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	Short Term Mission Trip Preparation Guide	Revision #	Basic
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Purpose: To provide instruction and guidance to short term mission travelers to help ensure a complete and smooth preparation process for a short term mission trip.

Related Standards and Procedures:

- RAM003 – Mission Trip Procedure
- RAM006 – Mission Trip Planning Process
- RAM010 – Donated Drug Guidelines

Procedure:

**INTRODUCTION:**

**CONGRATULATIONS!** You have made the decision to join in a mission trip, which is being facilitated by the Romanian-American Mission (RAM).

RAM is a mission organization bringing together Great Commission Christians, churches and groups of churches from all across America to accomplish in Romania and beyond the task our Lord gave His church in Matthew 28:19-20, ***“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”***



*Please take some time to read in detail the information in this packet. It provides everything you need to get ready for the trip. You'll learn what to pray for, how to fundraise, what to pack, and more. For further information, please contact your Trip Leader, or e-mail us at [ramromaniadecatur@gmail.com](mailto:ramromaniadecatur@gmail.com). Get ready for a great trip!*

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## PREPARATION FOR THE TRIP

Spiritual Preparation: You must be spiritually prepared for the experience ahead of you. Do you talk with the Lord daily and spend time listening to Him? Are you seeking God's will for how you can be used on this mission trip? You cannot know what He wants unless you spend quality time with Him. Commit yourself to the spiritual disciplines of church attendance, daily Bible study and prayer. Spiritual preparation takes time. Don't wait until the last minute.

### 1) Pray

The key to our effectiveness this trip is prayer. Our ministry starts now through prayer, not just when we get there. Consider praying daily for the following as you prepare your heart and as God prepares our way. Enlist others who will pray with you, and for you.

- Effective ministry to the nationals
- Unity on the mission team
- Team leadership
- Fundraising
- For God to give you His heart for the lost
- Health
- Prayer support and financial partnership

### 2) Fundraise

Fundraising is a great way to involve others in your mission trip. It can be a great faith-building experience as well. The following steps are imperative as you start fundraising:

- Pray and ask God for grace and favor (James 2:2-3)
- Find out your financial deadlines from your Trip Leader or the RAM office.
- Send out a letter to everyone you know: friends, family, co-workers, church members, neighbors, etc. Don't leave anyone out. You may not know through whom God wants to work to support your mission trip.

## Writing Support Letters

### What to include in the letter

- Name, trip, cost and deadlines
- What you will be doing on the trip
- What role your supporters play
- Mailing procedures

### What to include in your fundraiser mailed envelope:

- Support Letter (see sample below)
- Self-Addressed, Stamped Envelope

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Sample fundraising letter

[Date]

[name of potential supporter]

[address]

[city] [state] [zip]

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

God has opened the door for me to go on a short-term mission trip to [Country] with Romanian-American Mission [date]. We will be working with existing churches that are starting new churches there. I will be teamed up with one or more Romanian Christians as [we go door-to-door telling people about Jesus Christ through translators and bilingual literature (or) we offer free medical service to the poor in the name of Jesus Christ].

I am writing this letter to ask for your help! This is a team project, and you are needed on our team.

First, we need your prayers for the spiritual battles ahead.

Second, I pray that you may consider helping cover part of the cost for this trip.

The total cost is \$ 2,845.00 and much of this amount is due immediately. If you would like to join us in this, please make your check payable to "Romanian-American Mission" or simply "RAM" and return it either to me or mail it to the RAM office at the address below or you can use the PayPal donate button on the RAM website.

If you send a payment directly to RAM by mail or via PayPal or via E-Giving, please indicate a separate note with the name of the traveler your donation is supporting (please do not write this on your check). Your donation is tax deductible and you will be sent a tax statement for income tax purposes at the end of the year!

May the Lord greatly reward for your support to missions! Thank you for praying about being part of our team.

God bless you!

[Your Name]

## Financial Details

Before you (or your sponsor) mail funds to RAM:

- Ensure that all checks have been made payable to Romanian-American Mission or RAM.
- Do not send cash.
- Copy all checks for your own records before sending.
- Send in your funds by the initial (90day) and final (45day) payment deadlines.

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### Financial Policies

Be sure to inform your sponsors of the following:

To receive a tax deduction, travelers or sponsors must make their checks payable to RAM.

