to learn more about the people of your host community. Instead of "knowing all the answers," cultivate the habit of asking questions and actively listening to the replies.
- Be keenly aware of the feelings of others. This is especially applicable when taking photographs. Photographing local people and what might be considered sacred, cultural places should be done with reservation. It is respectful to ask permission before pointing the camera at people.
- Realize that often the people in the community you visit have time concepts and thought patterns different from your own; this does not make them inferior, only different.
- Acquaint yourself with local customs- people will be happy to help you.
- Remember that you are only one of many visitors. Do not expect special privileges.
- When you are shopping, remember that the "bargain" you obtained was possible only because of the low wages paid to the makers.
- Do not make promises to people in the community you visit unless you are certain you can carry them through. Homeowners always appreciate receiving photographs that you have taken of them, but if you promise to send photos, do so.
- Spend time reflecting on your daily experiences in an attempt to deepen your understanding. It has been said, "What enriches you may rob and violate others."

Gift giving

Habitat for Humanity takes a very strict stance on avoiding paternalism and fostering any sense of dependency or inequality among our partnering communities. Team members may not bring gifts for individual families on any trip. Even with good intentions, even a minor gift can create jealousy, competition and enmity.

Donations to the local affiliate that benefit an entire community, such as school supplies, small tools and clothing, are welcome and appreciated. They will be distributed by host staff after your team departs. Your host coordinator will give you more details when you arrive in country.

Team members are occasionally approached by host community members about sponsoring a child or directly donating to other local groups. Let your host coordinator know if these requests are asked of you and they will address it.

Cultural activities

Global Village trips include opportunities for team members to explore activities unique to the geographical area. You may spend time hiking, sightseeing, browsing local markets, or tours and other activities that expand the team's knowledge of local culture and poverty housing issues. The cost of these activities is typically included in the program donation. Adventure sports and other "extreme" tourism activities- such as zip lining or volcano surfing- are not allowed in a Global Village experience and not covered by the trip insurance.

Reflection time

Habitat for humanity is an ecumenical Christian organization. However, we welcome volunteers and supporters from all backgrounds. Each day your leader will gather the team for a reflection session, where each person has the opportunity to share and discuss any issues or concerns. You're encouraged to express yourself openly and use this time to process the experience you've encountered throughout the day.

The work you will do

Global Village trips are about much more than building houses. These unique service experiences provide the opportunity to forge new relationships, cultural immersion and contribute to global citizenship.

The construction site

The work you will do on a Global Village trip varies from location to location and depends on the phase of construction and type of project you'll participate in. Of course, a flexible attitude is key as rain or a variety of reasons can delay construction progress. Even with a delay, our mission can still be successful: we are equally focused on relationships.

You won't see much machinery on the build site, and in some cases the affiliate may not have enough wheelbarrows and other basic tools. It will be common for Global Village volunteers to perform more manual labor than skilled building tasks.

A professional mason or contractor is hired by the affiliate or the homeowners to be in charge of the construction project. The mason or contractor supervises the work of the future homeowners putting in "sweat equity," and will also be in charge of supervising volunteers. Keep in mind that the mason or contractor may have never previously supervised unskilled volunteers, who will actually be building a house that he or she has responsibility for completing. Consequently, team members are sometimes assigned less-skilled tasks. It is important to be patient, and respect the process and decisions of the mason or contractor in charge.

Every Global Village experience is different. Sometimes your team will arrive at the start of a project and will build from the ground up. In this case, you may be digging footers, laying block, constructing flooring systems or framing and raising walls.

On other trips, you will arrive to find the house partially built. In that case, your team might concentrate on installing siding, windows, doors, floors, roofing or drywall. Once the exterior of the house nears completion, efforts focus on finishing the interior.

A Global Village team is sometimes divided into smaller work units that will assist at multiple build sites. Don't expect to see a house completed during your stay. However, if your team is involved in the final stages of construction on a house, you might be lucky enough to attend the house dedication. Being part of the moment the homeowner received the keys to their new home is an unforgettable and moving experience.

