

MEMORANDUM FOR: All NOAA Employees

FROM: R.J. Dominic  
Director, Finance Office/Comptroller

SUBJECT: Travel Advisory 03-4 (Worldwide Caution Public Announcement and Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Warning)

This Travel Advisory provides information issued by the State Department on 1) the latest Worldwide Caution Public Announcement dated March 19, 2003, and 2) information on Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). In addition, please review the General Services Administration (GSA) website at <http://www.gsa.gov> on a daily basis for the latest information for travel within the continental United States. As the current events change, GSA will update their website and permit deviations from the Federal Travel Regulation as necessary to ensure travelers are able to return to their official station in a safe manner.

**Worldwide Caution Public Announcement** - The following State Department Public Announcement is issued to alert Americans to an increased potential for anti-American violence, including terrorist actions against U.S. citizens, as a result of the military action in Iraq.

The U.S. Government remains deeply concerned about the security of Americans overseas. American citizens are reminded that it is more important than ever to maintain a high level of vigilance and to take appropriate steps to increase their security awareness. This Worldwide Caution supersedes that issued on February 6, 2003 and expires on July 20, 2003.

As a result of military action in Iraq, there is a potential for retaliatory actions to be taken against U.S. citizens and interests throughout the world. Public demonstrations carry the potential for precipitating violence directed at American citizens, symbols associated with the United States or other U.S. and western interests.

The threat to U.S. citizens includes the risk of attacks by terrorist groups. Terrorist actions may include, but are not limited to, suicide operations, bombings or kidnappings. Possible threats include conventional weapons such as explosive devices or non-conventional weapons, including chemical or biological agents. Terrorists do not distinguish between official and civilian targets. These may include facilities where Americans and other foreigners congregate or visit, such as residential areas, clubs, restaurants, places of worship, schools, hotels, outdoor recreation events or resorts and beaches. U.S. citizens should increase their security awareness at such locations, avoid them, or switch to other locations where Americans in large numbers generally do not congregate.

U.S. Government facilities worldwide remain at a heightened state of alert and some have drawn down their dependents and/or personnel. These facilities may temporarily close or suspend public services from time to time for security reasons. In those instances, U.S. embassies and consulates will make every effort to provide emergency services to American citizens. Monitor the local news and maintain contact with the nearest American embassy or consulate.

As the State Department continues to develop information on any potential security threats to Americans overseas, it shares credible threat information through its Consular Information Program documents, available on the Internet at <http://travel.state.gov>. In addition to information on the Internet, U.S. travelers can get up-to-date information on security conditions by calling 1-888-407-4747 in the U.S. and outside the U.S. and Canada on a regular toll line at 1 317-472-2328.

**Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)** - The U.S. Department of State wishes to encourage Americans citizens traveling or residing abroad to familiarize themselves with the information available from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) about Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). A March 17 CDC announcement recommends that people with elective or non-essential travel to Hong Kong SAR, Guangdong Province (China), and Hanoi, Vietnam consider postponing such travel. Currently, there is no evidence suggesting that infection is spread in assemblages of large numbers of people (e.g. schools, churches, or other non-health care settings). The Department of State notes that in Vietnam, the appearance of SARS has had a major impact on medical facilities, with the closing and quarantine of the French Hospital in Hanoi. At present, medical evacuation for SARS patients is not available by commercial carrier. In light of the evolving nature of this SARS situation, American citizens should regularly consult the CDC website <http://www.cdc.gov/> and the WHO website <http://www.who.int/> for updates.

The CDC has received reports of outbreaks of SARS in Hong Kong SAR, Vietnam, Guangdong Province (China), Canada, Singapore, Thailand, Germany, and Switzerland. Most cases appear to involve health-care workers caring for patients with SARS and close family contacts. CDC is working closely with WHO and country partners in efforts to define the origin of this infection, to track patterns of its transmission, and to determine effective strategies for its control and prevention. Additional information is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/> and <http://www.who.int/>. Local health authorities should be notified of all suspected cases of SARS.

The definition of a suspected case of SARS includes the following:

--Fever greater than 38/C (100.4/F), AND

--One or more respiratory symptoms including cough, shortness of breath, difficulty in breathing, AND

--Either close contact with a person diagnosed with SARS or recent travel to areas with documented transmission of SARS.

The incubation period between exposure to infection and the development of symptoms appears to range from 2-7 days.

Currently, prevention of new cases is based on individuals avoiding close contact with SARS patients. Such close contact includes direct care of patients, or direct contact with their respiratory secretions and body fluids.

Contact Information for the CDC:

Public Inquiries:

English (888) 246-2675

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