RAM has been recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a tax-exempt organization detailed in the Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c) 3 and is eligible to receive tax-deductible donations. All contributions are solicited with the understanding that RAM has the complete discretion and control over the use of all donated funds. Contributions are NOT refundable nor can the donor or mission traveler request the contribution be designated to another person's account. All funds received are at all times under the complete discretion and control of RAM. Donated funds will be used in the furtherance of RAM's tax-exempt purposes for missions work and evangelism.

Sponsors are NOT to place your name anywhere on the check. When sponsors send in a check, it should be accompanied by a note stating that the gift to was made as a result of a request by <name of missionary>. If the check happens to be made out to you, please be sure to endorse the check before sending it into RAM (however, the donor will not be able to receive a tax deduction in this case).

### RAM Cancellation Policy

If a mission traveler cancels his/her plans to go on a mission trip, funds raised on behalf of their mission trip will go to cover other mission costs at the discretion of RAM.

### Be sure to say Thank You

After you receive a gift from someone, be sure to send a thank you note. Let them know that you appreciate their support and partnership on this trip. Another suggestion: send them a postcard and let them know about the exciting things that God did on the trip and how they were a vital part of the work there. Start thinking now about how you'd like to follow up with them after the trip (e.g. send a trip report, host a follow-up coffee, etc.)

### 3) Secure Your Passport

If you do not already have a passport, you must obtain a passport prior to travel and should receive the necessary immunizations for the local you are traveling to.

You will need two identical 2"x2" headshot photos which can be taken at some post offices, and other places like Walgreens, CVS, etc.

You may get a passport application form from your local post office. However, the application must be submitted at a designated location. It is a good idea to complete the application prior to going to submitting it; however, do not sign it until you are in the presence of the clerk. To obtain a new passport see below or go to the State Department website as follows:

<http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/passports/new.html>

Expect a minimum wait of six weeks for the return of your passport via mail. This process could take longer, especially closer to summer. Therefore, it is important that you apply as soon as possible!

Be sure to make a record of your passport number, date and place of issue. This is necessary to have in the event your passport is lost or stolen.

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**IMPORTANT: You should make three copies of this information.**

- Take one copy with you and keep in a separate location from your passport – in your luggage or carry-on.
- Leave the other copy in a safe location at home, perhaps with relatives or friends.
- Mail the third copy to the RAM office at 2801 HW 31 South, Decatur, AL 35603.

If your passport were to be lost, it would be much easier and faster to get a replacement if you have this recorded information available.

Record your blood type, Rh factor and immunization dates in the back of your passport.

#### **4) Get Your Immunizations**

Immunizations may be required for your trip depending on the country you are visiting. However, our doctors recommend Tetanus and Hepatitis A as the two immunizations to be obtained. Those working with the medical team should also obtain Hepatitis B. It is best to get your immunizations as soon as possible.

#### **5) Exercise Program**

On the trip, you will be walking a great deal and climbing stairs. Physical fitness is not an option – it is a necessity! To best prepare for this, you should immediately start walking 1 – 2 miles daily between now and departure time. Stair climbing is also very good. Take every opportunity to exercise. Don't fight so hard for the parking spot closest to the door! You'll feel much better for it!

#### **6) Helpful Travel Tips**

##### **A. PACKING**

**CARRY-ON BAG:** On the airplane, each person will be allowed to take one carry-on bag which must be of a size that will fit either under the seat in front of you or in the overhead bin. (Ladies, you may also take a purse, which doesn't count as a carry-on.) If you have any doubt about the size of your carry-on, there are size guide frames at the airport that you can put your carry-on in to determine if it is too large. If you are concerned about this, you might take your bag out to the airport ahead of the departure date and check to make sure it's okay. (Note: If it is too large, you WILL NOT be allowed to carry it on. The airlines have gotten much stricter about this than in the past.)

