



# go to **guatemala**

MISSION TEAM HANDBOOK: GUATEMALA



[Welcome!](#)

[Preparing for Your Trip](#)

[Accommodations](#)

[Meals](#)

[Clothing/Shoes](#)

[Suggested Packing List](#)

[Flight Information](#)

[Trip Insurance](#)

[Documents/Requirements](#)

[Passport Photo](#)

[Immunization/Health Information](#)

[Other Things You Need to Know](#)

[Information Packet](#)

[Gift Giving Policy](#)

[Team Devotions](#)

[Substance Use Policy](#)

[Trip Photo/Social Media Guidelines](#)

[Child Protection Guidelines](#)

[Losses](#)

[Emergency Contacts](#)

[Currency in Guatemala](#)

[Financial Information](#)

[Cancellation Procedures](#)

[Common Spanish Words & Phrases](#)

[The Trip is Just the Beginning!](#)



# welcome!

**Thank you for choosing a Lifeline trip!** At Lifeline, we want you to see how God is working around the world and to join Him there! We believe in healthy relationships and empowering partnerships, so every trip is designed in partnership with the local leaders. We work together to determine meaningful opportunities for people to experience what God is doing through Lifeline's field ministries.

**There are many ways for teams to learn, participate, and serve in ministry alongside our brothers and sisters in Guatemala.** The primary goal in all of Lifeline's ministries is to make a kingdom impact around the world!



“

***The Great Commission is not about us making something happen on the mission field, but about humbly coming alongside what God is doing in the world.***

*- Dr. Chris DeWalt, Ozark Christian College Director of Intercultural Studies*

”



# preparing for your trip

**One of the most important things you can do to ensure you experience the best possible trip is to plan ahead.** Please read through the handbook and know what is expected of you. Be ready to learn and participate in all of the pre and post-trip training sessions. If you have traveled on a mission trip before, we ask that you set aside any expectations, and come prepared for God to move in a new way! Another important note is that travel can be unpredictable & Lifeline trips always require flexibility, but you can eliminate many "surprises" by being well-prepared.

## ACCOMMODATIONS

- **Accommodations will be at a retreat center in Guatemala City.** Men's and women's cabins equipped with beds, showers, sinks and modern restrooms.
- Bedding and towels are provided unless otherwise instructed.
- If you are a light sleeper we suggest you bring earplugs in case you have a snorer.
- Guatemala uses the same electricity as the U.S. No adapter needed.
- WIFI access will not be available for team members.



Cabins at the retreat center in Guatemala City

## MEALS

- The tap water is not safe to drink or brush teeth.
- Lifeline will provide safe drinking water.
- Drink nothing away from the mission unless you are told it is safe. The water at the restaurants we visit is usually safe to drink. If not, Lifeline staff will inform you. Check with Lifeline Field Guides if you are uncertain.
- Breakfast will be at the retreat center. Most lunches and suppers will be prepared by ladies from the local church. A few meals may be at local restaurants.
- Come prepared to purchase one meal in Guatemala.
- **Food Allergies:** Please inform Lifeline in advance as to the nature and severity of any food or other allergies (gluten, nut, dairy, etc.). Lifeline is unable to accommodate food allergies, sensitivities, or preferences. In some locations we are able to provide a few gluten-free options, but we need to know well in advance. Participants with food allergies or sensitivities are encouraged to bring their own food items to supplement the meals we provide. We are not able to avoid cross contamination.

## CLOTHING/SHOES

The Guatemalan field staff has asked that you abide by the following dress code. This may require you to dress differently than you are accustomed to, however, it is a way to honor and respect the community where you will be serving.

Bring seasonally appropriate, modest clothing. Think conservative and comfortable. The temperatures average between 66-72°F.

- Laundry services are not available. Bring enough clothing for the entire trip.
- For safety, please keep jewelry to a minimum.
- Light jacket. It can get cool in the evenings.







## WOMEN

- Ladies may wear skirts, pants, jeans or capri length pants (mid-calf length). No holes in jeans/capris/etc.
- No shorts.
- No yoga pants, leggings, or other tight pants. These items may **only** be worn in the dorms for sleeping.