Every build project is different. As Habitat works to fulfill its mission of serving more families, the types of project will also vary in some cases. Be open to a spirit of service; everything you do on a construction site, whether it is installing siding, digging footers, hauling water, sifting sand, removing or placing fill dirt, mixing cement by hand or passing buckets of concrete to crews, is helping future homeowners realize their dream of having a decent place to live. You truly make a difference and are greatly appreciated!

Project types

Each community Habitat works in faces different challenges and has various needs that need to be met to achieve Habitat's vision of, "a world where everyone has a decent place to live." To better meet these needs, Global Village projects and trip types can vary by location. Volunteers should talk with their team leader to gain a clear understanding about the project and work they'll likely be doing to better prepare themselves for their trip.



Blitz build

Join hundreds of volunteers to build many houses in one week.



Build Louder: Advocate & build

Build with partner families and advocate for policies and systems to advance affordable housing.



Community development

Volunteer with a holistic development project that builds decent housing as well as economic growth and communal resources.



Critical home improvement

Improve existing shelters to make them safe, decent places to live.



Disaster recovery

Build back stronger after a disaster and learn about Habitat's work to increase stability and reduce risks.



Green building

Help build energy-efficient homes with those in need.



Healthy homes

Upgrade existing houses with smokeless stoves, water filtration systems, new bathrooms and more.



Home construction

Help build new homes with those in need.



Vulnerable populations

Bring stability and opportunity to orphans, vulnerable children and other people experiencing extreme difficulties.



Women Build

Build homes with women and children while exploring a new country.

Work site safety

Safety is everyone's concern and an important consideration at all Habitat work sites. Whether you are very experienced and comfortable on the build site or this is your first time constructing anything, everyone must be hyperaware to safety. An observer can often see danger better than the worker directly involved in a task. Be cautious at all times and ask questions if you are uncertain how a task should be performed.

Safety is based on knowledge, skill and an attitude of care and concern. The on-site construction supervisor will instruct volunteers in the correct and proper procedure for performing each task and will familiarize you with the potential hazards and how to minimize risk. Your team leader and local Habitat host will work

together to maintain a safe working environment. The final responsibility for each team members' personal safety lies with that individual member.

Attitude

Safety begins with a safe attitude. Keep the following in mind when working on site:

- Pause and think before you begin a task.
- If you are uncertain how to perform a task or operate a tool, ask.
- Avoid distractions and concentrate on the task at hand.
- Inspect all tools, ladders and scaffolding before use.
- Immediately advise the team leader of any unsafe or hazardous tools or conditions.
- Know where the first-aid kit is located and how to summon emergency help.

Dressing for work

It's important to dress in a way that is practical and safe for the work being done. Loose or low coverage clothing can be dangerous. Follow these basic guidelines:

- Wear pants on the build site.
- Use work gloves.
- Wear work boots or thick-soled shoes at all times on the build site.
- Wear hardhats while doing demolition work and when others are working overhead. Hardhats, if required, will be provided by the host program.
- Use protective glasses when there is any possibility of an eye injury.
- Wear a dust mask when sanding or installing insulation.

The above recommendations are minimum standards. Depending on the work being performed or area you are visiting, the on-site supervisor may request that volunteers take additional safety precautions.

Off the build site, ensure that you are also following appropriate culture norms while at the hotel and during team activities in the community.

Personal precautions

It's easy to overexert yourself on the build site as most volunteers aren't used to intensive physical labor in the high heat. It's important that you recognize your limitations and work within them so that you do not get injured.