**Liquids and Containers:** The quantity of liquids, gels, pastes, etc. that you can take in your carry-on bag is now strictly limited. Examples of liquids and gels included in these security measures are:

- Beverages
- Creams, lotions and oils
- Perfumes
- Mascara and other liquid makeup
- Hair gel
- Hair spray
- Shampoo
- Sunscreen
- Toothpaste

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- Contents of pressurized containers, including shaving foam, other foams and deodorants
- Other items of similar consistency

**3-1-1 RULES for Carry-ons:**

**LIMIT ALL LIQUIDS, GELS, AEROSOLS AND PASTES TO A MAXIMUM CONTAINER OF 3.4 OZ/100 ML.**

**PLACE ALL SUCH ITEMS IN ONE QUART-SIZE, CLEAR PLASTIC, ZIPLOCK BAG.**

**ONE BAG PER PASSENGER**

**REMOVE YOUR QUART-SIZE BAG FROM YOUR CARRY-ON AND PLACE IN THE APPROPRIATE BIN AS YOU APPROACH THE SECURITY CHECKPOINT.**

**Declare larger liquids:** In addition to one quart size zip lock bag, you can carry in your carry-on bag any necessary medicines and dietary requirements for use during the trip. Be sure to declare these items for inspection at the checkpoint. These should all be in the original container, such as the prescription bottle from the drugstore.

NOTE: Except for the limited quantity of liquids in your carry-on bag described above, all other liquids should be packed in your checked luggage. There is no limit in the checked luggage. (Be sure to place all liquid containers inside zip lock bags to avoid spillage on your clothes.)

It is **essential** that in your carry-on you pack one change of underwear, nightclothes and one outfit of clothes, along with basic toiletries and any medications you take daily. That way, if your luggage is lost or delayed, you'll have at least two changes of clothes for the trip (what you have on and what you carry on). You cannot imagine how important this is until it happens to you!

Check with TSA or the Airlines for current limitations of liquids.

**TIPS FOR GOING THROUGH SECURITY CHECKPOINTS:**

These simple hints will usually help you to breeze right through security:

- Travel light – minimal clutter will expedite the screening process
- Leave lighters and matches at home
- Pack in your checked baggage any pocket knives, files, scissors and any other sharp objects.
- Be ready to take off your shoes. Put belts, cell phones, cameras in the bin provided.
- If taking a laptop, take it out of the case and place it in the bin provided.
- Have two forms of identification (passport and drivers license) and your boarding pass out and ready to show.

**CHECKED LUGGAGE:** Each person is allowed to check one piece of luggage. However, ***you may be required to carry a second piece will be utilized by your team to transport humanitarian items for the mission trip such as medicines, Bible school supplies, etc.*** Your team leader will let you know whether or not you actually need to provide the second piece of luggage or if it will be provided by the team. In the past, some teams have used donated “disposable” suitcases that might be given by church members or purchased cheaply at garage sales.

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You will typically be allowed to check only one piece of luggage for your clothes and personal items. Each bag must weigh **no more than** 50 pounds. The overall dimensions cannot exceed 62 inches (height plus depth plus width). When packing your bag, you can easily weigh it by using your bathroom scales. Weigh yourself without the bag, then hold the bag and weigh yourself. The difference, of course, is the weight of the bag. The airlines are **very strict** about the weight and size limitation. Don't try to "fudge" on the 50 pounds, or you'll have to unpack something and leave it behind at the airport (how embarrassing!). Your carry-on must fit under your seat and cannot weigh more than 20 lbs.

Be sure that all of your bags have identification tags including your name, local address, phone number. It is a good idea to put the same identification information on the inside of your bag on an index card or piece of paper. That way, if the tags on the outside of the bag were to get torn off, at least your bags could still be identified. It is also a good idea to "mark" each of your bags somehow (colored ribbon, sticker or pom-pom tied to the handle) to make them easy for you to identify at baggage claim.



## 7) Suggested Packing List

**NOTE: Before packing, take time to think about the fact that everything you take with you that has value must be kept in your possession at all times! When you leave your hotel room each day, you must take with you all valuables. During the day, when you are "out and about", you must keep everything in sight (preferably on your body). Therefore, if you do not want to carry something around all of the time, it might be best to leave it at home!**

\_\_\_\_\_ Camera, film and batteries

\_\_\_\_\_ Alarm clock (preferably battery-operated)

\_\_\_\_\_ Prescription drugs to last duration of trip (Always carry prescription medicines in the original container from the drugstore with the label on it. If your bag is checked at customs, you might not be allowed to keep drugs in unmarked bottles or bags. This applies to over-the-counter drugs as well. Leave them in their original packaging.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Sunscreen (This is very important – especially if you are street-witnessing. Sunburn can make you feel miserable.)

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\_\_\_\_\_ Insect repellent Take spray repellent- you will need it to spray your room and on curtains at night. (In some locations, the windows might not have any screens!).

