

Understanding
Duty of Care
During Corporate
Mobility



Millions of American professionals relocate annually, many taking on exciting international assignments. U.S. businesses are just as excited about these global relocations. After all, global mobility can lay the groundwork for expansion and revenue gain.

But businesses must understand that expatriates can encounter serious safety hazards during and after relocation. Companies organizing and managing global mobility and assignment processes are responsible for addressing these dangers and ensuring employee safety.

Duty of care encapsulates these obligations. Both businesses and relocating employees should clearly understand what duty of care constitutes before navigating employee mobility strategies.

Corporate Responsibility During Employee Relocation

Duty of care, in the context of corporate mobility, is the obligation to protect those under your charge. Organizations sending teams abroad must take on this complex responsibility.

Businesses must also consider employee well-being, which includes not only physical safety but also emotional and mental wellness. Moving to a foreign country can be a stressful experience, especially moving to one with an entirely different culture than what you're used to. Businesses should address this issue by providing comprehensive resources to help relocating employees cope with the stressors that accompany international assignments.

With specific employee safety and well-being concerns in mind, companies can begin to formulate strategies to address them in a formal duty of care policy that should be incorporated into business travel and global mobility policies.

While there are legal obligations that companies must meet, they should go beyond what's legally required of them, not just for the employees' sake, but also for the success of the company. Relocation is an investment, and providing for the productivity and safety of those who relocate will protect and nurture that investment.

But what does that strategy entail? Providing access to reliable mobility vendors is a good start. Employees moving abroad should be able to connect with mobility management companies and other vendors involved in the relocation process.

Employers should also consider offering property insurance to their relocating talent. Although this may not be a legal requirement, providing this option sends the best message about a business and its brand: *We recognize what you, our employee, and your family are undertaking for the benefit of our organization, and we will do our part to allay concerns about your belongings during and after your move.*

How to Find Assignment Success

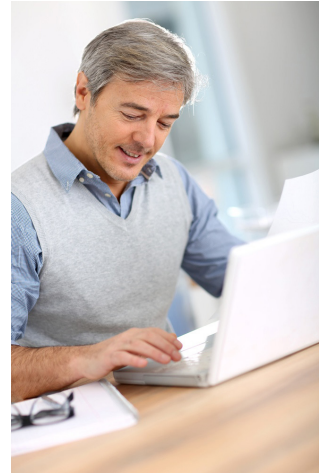
Even employees who are seasoned travelers and excited about embarking on global assignments can experience nervousness and may have trouble living abroad and adapting to unique cultures and customs in the long term.



Adjustment is critical for assignment success. Employees who do not adapt well to their new surroundings may underperform. Anything an employer can do to prepare relocating employees for any initial culture shock, such as offering language and cross-cultural training before the move, can help them immerse themselves in their new communities sooner with greater ease.

Employers can also ensure their assignment policy includes provisions that address duty of care and promote assignment success beyond basic personal safety, such as:

- Evaluating health and medical care laws and customs in the host location to ensure the medical insurance offered to employees and their families is sufficient.
- Ensuring employees' personal information is secure during the relocation process.
- Providing additional benefits tailored to the assignment location, like winter driving courses for locations in cold climates.



Planning for Emergencies

In recent years, a number of large-scale international emergencies have unfolded. Six major hurricanes rocked the globe in 2017, taking thousands of lives and causing billions in damage. Many nations around the world are also struggling with prolonged challenges: armed conflicts, health crises, poverty, political turmoil and more. Each of these variables adds a layer of complexity to corporate mobility and duty of care.

Before enterprises can effectively develop and deploy systems for keeping employees safe while working globally, they should identify the specific risks to be addressed. This depends largely on location. For example, countries such as Switzerland, Norway and Singapore, which rank among the safest expatriate destinations in the world, pose different security challenges than countries like South Africa, Brazil and Nigeria, where there are more serious hazards.

After specific risks are identified, employers must create flexible emergency plans and communicate them effectively to their employees, then give them access to the resources they will need in case of an emergency.

It is also essential to establish an effective system for tracking employees on global assignments. To ensure employee safety and well-being, employers need to know where they are and what they are doing. Whether a company uses an Excel spreadsheet or an online tracking software system, the data must be available instantly, 24 hours a day, from any location in the world to reference during emergency situations.



Ensuring a Safe Employee Relocation

A reliable mobility management partner can help businesses develop and maintain high duty of care standards. With technology and services to assist mobile professionals all over the world, mobility management providers help keep relocated talent safe achieving optimal productivity. For employers, managed corporate mobility services can connect them with real-time data that leads to groundbreaking insights about their global mobility programs.

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