



TRAVEL WITH PRIDE – SIX STEPS TO SUPPORT YOUR LGBTQ TRAVELERS

Sexual orientation goes beyond travel policies and programs. It is an organization's Duty of Care to adequately prepare its workforce for foreseeable medical and travel security risks including the specific risks faced by its mobile LGBTQ members. With this in mind, how can you make sure your LGBTQ staff will be suitably supported when away and that your diversity policy will be upheld? Is it safe to be open about sexual orientation in a particular destination? Is this a subject you are empowered to deal with? The risks faced by your LGBTQ workforce may vary based on the destinations to which they travel, influenced by factors including the legal status of LGBTQ relationships and the levels of social tolerance.

Like any personal characteristic, sexual orientation and gender identity are part of our personal risk profiles. To protect your people, you need to understand the specific risks involved and put in place processes to mitigate them. Here are six steps organizations can follow to create a mobile workforce inclusive of all orientations, without exposing travelers to unnecessary risk:

- 1. UNDERSTAND THE CHALLENGES**
In certain countries, some sex activities are illegal, which can put your LGBTQ staff at risk of harassment by the authorities. Lack of anti-discrimination laws might also facilitate an ability to refuse accommodation. Transgender and people-in-transition face extra challenges, such as being denied access to gender-assigned services and/or facilities. On top of the legal barriers, there are some factors organizations need to be aware of: recent protests against advancements in legal equality, societal attitudes, hate crime rates, etc.
- 2. INCLUDE LGBTQ-SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS IN YOUR MOBILITY POLICIES**
Select suitable logistics – transport and lodging – and make sure that you take into account any immigration considerations that might have an impact. Allow for travelers to opt out or refuse a trip or an assignment without repercussions if they do not feel comfortable with the destination. At all times, preserve the right to anonymity.
- 3. PLAN TAILORED, REALISTIC AND INCLUSIVE SUPPORT**
Be ready to provide LGBTQ travelers with confidential access to information and advice pre-departure. It is also essential that organizations provide employees with a 24/7 support system that they can rely upon before, during and after their trip.
- 4. INFORM EMPLOYEES**
All travelers and employees need to be informed about how their actions could inadvertently increase the risks faced by their LGBTQ colleagues. For example, in some destinations, showing support of a LGBTQ colleague could put both persons at risk. Incorporate scenarios about awareness of all profiles into your travel training and crisis management planning, so that your travelers and managers are prepared while travelling or on assignment.
- 5. EDUCATE MANAGERS AND MOBILITY STAFF GLOBALLY AND HAVE A WELL-INFORMED POINT OF CONTACT FOR YOUR LGBTQ STAFF**
Ensure everyone involved with travel within your company is well-trained on how to support LGBTQ colleagues. If an emergency occurs, local staff need to be able to assist efficiently. It is also important that your LGBTQ staff have a primary point of contact that knows how to assist in case of emergency.
- 6. HAVE CONTINGENCY TRAVEL PLANS**
If the worst should happen, despite all your efforts in preventing any unwanted situation, make sure you have in place a clear contingency plan that allows you to evacuate your staff promptly.