### Tops:

- Midriff, chest, back, underwear and bra must be covered.
- Sleeveless tops may be worn. Please no tank tops, halter tops, spaghetti straps or low necklines.

### Shoes

- Comfortable walking/work shoes, such as sneakers or work boots for working and walking.
- Shoes for church services.
- Flip-flops to wear in dorms and showers. No flip-flops or sandals at the worksites. Never go barefoot.

### Church Services & Women's Events

- Dresses, skirts (at least knee length) or nice pants may be worn to church services or special women's events

### Swimwear (if swimming is included on your trip)

- Full coverage one-piece or tankini (no bare midriffs)

## MEN

- **Shorts** or **jeans** may be worn for work. No holes in jeans/shorts or exposed underwear.
- For church, khaki-type pants or nice jeans and a collared shirt. No shorts.
- Shirts must be worn at all times except in the sleeping room.
- Tank tops or low armholes may be worn in the sleeping room only.

### Shoes

- Comfortable walking/work shoes, such as sneakers or work boots for working and walking.
- Shoes for church service.
- Flip flops/shower shoes in the retreat center and shower. Flip-flops and sandals are not permitted at the worksites. Never go barefoot.

### Swimwear (if swimming is included on your trip)

- Trunks. No Speedos!

**NOTE: In this local culture, tattoos, body piercings and men wearing jewelry are not well received. Out of respect for their culture we ask that you abide by the following guidelines:**

- **Tattoos** must be covered at **all** times except when in the hotel rooms.
- **Men:** No gauges or jewelry except wedding bands. Flesh colored gauges are acceptable.
- **Women:** No piercings except earrings in ears.

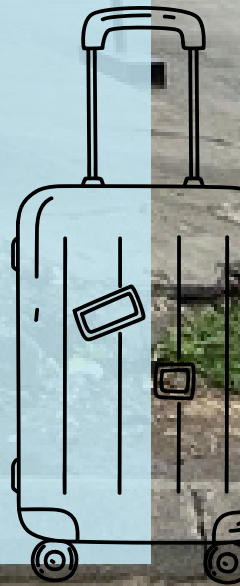


## SUGGESTED PACKING LIST

- Passport & Copy of the first two pages of passport (picture pages; packed separate from passport)
- Refillable water bottle that can be used all week
- Bible
- Journal & pen
- Clothing & Shoes (See guidelines)
- Covering for exposed tattoos (see note above)
- Earplugs – there may be a snorer in your dorm
- Flashlight
- Insect repellent. (Aerosol containers must be packed in checked luggage.)
- **Money:**
  - Food at airports on travel days
  - Offering for approximately 2 church services
  - Souvenirs on shopping day (Average spent - \$50-\$100+)
  - You will need to purchase 1 meal while in Guatemala
  - **NOTE:** Currency must be clean, no tears or marks. If possible, bring a variety of denominations (\$20 & smaller). They will not exchange bills that have marks or are torn
- Personal medications (pack in carry-on bag)
- Photo ID, such as driver's license (optional)
- Sleepwear
- Snacks for your personal use
- Sunglasses, sunscreen & lip balm
- Toiletries (toothbrush, shampoo, etc.)

We encourage teams to bring basic health/First-aid supplies such as:

- Band-aids & Neosporin
- Imodium
- Tylenol; Advil
- Pepto Bismol
- Benadryl (for an allergic reaction)
- Electrolyte replacements





## FLIGHT INFORMATION

All teams are responsible for purchasing their own plane tickets to and from the mission location. Before purchasing plane tickets, you must confirm the itinerary with the Lifeline team.

**Airport: Guatemala City - La Aurora International Airport (GUA)**

**Time frame: 10am-5pm**

**Prefer: Arriving 4-5pm**

**Departure: 9am-12pm**

\*By the request of the Lifeline Field Leaders, please make every effort for your entire team to arrive and depart on the same flight or within an hour of each other. We are not able to accommodate you if you do not arrive/depart within the given time frame.

If you would like to use a travel agent, we recommend High Point Travel. We have partnered with High Point for many years, and they will take good care of you. Our main contact is [amanda@highpointgo.com](mailto:amanda@highpointgo.com).

