

VHP Volunteer Info Packet

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS & CONTACTS

ILAC (Institute for Latin American Concern)
Centro de Educación para la Salud Integral
7.5 km Carretera Duarte
Licey al Medio
Santiago de los Caballeros
Republica Dominicana

EMERGENCY NUMBERS IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

ILAC Office 1-809-736-0774
(will answer in spanish)

LONG DISTANCE PHONE CALLS & INTERNET AVAILABILITY

Before leaving the US check with your wireless carrier regarding service plans for the Dominican Republic. Most people communicate via apps such as Viber or WhatsApp which should be downloaded before leaving the US.

Internet/email is available at the ILAC Computer Center for limited use to let you notify your family of your safe return. Please be aware that internet/wifi can be spotty.

AIR TRAVEL

Reservations and cost of airplane tickets are the responsibility of the volunteer. When making your flight plans make sure that you are flying directly into **Santiago, Dominican Republic (STI)**

We recommend that you arrive between the hours of 8am and 10pm when ILAC drivers are available. Arriving any later than that is not recommended because it is not safe.

We plan to travel together to simplify the transport of volunteers to the mission site.



DELAYED FLIGHTS/MISSED CONNECTIONS

In the event your flight is delayed more than 2 hours or you miss your connections, please try to call the ILAC Center in Santiago or have someone in the US try to call to relay the information. You can also email us at VHProg@gmail.com

Travel Documents

- A **PASSPORT IS REQUIRED** along with a Photo I.D.
Your airline ticket name must match the name on your passport.
- Before leaving home, make two copies of your documents, including your passport, your driver's license as well as your airline ticket.
- If you're on medication, you should also make copies of prescriptions.
- Travelers are advised to double check airlines' carry on regulations as to what you can and cannot bring.

While at ILAC it is recommended that you keep your passport in an envelope that will be given to you upon arrival. This envelope will in turn be kept in a safe in the office.

Entry Into The Dominican Republic:

A **TOURIST CARD** must be purchased and filled out when you enter the airport in the Dominican Republic. The tourist card counter is the first area you will see when you enter all the DR airports. This card should be purchased first before going through immigration and customs.

Cost is \$10 U.S. dollars. **CASH** only

Fill in the address for the ILAC center in Santiago:

ILAC
7.5 km Carretera Duarte
Licey al Medio, Santiago, RD
Phone: 1-809-736-0095

You may be asked to open your luggage for inspection at customs (do not lock your luggage)

ACCOMMODATION

While in the Dominican Republic we live at ILAC a jesuit mission. The sleeping arrangements consist of dormitory style or two beds in a room. The rooms are clean and utilitarian. Towels are provided but are not adequate, I suggest that you bring your own. (I bring old sheets and towels that I leave at the mission). The cost of food and housing is \$35 per day.

FOOD

Our meals are prepared by trained staff who are accustomed to preparing food for visitors from the United States. Native Dominican cooking combines Spanish influences with local produce. Beef is expensive and local favorites are pork and chicken. There is plenty of locally grown tomatoes, lettuce, cabbage, papaya, plantain and bananas. Local dishes comprising white rice, red beans, stewed meat, salad and fried plantain are featured. Be advised that special diets & food allergies are not able to be accommodated.

DRINK

Native coffee is excellent and very strong. Locally produced beer *Presidente* and rums *Brugal* or *Bermudez* are very good and cheaper than imported alcohol.

It's recommended that you stick to drinking sealed bottled water in the Dominican Republic

Health & Insurance

STAYING HEALTHY-PLAN BEFORE YOU GO

Try to take proper precautions the week before you depart to avoid falling ill while you're away from home. Make an extra effort to eat and sleep well the week before you go- especially if you feel an illness coming on.

Mosquitos are a not only a nuisance but disease carrying as well. (For example - malaria, zika etc.) Review the CDC website (CDC.gov) for additional notifications and warnings. Consult your doctor for preventative medicine at least 8 weeks before you leave.

To note, prior to our arrival the ILAC compound is sprayed for mosquitoes and gnats. The mosquitoes are not eliminated but the numbers are drastically reduced.

Vaccinations are not required for entering the Caribbean if you're coming from the United States, Britain or Canada.

Infectious hepatitis has been reported in the Dominican Republic and Haiti. Unless you have been immunized for both hepatitis A and B, consult your doctor about the advisability of getting a gamma-globulin shot before you leave.

WHILE ON LOCATION

It's best to drink sealed bottled water during your trip.

If you experience diarrhea, moderate your eating habits and drink only mineral water until you recover. If symptoms persist, notify VHP team leader immediately.

The caribbean sun can be brutal. Wear sunglasses a hat and use sunscreen liberally.

One of the biggest menaces are the "no-see-um", which appear mainly in the early evening. You can't see these gnats, but you sure can "feel um". Screens can't keep these critters out, so carry your favorite bug repellent.

IF YOU GET SICK AWAY FROM HOME

If you worry about getting sick away from home, you may want to consider medical travel insurance. Your existing health insurance should cover you if you get sick (though if you belong to an HMO, check to see whether you are fully covered while away from home). If you need hospital treatment, most health insurance plans and HMO's cover out-of-country hospital visits and procedures, at least to some extent. Most make you pay the bills up front at the time of care, however, and you'll get a refund only after you've returned and filled all the paperwork.

If you require additional insurance, try one of the following companies:

MEDEA International
P.O. Box 5375
Limonium, MD 21094-5375
(tel. 888/MEDEA-00 or 410-453-6300; fax 410-453-6301; www.medexassist.com)

Travel Assistance International (Worldwide Assistance Services Inc.)
1133 15th Street NW
Suite 400
Washington, DC 20005

VHP
The Volunteer Health Program
c/o Darlene DellaRocca
18 Upland Street
East Greenwich, Ct. 06831