

**Travel Abroad  
Information  
Session**

**April 2024**

# Introduction

Presentation covers top travel abroad tips for faculty and PIs.

- Not comprehensive but highlights of topics that we've heard may be of interest

We have experts from various offices to present lightning talks and answer questions

- There will be contact information for each of the topics/offices
- If unsure, please reach out to [internationalhelp@mit.edu](mailto:internationalhelp@mit.edu)

# Agenda

## Topics:

Research Security and Export Control

Interactions at Airports and International Borders

Electronic Device Security and Loaner Program

Personal Travel Safety and Security

Other Resources

## Speaker:

Greg Moffatt, Chief Research Compliance Officer  
Office of the VP for Research

Matthew Fucci, Counsel  
Office of the General Counsel

Kyle Filipe, Director of IT Support Services  
IS&T

Todd Holmes, Program Mgr, Int'l Safety and Security  
MIT Emergency Management

Magdalene Lee, Director Global Support  
Office of the Vice Provost for International Activities

# Research Security and Export Control

Greg Moffatt

Chief Research Compliance Officer

Office of the VP for Research

# Background - Export Control and Other Restrictions

## Export Control

- Due to foreign policy and national security concerns, U.S. government has export control regulations in place. Controls vary by country, institutions, etc. and can restrict what is exported. Restrictions can be non-obvious.
- Engagements with colleagues outside the U.S. are subject to export control laws. Everything that crosses the U.S. border is considered an export: Products, equipment, materials, software, technology, information, and “services.”\*
- However, publicly available information and **results** of fundamental research are generally not covered by export control regulations.

\* Services are broadly defined. Examples include instruction, advice, giving a keynote speech, accepting an award, etc.

## Other Restrictions

Interactions with certain international entities and persons are restricted

### Sanctions by Statute or Executive Order:

- Iran, N. Korea, Syria, Russia-controlled Crimea, Cuba
- Other countries of concern: Russia, Belarus, Russia-occupied Ukraine areas, and Venezuela (government-connected entities)

### Denied/restricted party restrictions:

- Prohibitions are specific to persons or institutions— Entity and Unverified Lists, SDNs (Specially Designated Nationals), etc.

### Entity/Unverified Lists:

- Imposes individual export licensing requirements that are not otherwise in place. Practical impact - cannot receive items that others in the same country can without a license being obtained.

# We Can Help – Please Contact Us

## Why:

- Some institutions (and individuals) are restricted for export control or other risks associated with them. These are not always obvious, but MIT's export control office can help.

## When:

- Traveling to a high-risk country (Check [U.S. State Department Travel Advisories](#) and/or the export control office)
- Considering an informal collaboration\* with person or entity in high-risk country
- Taking technology (physical item or prototype) with you anywhere out of the country
- Anytime you have concerns or questions

## How:

- Contact the [export control office](#)
  - Janet C. Johnston (978 590 0974); Kate Donovan (617 715 2886)
  - <https://research.mit.edu/integrity-and-compliance/export-control>
- Use the Informal International Collaborations tool <https://iic.mit.edu/iic/#/home>

\*Please note: for formal collaborations where MIT is a signatory to an agreement, assessment of these collaborations is addressed through normal MIT processes



# General Travel Advice

## Laptops/Mobile Phones

- Don't take anything controlled with you
- In presenting, stick to previously published material
- Be aware of what kind of data you receive through your mobile phone
- Retain “effective control” over phones, laptops, etc. (on your person, in hotel safe, etc. Checked baggage is **NOT** deemed to constitute effective control.)

## Other Equipment

- It is strongly advised to ship material --through third-party carriers to ensure proper compliance with EHS regulations, export control clearances, liability if items are damaged, and other procedures.
- Shipping with intermediate stops can be an export to those countries!

## Field Work

- University research activity done outside the U.S. may not qualify for the Fundamental Research Exclusion. Any physical items or prototype deployed in a foreign country is an export – please contact export control for assistance.