**Reminder: Flights need to fall within certain arrival and departure times. Refer to your contract for these times and airports. Contact us at [missiontrips@lifeline.org](mailto:missiontrips@lifeline.org) if you have questions.**

## TRIP INSURANCE

Teams may purchase their own short-term medical/evacuation insurance if desired. We recommend working with Adam Bates of Insurance Services of America.

**During an international crisis**, the Department of State helps US citizens primarily in the form of providing safety information and travel warnings. We encourage US citizens traveling abroad to enroll in the Department's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP), which will send you critical information if a crisis develops. But be warned: the Department's ability to help you out of a jam overseas is very limited.

For example, the Department of State does not pay for hospital emergencies and won't cover additional hotel or travel expenses if your trip is interrupted. It cannot replace lost or stolen luggage, and it offers no assistance if your trip is canceled.

Very rarely does the Department provide evacuation assistance. But there's a major "catch": you must promise to pay the transportation expenses! And since Uncle Sam doesn't do anything cheaply, going this route could put quite a dent in your pocketbook.

Thankfully, an international health insurance policy from Insurance Services of America (ISA) can cover the costs of a private medical evacuation.

For more information regarding the services the Department of State offers, please visit: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/emergencies/what-state-dept-can-cant-do-crisis.html>

For further clarification, please contact Adam Bates at [adam@missionaryhealth.net](mailto:adam@missionaryhealth.net)

## DOCUMENTS/REQUIREMENTS

**Minimum age** is 12 years old; 7 years of age for Family Trips.

A **Passport** is required to enter Guatemala. **Passport must not expire within least six months of your travel date** or you will be denied travel by the airlines. If applying for a new passport allow 4-8 weeks to receive it.

**Online Application:** Your team leader has a link to this form. All team members **MUST** complete ASAP (including returning mission team participants).

**Background Check:** For the safety and security of the children we minister to and members of visiting teams, Lifeline requires a criminal background check for all short-term mission trip participants age 18 and older. This service is provided by Choice Screening, who specializes in conducting background checks for volunteers in full compliance with applicable state and federal laws and guidelines, including the Fair Credit Reporting Act.

- If a team member has already had a background check within 2 years of travel date, the check will not need to be run again. However, they must provide a letter stating what tests were run. Please send to [sandy.gleason@lifeline.org](mailto:sandy.gleason@lifeline.org) as soon as possible.



**Parental Consent:** All minors (under age 18) not accompanied by a parent, must have a signed, notarized parental authorization. This document must include parental permission to leave the country. If neither parent is traveling with the child, an adult on the team must be designated to act on behalf of the parents in case of emergency or sickness/accident. You can download and print [this form](#). The form will need to be notarized and carried with the adult responsible for the minor.

### **Requirements to enter/exit the country**

Check the U.S. State Dept. website [Travel.State.Gov](https://travel.state.gov) for current requirements.

### **Health Care Teams Only: Licensure Verification**

All Health Care Professionals must have licensure verification prior to serving on a medical team. This may be done in one of two ways.

1. Individuals may provide Lifeline with a hard copy of professional license before the scheduled trip date.
2. Lifeline will verify licensure via an online database prior to the trip.

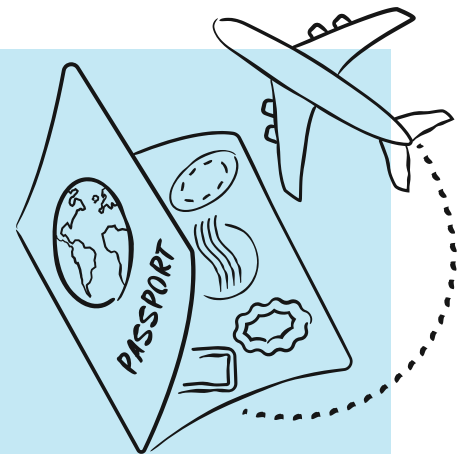
## **PASSPORT PHOTO**


**Team members will need to bring a color photocopy of the picture page of their passport. The team leader will carry those while traveling throughout Guatemala.**

## **IMMUNIZATION/HEALTH INFORMATION**

There are no immunizations required by Lifeline, the U.S. government or the country of Guatemala. Lifeline encourages everyone to **seek professional advice** from their physician or international travel clinic to determine which immunizations are recommended for your personal health needs.