- Lifting: always use the proper lifting technique- bent legs and straight, vertical back. Do not exceed your lifting capacity. Ask another volunteer to help if an object is very heavy.
- Overexertion: let go of your competitive side and avoid struggling to keep up with other team members. Take rest and water breaks often.
- Hydration: replenish liquid often since physical work causes you to perspire, which can result in dehydration. Always drink more water than normal. Every job site will have safe drinking water available.
- Sun: your worksite may or may not have shade. Make sure to apply sunscreen often. A wide-brimmed hat and long-sleeved clothing can also help.

Power tools and other electrical equipment

Most build sites will not utilize power tools, but if yours does, it's important to keep these guidelines in mind:

- You must be 18 years or older to operate power tools on the build site.
- Ensure you are wearing appropriate safety gear each time you operate a power tool.

- A power tool should not be used without proper instruction of its use and explanation of the potential consequences of misuse.
- Defective tools should not be used. They should be labeled “defective” and reported to the team leader immediately. Do not wait until the end of the day to report a defective tool.

Hand tools

- Use the tool that the construction supervisor directs you to use.
- Sometimes there may not always be enough hand tools for everyone on the team. Ask the supervisor what other tasks you can assist with.

Ladders/Scaffolding

- You must be over 18 to use a ladder or be on scaffolding.
- Inspect ladders and scaffolding before you use it. Ensure that they are stable and safe.
- Use a ladder that will reach the work area, getting an extension ladder if necessary.
- Move your ladder with your work. If both of your shoulders are extended outside the ladder while you are working, you are overreaching.
- Ensure the ladder/scaffolding are on solid footing in a safe location.
- When climbing, always face the ladder and keep your hands free for climbing. Carry tools and materials in proper carrying devices.

Roofs

- You must be over 18 to be on a roof.
- Do not cut roof materials aloft.
- Avoid laying tools and other items on the roof when they're not in use.
- Secure building materials to prevent them from sliding or being blown off the roof.
- Some tasks along the edge of the roof are easier and more safely done off a ladder from below.
- Do not allow scrap materials and sawdust to accumulate on the roof.
- Do not work on the roof when the surface is wet.
- Secure the access ladder to the edge of the roof to prevent the ladder from moving.
- Do not throw items from the roof unless someone on the ground declares the landing area “all clear” and prevents others from entering the area until the thrown item has landed.
- Avoid wearing leather-soled, slipper-soled shoes when working aloft.

Maintaining a safe, clean, secure worksite

Good housekeeping prevents accidents.

- Clean up the site before you leave each day.
- Keep tools and equipment in their proper place when not in use. This protects both tools and workers.
- Take the time to mark any significant holes or areas that may not have been noticed by others.

Build site emergency medical care

If someone is injured on the job site, contact your team leader immediately. They will utilize the first-aid kit or summon additional medical help, if needed. Make the injured person comfortable and attempt to stabilize the injury until medical help arrives. Your team leader possesses an emergency management plan that outlines specific procedure to follow in any emergency, including injury or illness. Your host coordinator will discuss emergency procedures with you during the orientation.

Health and personal safety while traveling

Your team leader and host coordinator have taken every step to ensure the team's health and personal safety during the trip. However, you must use caution and adopt the same sense of personal responsibility that applies to any type of travel. This chapter provides information that will help each team member have a healthy, safe and rewarding trip.

Medications

If you use prescription medications, carry an adequate supply for the trip, along with a signed and dated statement from your physician indicating the dosage and the reason for the medications. This information will answer questions you might encounter when passing through customs and is helpful to medical authorities in case of emergency. Be sure to discuss with your doctor the climate at your destination, as some medicines are ineffective at extreme temperatures or when the patient is exposed to large amounts of sunlight.

A card, tag or bracelet identifying any physical condition that may require emergency care is helpful when traveling. Also pack a copy of your medical history, including blood type, allergies and any special conditions.

If you wear prescription glasses, bring an extra pair and a copy of your prescription. Contact lens wearers should check with their eye care professional regarding the practicality of wearing and cleaning their lenses during the trip.

Medical insurance

Each team member is covered by travel medical insurance and is already included in the cost of your trip. Habitat's travel medical insurance is wraparound coverage, meaning that it covers expenses above and beyond your personal medical coverage.