## For more details:

<https://research.mit.edu/integrity-and-compliance/export-control/scholarly-activities/international-travel>

# **Interactions at Airports and International Borders**

Matthew Fucci

Counsel

Office of the General Counsel



# Researchers Are Getting Stopped at Airports and Borders

We observe that the majority of prolonged border stoppages for researchers and students are a result of U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agents questioning either:

- (1) **Data** or other information related to the traveler's area of research contained on electronic devices or
- (2) **Research materials or specialized equipment** being carried by the traveler

# How to Reduce Your Risk at the Border

Carry only what you need

- (1) Contact your local IT support provider or [IS&T](#) to ask for a **loaner laptop and/or mobile device** that can be configured with minimum software and data needed
- (2) Instead of hand-carrying research materials or specialized equipment, you should **ship research materials and equipment separately to your destination**

# Additional Documentation

- You may also choose to secure and carry with you **a letter from your supervisor or department head** noting the data you may be traveling with and the purpose of taking it abroad
- This letter helps answer questions a CBP agent or other border agent may ask and gives them **a contact person at MIT to verify the information**
- A sample letter is available on the OGC website: <https://ogc.mit.edu/template-travel-authorization-letter>

# If You Get Stopped and Questioned in the U.S.

(Laws Elsewhere Vary)

- CBP agents do not need a special reason to search or question you at the border
- Not a criminal detention, so **you do not have the right to contact an attorney** (unless you are being placed under arrest)
- **You do not have to assist in a search** by giving device passwords (although CBP may seize your devices); You have right to remain silent
- **Ask for a receipt** if CBP seizes a device (which they may retain for weeks or months)
- Failure to cooperate may affect immigration or visa process for non-U.S. persons

# More Details Available on OGC Website

<https://ogc.mit.edu/latest/international-travel-preparation>

- PDF “pocket reference cards” available with key points that can be carried when traveling

<https://ogc.mit.edu/template-travel-authorization-letter>

# Device Security and Loaner Program

Kyle Filipe  
Director of IT Support Services  
IS&T

# Secure Data Travel Recommendations - Highlights

## Before Travel:

- Backup your data. IS&T makes [CrashPlan](#) available for free to the community
- If don't have currently: [encrypt](#) your devices; install security applications ([Crowdstrike](#), [Sophos](#), [VPN client](#))
- Bring the least amount of information and data on the fewest devices possible. Store potentially sensitive material on an encrypted flash drive
- Consider new loaner device program (more to come)

## During Travel:

- Use [MIT's VPN](#) (if not prohibited) to create a more secure connection between your devices and the resources you need to access
- Do not use unknown USB drives
- Avoid downloading and using apps that sync data, and instead use outlook.com or owa.mit.edu for email, Dropbox on the web, etc.

## After Travel:

- If you traveled with a loaner device, or wiped your devices before traveling:
  - Copy any data you've modified onto an external drive
  - Scan the data for viruses. IS&T makes [Sophos](#) anti-virus software available for free for the community
- Reset passwords



# A New, FREE Loaner Device Program

## Why should I borrow loaner devices?

- Using loaner device is more straight forward than the complex process of configuring your personal device
- Devices are already configured with settings to achieve a more secure computing experience
- Less risk with loss/loss/theft or confiscation. IS&T can lock or wipe the devices to protect the data they contain under certain scenarios.

## What devices are being offered?

- Travelers may request up to one laptop, one tablet, and one phone (free cellular data plans available if needed).
- A base suite of apps are currently installed on all issued devices. Additional apps may be added to devices upon request; we are flexible and will review all app requests to ensure the devices are able to support your work

## Who can borrow devices?

- Faculty, staff, and students

## When should I borrow devices?

- Can borrow anytime you are traveling abroad (business or personal) and encourage this
- MIT **strongly recommends** borrowing devices when traveling to any destination with a **Level 3 or higher** travel advisory [designated by the US Department of State](#).

## How do I submit a request?

- Visit IS&T's [Secure Devices for International Travel](#) website to learn more and submit your request.

# Additional IT Guidance

- [Travel and Technology guidance](#) in the Knowledge Base
- [Secure Travel Recommendations](#) for “High Risk” destinations
- [Secure Devices for International Travel](#) IS&T loaner program
- [Protecting Information at MIT](#)

Questions? Email [ist-loaners@mit.edu](mailto:ist-loaners@mit.edu)

**KB** The Knowledge Base

[Home](#) [Edit](#) [View](#) [Watch](#) [Comment](#) [History](#)

## Travel and Technology Landing Page

On this page:

- Overview
  - Before you travel
    - ✓ Back up your laptop
    - ✓ Back up your mobile device
    - ✓ Secure your computer...
    - ✓ ... and its data
    - ✓ Test your software
    - ✓ Plan for connectivity
    - ✓ Check all necessary chargers and cables
    - ✓ Update voicemail greetings and e-mail auto-responders
    - ✓ Have a "Plan B"
  - While traveling
    - ✓ Never leave your device unattended
    - ✓ Whenever possible use the MIT VPN client
    - ✓ Check your mobile device settings
  - After you travel
    - ✓ Perform a full virus-scan of your computer
    - ✓ Reset any e-mail automatic replies or voicemail greetings
  - International travel considerations
  - Resources
  - See also