If you have medication you must take regularly or over the counter medications that you prefer, be certain to bring it with you (packed in your carry-on bag).





## OTHER THINGS YOU **NEED TO KNOW**

All Lifeline trip participants must abide by Lifeline's policies, respect Lifeline's doctrinal position and do nothing to act contrary to or against the mission beliefs. Our primary objective is to honor Christ and reflect his image to everyone we come into contact with.

### INFORMATION PACKET

A **Final Information Packet** will be emailed to you approximately 10-14 days prior to your departure. Included will be a tentative schedule, devotion schedule, last minute information, etc.

### GIFT GIVING POLICY

Please note that Lifeline has a strict “no-giving” policy. While it can feel natural to want to meet immediate needs by giving money or goods directly, we’ve learned that sustainable impact comes through relationships, not handouts.

Rather than distributing gifts, we encourage you to invest in building authentic relationships based on mutual learning, understanding, and trust. When material gifts are given directly, it can unintentionally create dependency, damage dignity, or disrupt local relationships and community dynamics. Our goal is to come alongside communities in ways that empower, not enable, and to support long-term growth led by local leaders.

Therefore, no cash or personal gifts should be given to anyone during your trip. If you feel led to give or support, please talk with your Lifeline Field Guides first. They can help you find appropriate, impactful ways to invest in the ministry—such as contributing to community projects or long-term development initiatives—ensuring your generosity aligns with local needs and Lifeline’s mission.

If team members want to leave extra supplies from trainings or other activities, then these items will be given to the country director to distribute at their discretion.



## GIFTS IN KIND (GIK)

Please do not bring items that have NOT been specifically requested by the Lifeline Trips Team. This ensures that all supplies are truly needed and that local leaders have ownership in how they are used.

For items that have been specifically requested from the field—for example, supplies for sports camps, or medical outreach, etc.—[please complete the Gift in Kind \(GIK\) form](#). This form allows you to list any purchased or donated ministry items you plan to take to the mission field (for example: craft materials, sports equipment, or healthcare items). Completing this form helps Lifeline remain transparent and compliant with IRS requirements for tracking donated goods.

Whenever possible, please complete the GIK form before your trip. This helps our team coordinate logistics and make sure your contributions have the greatest positive impact.

## TEAM DEVOTIONS

Each day the team will gather together for a devotion time and to debrief the day. Each team member is expected to prepare and share a brief devotional thought with the team. Your scheduled day will be listed in the final packet. This is a time to share an encouraging word, scripture, or simply what God is doing in your life right now. This is one of our favorite parts of the trip and a great way to get to know each other better! If you have questions, please reach out to your team leader so they can assist you.



## SUBSTANCE USE POLICY

Use of the following **will not** be permitted at any time during your Lifeline trip.

- Alcoholic beverages
- Tobacco, including e-cigarettes, vapes, medical marijuana, and chewing tobacco. Smoking cessation products **are** permitted (ex. Patch, gum, etc.),
- Illicit drugs
- The possession of drugs is considered a major crime in countries where we serve, including medical marijuana.

## TRIP PHOTO/SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

We live in a culture where every latte, sunset, or family gathering is fair game for a photo-op and social media post. But we have to be aware of how our love for photography and social media can play out on a short-term mission trip. Please review and familiarize yourself with [Lifeline's Trip Photo/Social Media Guidelines](#).

## CHILD PROTECTION GUIDELINES

Please review and read our [Child Protection Guidelines](#). Ensuring the safety of everyone on our Lifeline trips is of utmost importance. Familiarizing yourself with these guidelines is essential for maintaining a safe environment for all participants.

## LOSSES

Lifeline Christian Mission and/or its employees or volunteers are not responsible for loss suffered due to illness, accident, injury or theft which may occur at any time in relation to your trip. We do everything possible to prevent these incidents, however, despite our efforts they sometimes occur.