For details about insurance coverage, visit our [volunteer resources page](#).

Embassy registration

When you travel internationally, you should register with the U.S. Department of State travel registration website, known as STEP. Registration and all provided services are free, and by providing your contact information and trip details, the U.S. government will be able to find and assist you in the case of an emergency such as natural disaster or civil unrest.

[The STEP website](#) provides information on the services that are offered to U.S. citizens traveling abroad, and instructions on how to register.

Medical precautions and immunizations

Any Habitat volunteer should have an up-to-date tetanus shot before participating in any project.

The types of immunizations you may need to travel internationally varies by country and by person. Visit your doctor and consult the Centers for Disease Control travel site for details on immunization requirements and recommendations for the country(ies) you will be visiting. It is highly recommended that you consult our medical doctor for personalized counsel concerning your health and international travel plans. Some vaccinations, such as typhoid and hepatitis, require booster shots a month after the initial vaccination, so begin your immunizations research as far in advance as possible.

Personal safety

Each team leader has access to a first aid kit, an emergency management plan, and the emergency contact information that you provided during registration. A Habitat for Humanity International staff member is on call 24/7 as a contact during emergency situations. The host program has also prepared emergency management plans prior to the team's arrival.

Be aware of potential risks while traveling. Heed the advice of your team leader, the host coordinator, and tour guides about areas to avoid and proper procedures for going out at night. Never go out alone. Do not resist attackers. If confronted, give up your valuables.

While there are inherent risks in any travel opportunity, we have a thorough and comprehensive safety/emergency management plan and travel medical and evacuation insurance policies in place. Habitat for Humanity will not pay ransom or make any other payments in order to secure the release of hostages.

Animals

All animals, wild or domestic, should be avoided. Your host coordinator will review any necessary animal related precautions during the orientation.

Mosquitoes and other insects

Prepare for the possibility of mosquito bites. Travel with insect repellent, preferably repellent that contains DEET. Consult with your doctor to determine prevention of malaria, yellow fever and other mosquito borne illnesses. Wearing long-sleeved shirts, long pants and hats will minimize areas of exposed skin.

When exposure to ticks or mites is a possibility, tuck your pants into your socks and wear boots rather than sandals. At the end of the day, you should inspect yourself and your clothing for ticks. Ticks are detected more easily on light-colored or white clothing.

Although vaccines or medications are available against vector-borne diseases such as yellow fever and malaria, there are none for most other mosquito-borne illnesses such as dengue or zika. Use repellents and other general protective measures to minimize your exposure.

Seek medical attention if you get an insect bite or sting that causes persistent pain. Many countries utilize bed nets to provide protection and comfort from insect bites at night.

Swimming precautions

Only swim in waters that your host coordinator has informed you are safe and clean. Never swim alone or when under the influence of alcohol or drugs, and never dive head-first into an unfamiliar body of water.

Avoiding mosquito bites:

1. Apply insect repellent to exposed skin. Repellent containing 20-35% DEET is recommended.
2. Wear long-sleeved clothing and long pants if you are outdoors at night.
3. Use a mosquito net over the bed if provided one. For additional protection, treat the mosquito net with insecticide.
4. Spray an insecticide or repellent on clothing, as mosquitoes may bite through thin clothing.
5. Spray insecticide in your bedroom before going to sleep.

Preventing malaria:

During travel to areas in which malaria is present:

- Use anti-mosquito measures.
- Take a drug to prevent malaria.
- Consult a physician if you experience symptoms.

Fire

Your host coordinator has taken great care to select safe, decent accommodations for your team. Upon arrival, you'll be given an orientation for the week. Ensure that it includes details on the fire emergency plan- including the primary and alternate escape routes and the meet up location for your team. In case of fire, crawl low, under the smoke, to escape.