# **Personal Travel Safety and Security**

Todd Holmes

Program Manger, International Safety and Security

MIT Emergency Management

# Top Things to Know for International Travel Safety

## Key Resource: [International SOS \(ISOS\)](#)

- A global medical and security assistance company that provides support services to the MIT community while abroad. Examples:
  - Appropriate medical care recommendations
  - Over the phone interpretation services
  - Medical or other evacuations if needed
  - Not insurance – check with your medical insurance provider on overseas coverage
- Provides pre-trip or in-trip risk preparedness advice
- Contact 24 hours a day, year-round by phone (+1 215 942 8478) or through [ISOS app](#)

# Top Things to Know for International Travel Safety cont

- **Pre-trip travel risk planning**
  - Review the U.S. State Department [Destination guide](#) and [Travel Advisories](#).
  - MIT [high-risk travel destination list](#) is also available
  - Download the International SOS assistance app ([app.internationalsos.com](http://app.internationalsos.com))
  - Reach out to [Todd Holmes](#) for consultation, advice, and planning
  
- **Incident response**
  - After addressing immediate emergency, **contact ISOS**. They will facilitate and activate resources needed for the situation and assist with questions
  
- **Additional information available:**
  - Guide on “[Preparing to Travel Safely](#)”
  - [gsr.mit.edu/travel-safety-abroad](http://gsr.mit.edu/travel-safety-abroad)

# Other Resources

Magdalene Lee  
Director Global Support  
Office of the Vice Provost for International Activities

# Other Resources

Topic	Details
Field research or work	EHS can assist in determining your <a href="#">field activity safety</a> needs. Planning information and factsheets available
Travel health	<a href="#">MIT Travel Health Clinic</a> can provide advice, immunizations and specialized medications for travel abroad
Cultural resources	MIT has licensed Aperian's <a href="#">GlobeSmart</a> , an online resource containing culture guides for over 100 countries
Trip leader	<a href="#">Taking students abroad?</a> MISTI can provide support and advice. Students can participate in their health and safety training (misti@mit.edu)



# Key Takeaways

## Research Security and Export Control

- Export control regulations vary by country and institution. Interactions with certain international entities and persons are restricted.
- When in doubt, contact [Export Control Office](#) or use [Informal International Collaboration tools](#)

## Interactions at Airports and International Borders

- To reduce the chance of a prolonged border stoppage, carry only what you need when traveling internationally and obtain a department head or supervisor letter to take with you

## Device Security and Loaner Program

- Secure your data and devices before your trip
- Get free loaner devices when traveling internationally and especially to destinations with a Level 2+ travel advisory designated by DoS

## Personal Travel Safety and Security

- Download [ISOS App](#) prior to your trip. Contact International SOS during emergencies while traveling internationally.
- Contact [Todd Holmes](#) for pre-trip advice and consultation



# Conclusion

Thank you for your time!

All information, including slides, can be found at the **MIT Global Support Resources Website** (aggregator of international topics and information at MIT)

Website: [gsr.mit.edu](https://gsr.mit.edu)

Email: [Internationalhelp@mit.edu](mailto:Internationalhelp@mit.edu)

We would like your feedback to improve this program

MIT GLOBAL SUPPORT RESOURCES

MIT GLOBAL SUPPORT RESOURCES

## Start smart on international engagements

You have arrived at the MIT Global Support Resources (GSR) website, where we bring together the essential administrative resources from across MIT to assist members of our community in planning and managing their global activities. This service is provided by the Office of the Vice Provost for International Activities in collaboration with the International Coordinating Committee (ICC).

### Travel abroad information session

The Office of the Vice Provost for International Activities sponsored an [information session \(pdf\)](#) on international travel on December 7, 2022. MIT experts spoke and answered questions on a range of topics related to traveling abroad.

[WATCH THE SESSION](#)

#### GET HELP WITH:

- Preparing to travel safely
- Accessing GlobeSmart culture guides (101 countries!)
- Working or hiring abroad
- Sending students abroad
- Initiating an international agreement
- Understanding elevated-risk project review
- Navigating federal compliance regulations
- Hosting visitors at MIT

Not sure where to start?  
[REACH OUT TO ONE OF OUR EXPERTS](#)