

Jewish Cemetery Expedition and Archive

Cemetery Visit Health & Safety Briefing

1. _____ Read the specific JCEAA Trip Plan, to include any annexes that address health, safety, immunizations, travel documents, and threat briefings (criminal, terrorist, etc.).
2. _____ Complete any personal processing you require to travel to the planned countries.
3. _____ Confirm your travel insurance is sufficient for the trip. Do not travel when ill, or take any risks that endanger your health or safety. Delay day trips if necessary due to health. Have immunizations that are appropriate, and be certain your tetanus immunization is current and documented on your International Immunization Record (Yellow Book).
4. _____ Confirm that non-JCEAA staff has been authorized to participate in the visits, and meet all the requirements specified in the trip plan.
5. _____ While most cemeteries are relatively safe and visits will be problem free, all site visits and travel pose some risk. Review the basic rules for travel to cemeteries, regarding falling, tripping, encountering insects or stray dogs, and avoiding bio/chemical hazards. Riskier sites, such as isolated country cemeteries, or very large urban cemeteries, require more extensive planning and care during visits. Don't unnecessarily tamper or touch items at the site. Be careful where you walk (sharp nails). Heads up at all times and wear a head covering. Maintain three-point contact in perilous walking areas. Remain on the perimeter of unstable, damp or constructions areas. Refer to the JCEAA "Safe Country" list before planning a cemetery visit.
6. _____ Team members should always be aware of the risks posed by falling headstones or monuments; loose gravel and depressions, branches and low hanging thorns; mosquitoes, insects, ticks; rats, snakes and other wildlife; cats and dogs; broken glass; homeless trespassers, hooligans, criminals; surrounding-area crime; isolated areas; old out-buildings; weather/lightning; graveyard bio/chemical hazards; sharp gates/fences/signs; and tall grass/ low visibility situations. Trips conducted during high heat, inclement weather, or freezing conditions require additional preparation and familiarization with emergency response in the event of an incident. Be especially cautious to avoid heat-related sickness, and hypothermia.
7. _____ Carry a mobile telephone or communications radio with at least two fully charged batteries and a mobile recharger capability. Mark the cemetery entrance and/or your starting point in large cemeteries with GPS and/or map coordinates/landmarks. Carry appropriate map, compass, water, rain gear, cold weather gear, spare socks, signal light, umbrella, sun screen/head cover, sturdy shoes/boots (insulated and water proof if appropriate), first aid kit, dictionary, and telephone numbers of local police and cemetery caretaker. Carry adequate stocks of prescription medicines with accompanying international prescriptions. Travel in pairs in isolated cemeteries. Schedule visits so you are not on-site at dark, or after the cemetery has closed. Secure valuables or leave them behind. Secure vehicle. Precautions for individual travel must be addressed in the specific trip plan.

8. _____ Ensure that all off-limits, restricted, or controlled zones are adequately marked on trip maps. Avoid any photography in areas that have restrictions, such as military installations, communications facilities, transportation depots, or industrial sites. Each country has different rules on photography in and around these areas. For purposes of personal and team safety, comply fully with all law enforcement officials and handover all cameras, image disks, survey materials when requested. See “JCEAA Legal Guidance” for primary guidance on matters pertaining to law enforcement contacts.
9. _____ If feasible, check with the caretaker or cemetery office regarding any health and safety issues, including areas of the cemetery that are closed or unsafe.
10. _____ Understand the process for reporting incidents or emergencies to cemetery management and the police. Report incidents to JCEAA in a timely manner.
11. _____ Know first aid for you and team members. Carry appropriate first aid kit in vehicle, and hand-carry field kit in pack. Ensure that the closest 24-hour medical clinic is noted on the trip map and GPS, and ideally have the telephone number of the facility and an ambulance service (or police).
12. _____ Research the site before visit, including aerial photo, maps, relationship to police/etc. Maintain contact with the POC who knows when and where you are traveling. Follow the “positive contact” procedures in the specific JCEAA trip plan (e.g., 90 minute rule). All JCEAA cemetery visits require a positive contact plan. Ensure you have an adequate information source for weather forecasts. Maintain cognizance of your best shelter retreat in the event of a weather emergency.
13. _____ Don’t lose your way in the cemetery and especially during visits to suspect sites which are not marked. Know the quickest and safest route back to your hotel or secure shelter. Do not enter unsafe structures. Conduct night visits (during hours of darkness) only when pre-approved by JCEAA. At very large sites or cemeteries make periodic location checks on the map or GPS.
14. _____ Understand warning and advisory signs at or near cemeteries – they may describe hazards. Double-check meaning of information signs that are not written in one of your primary languages. When in doubt, use available communications equipment or reference materials to determine meaning of advisory signs.
15. _____ Lessons Learned. Prior to the visit check to see if there is a JCEAA Lessons Learned report from a previous trip on the cemetery, locale, or country. After the visit, prepare a JCEAA Lessons Learned report if appropriate.

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