Catastrophic events

Your health and safety is our top priority. Your team leader and the host program are trained in Habitat's emergency management plan. It contains specific instructions about a wide arrange of emergencies, including catastrophic occurrences- natural disaster or any type of terrorism, war, insurrection or criminal activities, which pose a threat to your team.

Jet lag

You may feel a bit ill while you adjust the first few days at your destination; most likely it's only jet lag. Sensible exposure to sunlight the first day also helps the body adjust. Take breaks as you need on the build site and take advantage of rest periods in the itinerary.

Food and water

The most common health advice given to travelers to foreign countries is "Don't drink the water!" Keeping healthy, however, involves more than carefully selecting your water source.

In most locations you visit, tap water should never be consumed. Your host coordinator will let you know where you can access bottled water and will provide safe drinking water on the build site. Where water may be contaminated, ice and containers for drinking also should be considered contaminated. Thus, in these areas, ice should not be used in beverages. It is safer to drink bottled beverages directly from the bottle than from a questionable container, but water on the outside of cans or bottles of beverages might also be contaminated. Dry wet cans and bottles before opening.

The host coordinator takes great care in selecting appropriate food vendors for the team to use. Never eat food from street vendors. Avoid salads, uncooked vegetables, unpasteurized milk and milk products such as cheese, and eat only food that has been cooked and is still hot, or fruit that you have peeled yourself. Undercooked and raw meat, fish and shellfish may carry various intestinal pathogens. Cooked food that has been allowed to stand for several hours at ambient temperature provides a fertile medium for bacterial growth and should be thoroughly reheated before serving.

If you do become ill during the trip, it is better to see a local doctor, who is familiar with local and tropical illnesses, than to wait until you return home.

Traveler's diarrhea

International travel can often can cause traveler's diarrhea, while during the trip or after returning home. Travel with Imodium (available over the counter) just in case and ensure that you are taking in plenty of fluids to keep from becoming dehydrated.

If your condition persists for several days without improvement, if there is blood or mucus in the stool, if fever occurs with shaking child or if there is dehydration with persistent diarrhea, consult a physician right away.

Returning home

Aside from the luxury of sleeping in one's own bed and taking long, hot showers, few volunteers look forward to getting back to their daily routines after returning from a Global Village trip. Immersing yourself in a new culture and building with future homeowner families, even if only for a week, can be a life-altering experience; you may find yourself reevaluating your own life priorities.

Reentry stress

Upon returning home, you may find view things a bit differently. The way you and those around you live might suddenly seem excessive, possibly even wasteful. Material things that once were valued may be of lesser importance. Don't be alarmed, you most likely are experiencing re-entry stress, commonly referred to as "reverse culture shock."

Overcoming reverse culture shock takes time. Such a change can be positive, but avoid making drastic changes too soon after returning. Give yourself time to process the experience. Stay in touch with other team members, they may be experiencing similar emotions.

As with culture shock, re-entry stress is commonly experienced in stages. Most individuals returning home from time spent immersed in a different culture will experience each of the following emotions at some point upon reentering normal daily life at home.

Sverre Lysgaard first developed the concept of a "U-curve" graph that describes the stages of adjustment into a new culture, and it was later expanded to include the similar stages of re-entry, commonly referred to as "reverse culture-shock." The emotions experienced upon adjusting back into life at home are very similar to those you might go through during the trip itself.

Four common stages of reentry

- **Fun:** The honeymoon stage of returning home: hot showers, familiar foods, excitement to tell your story!
- **Flight:** The avoidance stage: you have been affected in some way by your experience, but the fast-paced world remains the same. You may become confused and feel somewhat isolated from what was once familiar.
- **Fight:** The anger stage: the enthusiasm of others to hear your stories may not match your passion for telling them. The affluence or apathy of the world that you are adjusting back into may become overwhelming.
- **Fit:** The tolerance stage: compassion and empathy develop for those who have not had the opportunity to share your experience; you will change what you can, and accept what you cannot.

