

For many years, the Berry College policy for travel to countries that have been issued a Travel Warning by the US Department of State has been to prohibit such travel. Because the language in these warnings can differ in their level of severity, the College is now willing to consider program participation and international travel (referred to in this document as “activities”) by students, faculty and staff (hereafter referred to as “Berry College community members” or “participants”) in such countries, according to that level. Although our approach continues to discourage travel to these countries due to the risks involved, the following guidelines illustrate how the varying language in Travel Warnings and Travel Alerts will affect activities. Requests to allow activities in a Travel Warning or Alert country should be directed to the International Programs Director for approval after consultation with the Provost and General Counsel as appropriate.

Berry College International Programs, College Counsel and the College Provost assess activities in high-risk locations, including those for which a Travel Warning or Travel Alert has been issued by the US Department of State. When requested to evaluate activities in a particular country or region, this team consults relevant faculty and staff, as well as external resources, such as the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), World Health Organization (WHO), iNext travel insurance, local governments and local contacts/staff on site.

The team makes recommendations for participation in Berry College approved activities based on the following guidelines. Note that even though the U.S. Department of State references U.S. citizens in its warnings and alerts, these guidelines apply to Berry College community members of all nationalities. Berry College’s decisions are guided primarily by consideration for the health, safety and security of the entire Berry College community.

Those considering international travel should familiarize themselves with political, health, crime, and other safety-related conditions prevailing in any country and specific locations within the country(ies) to be visited. One source of information is the [US Department of State](#), which provides travel information on all countries and, as necessary, will issue a Travel Warning or Travel Alert under certain conditions:

Travel warnings: *issued to describe long-term, protracted conditions that make a country dangerous or unstable.* Current Travel Warnings can be found [here](#).

Travel alerts: *issued to disseminate information about short-term conditions, generally within a particular country, that pose imminent risks to the security of U.S. citizens. Natural disasters, terrorist attacks, coups, anniversaries of terrorist attacks, election-related demonstrations or violence ... are examples of conditions that might generate a travel alert.* Current Travel Alerts can be found [here](#).

Not all Travel Warnings or Alerts are of the same level of severity. Some recommend that travelers defer travel to the entire country and authorize the departure of dependents of consular personnel. Others reflect dangers or risks in a specific region of the country. Some warnings simply highlight the risks and urge travelers to take prudent security measures. For this reason, recommendations regarding activities in a country or region under a Travel Warning or Alert take into account the specific nature of the warning or alert, as well as the proposed activities and other related circumstances.

Category 1: Berry College will typically suspend or cancel activities if the US Department of State issues a strong country-wide Travel Warning. These warnings tend to include statements that:

- order departure of U.S. dependents and non-emergency personnel;
- recommend that any U.S. citizens remaining in the country should depart;

- urge (warn) U.S. citizens to (carefully) weigh the necessity of (all) travel to the country;
- urge U.S. citizens to exercise extreme caution;
- (strongly) warn U.S. citizens against (all) travel to the country;
- warn (urge) U.S. citizens to defer (all) (non-essential) travel to the country;
- warn that the US Department of State is not able to provide routine consular services.

No single statement will automatically warrant suspension or cancellation. Further, factors other than the existence of a Travel Warning may justify suspension or cancellation of activities. The entire warning, as well as information gathered from other sources, will be taken into consideration.

When the US Department of State uses statements such as those listed above but only for a specific region within the country (and not the entire country), Berry College will typically suspend or cancel activities located within that region, and it may suspend or cancel activities in surrounding or other regions.

For activities in countries or regions in this category:

No applications/requests are allowed.

If it is after activities have been planned and approved, but prior to departure, Berry College may suspend or cancel activities.

If participants are already on site, Berry College may suspend or cancel activities and instruct the affected participants to leave the country as soon as possible.

Per the Berry College International Programs Release and Hold Harmless Agreement, the College reserves the right to cancel without penalty the activity, and to make any alterations, deletions, or modifications in the itinerary and/or the scheduled activities. Any costs associated with withdrawal or removal from the program, relocation of program due to emergencies, or evacuation from the host country not covered by iNext insurance will be borne by the participant. Berry College will make a reasonable effort to facilitate the completion of an activity's academic component.

Category 2: When the US Department of State Travel Warning is less strong, Berry College will consider applications/requests and may approve activities, but will generally advise the use of extreme caution and awareness, and may place conditions on travel to as well as within the country. Less strong warnings tend to include statements that:

- warn U.S. citizens of the (risks, danger, or potential risk or danger) of travel to the country;
- urge U.S. citizens to evaluate carefully their security and safety before traveling to the country;
- warn (caution) U.S. citizens to consider (carefully) the risks of travel to the country;
- urge U.S. citizens to exercise caution; or
- caution U.S. citizens to take prudent security measures.

Travel Warnings are updated on a regular basis. If a Travel Warning becomes more severe while participants are on site, Berry College may suspend or cancel activities and instruct the affected participants to leave the country as soon as possible.

Category 3: When the US Department of State issues a Travel Alert, Berry College will consider applications/requests and make decisions on a case-by-case basis.

Travel Alerts tend to expire on a pre-specified date, but may be extended. If an Alert becomes more severe while participants are on site, or if the Travel Alert is elevated to a Travel Warning, Berry College may suspend or cancel activities and instruct the affected participants to leave the country as soon as possible.

Acknowledgement of Risks and Release: Berry College community members who have been approved to participate in activities in countries under a Travel Warning will be required to sign an Acknowledgement of Risks and Release to acknowledge they have reviewed the travel warning and are aware of the risks associated with their travel, and sometimes in the case of students, their parents or guardians will be asked to execute a Parental Acknowledgement.

Authority of the Provost and Reviewing Staff: The Provost, in consultation with the staff listed above or unilaterally, has sole and complete discretion with respect to any decision regarding the approval, suspension, modification, or cancellation of any program involving travel to a country under a travel warning. Decisions of the Provost are final and should a faculty or staff member, or student, choose to travel to such locations regardless of the decision of the Provost, Berry College will not provide academic credit, compensation or reimbursement of expenses, nor logistical/diplomatic/legal support or assistance, and all persons involved may be held responsible for any violations of the faculty/staff handbook, Viking Code, or other applicable policies.