## EMERGENCY CONTACTS

### U.S. Contacts

- Lifeline Christian Mission (U.S.): 614-794-0108  
Monday – Friday 9am – 5 pm ET
- Susan Hammond, Director, Mission Trips: 859-553-6638

### U.S. Embassy

Avenida Reforma 7-01 7-01

Cdad. de Guatemala, Guatemala: +502 2326 4000



## CURRENCY IN GUATEMALA

**If you wish to exchange money, do so at the airport when you arrive in Guatemala.** This will be the only opportunity to exchange money. Do not exchange money on the street with money changers. **NOTE:** Currency must be clean and crisp with no tears or marks. If possible, bring a variety of denominations (\$20 & smaller).

Money will be needed for church offering, shopping and possibly one meal in Guatemala.

## FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Lifeline Christian Mission considers the monies received for mission trips to be tax-deductible donations, therefore, contributions are **non-refundable**. Please Note: Trip credit will not be given if someone drops from the team within 30 days of the trip.

### 8 day/7 night trips

#### Includes

- Lodging and most meals in the mission field
- Transportation in Guatemala including airport pick-up and drop off
- Translators
- Background check
- Supporting services

#### Additional Expenses

- **Cost of Airfare**, hotel, if needed, & meals on travel days
- **Flight interruption costs**, such as hotel, meals, tips, etc., during travel to/from the mission or expenses incurred as a result of canceled flights, delays or missed flights for any reason.
- **Checked baggage fees**
- All costs related to extended stay for **any** reason.
- You may be asked to purchase one meal at a restaurant while in the field.

## CANCELLATION PROCEDURES

**Refunding trip donations:** Due to the nature of tax-deductible donations, Lifeline Christian Mission (LCM) is unable to refund donations made for trip purposes. Trip donations may be designated for another Lifeline ministry or used for a future trip with Lifeline. Funds used for a future trip must be used within one year of the original trip date. **Please Note:** Trip credit will not be given if someone drops from the team within 30 days of the trip.

# common **spanish** words and phrases

Good morning **¡Buenos días!** (BWAY-nos DEE-as)

Good evening **¡Buenas tardes!** (BWAY-nas TAR-des)

Hello **Hola!** (O-la)

How are you? **¿Cómo estás?** (KOH-moh ehs TAHS)

I'm fine, thanks **Estoy bien ¡Gracias!** (eh-STOY bee-en, GRA-see-as)

Thank you **Gracias** (GRAH-see-as)

You're welcome! **¡De nada!** (de NA-dah)

My name is... **Me llamo ...** (Meh YAH-mah); **Mi nombre es...**(mi NOM-bray es ...)

What's your name? **¿Cómo se llama?** (KOH-moh say yah-mah)

Yes / No / OK **Si** (see)/ **No** (no)/ **OK** (OH-keh)

Please **Por favor** (por-fah-VOR)

Excuse me (to get past) **¡Perdone!** (per-DON-ay)

Sorry (for a mistake) **Lo siento** (lo see EN-toh)

Goodbye **Adiós** (ah-dee-OS)

Goodnight **¡Buenas noches!** (bway-nas no-ches)

See you later **¡Hasta luego!** (AS-ta loo-AY-go)

See you tomorrow **¡Hasta mañana!** (AS-ta man-YAN-a)

I don't understand. **No entiendo.** (NOH ehn-TYEHN-doh)

Do you speak English? **¿Hablas inglés?** (AB-las in-glAYs)

I don't speak Spanish. **No hablo español.** (noh AH-bloh ehs-pah-NYOHL)

Where is the bathroom? **¿Dónde está el baño?** (DON-day es-TAH el BAN-yo)



# The Trip is Just the Beginning!

It is our joy to come alongside our local leaders in ministry, encourage them, and see the difference that they are making in the kingdom! They are on mission to make a great impact in their communities.

Our goal is that each person on the trip will be inspired to join God on mission, too! We believe that each person is called to bring hope into their own homes and communities. How lives will be sparked on mission by God will be different for each person; but, God invites us to join Him on mission wherever that may be. We pray that Short-Term Mission Trip Experiences will be fertile ground for God to prepare His people for mission abroad, but also in their own homes, jobs, and communities.