\_\_\_\_\_ Handi-wash packets (anti-bacterial type) and anti-bacterial gel to carry in your backpack for hand washing when soap and water is unavailable

\_\_\_\_\_ Hair grooming items, such as comb and brush

\_\_\_\_\_ Hair styler/dryer (dual voltage ones 110/220 V recommended)

\_\_\_\_\_ Soap, deodorant and shampoo

\_\_\_\_\_ Toothbrush and toothpaste

\_\_\_\_\_ Pen, paper and envelopes

\_\_\_\_\_ Addresses of those you may want to write back home

\_\_\_\_\_ Prescription glasses, contacts (with all cleaning supplies, etc.) and sunglasses (Particularly if you are very dependent on your glasses to see, carry an extra pair if you have one. It is also a good idea to carry a copy of your eyeglass prescription with you.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Breath mints (important witnessing tool!)

\_\_\_\_\_ Small flashlight (This can come in very handy. Some hotel corridors are not well lit, and the flashlight will help you find your room!)

\_\_\_\_\_ Toilet paper - Small travel packages of tissues are good to carry with you in your backpack to use during the day when away from the hotel.

\_\_\_\_\_ Bible and devotional reading material

\_\_\_\_\_ Woolite or other detergent for hand washing clothes

\_\_\_\_\_ Kleenex (small travel packages take up less space)

\_\_\_\_\_ Pajamas, robe

\_\_\_\_\_ Shaving supplies

\_\_\_\_\_ Shirts/blouses

\_\_\_\_\_ Pants/jeans (Men will need slacks for during the day and for night services. Ladies can wear slacks during the day, but should not wear slacks at any church services. Younger girls (youth) can wear slacks or jeans to church services.

**Important: All missionaries must dress modestly! No low cut attire or short skirts. No spaghetti strap tops. The purchase or use of alcohol or tobacco, or illegal drugs is prohibited.**

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\_\_\_\_\_ Walking shorts (It is okay for men and women to wear shorts during the day, but make sure they are very modest – walking short length. It would be inappropriate to wear short-shorts at any time.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Skirt(s)

\_\_\_\_\_ Dresses

\_\_\_\_\_ Shoes (Take comfortable walking shoes, maybe a pair of athletic walking shoes and a pair of comfortable sandals. You will put many miles on these shoes, so if you get new ones for the trip, be sure to “break them in” before we leave!!)

\_\_\_\_\_ flip-flops or some sort of rubber or plastic shower shoes/houeshoes

\_\_\_\_\_ Socks/hose (It is not necessary for ladies to wear hose, even to church, but in the event of a “cold snap” hose would supply extra warmth, so you may want to pack some just in case.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Underwear

\_\_\_\_\_ Belt(s)

\_\_\_\_\_ Ties - It is not required that men wear ties, unless preaching. If you will be preaching, you should take a suit or sport coat and tie(s) to wear when preaching. Others may wish to wear a tie, but a sport shirt without a tie is acceptable for church.

\_\_\_\_\_ Sweater or light jacket

\_\_\_\_\_ Umbrella (small, fold-up type)

\_\_\_\_\_ Raincoat or poncho (Small travel-size that fits in its own small bag or pouch)

\_\_\_\_\_ Shower cap

\_\_\_\_\_ Handbag (Don't carry a large purse. A small one that can be securely placed over the shoulder would be best. You should consider substituting a backpack for your purse.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Backpack or tote bag (This is essential. You will use it everyday to carry tracts to distribute, toilet paper, tissues, snacks, water bottle, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Water bottle (You can just re-fill small bottles and re-use them.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Hand-held battery operated fan (“fan on a rope”)

\_\_\_\_\_ Electric converter (This is necessary if you have anything that requires electricity, since voltage in most European countries is 220-250 volts instead of 110-115 as in the U.S. You will need adapter plugs and, possibly, transformers. These are available at Target, Wal-Mart, Brookstone, Eddie Bauer, L.L. Bean, most luggage stores, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Plastic shopping bags (You may want to roll clothes in these to prevent wrinkles, so having a few with you might come in handy.)

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\_\_\_\_\_ Bottle opener

\_\_\_\_\_ Small tape recorder

\_\_\_\_\_ Personal journal or diary (This trip will be an exciting, unique experience. Expect to grow in your Christian walk through ministering to others. Recording events and details of the trip everyday might be something you would enjoy doing and having to read after you get home.)

### Things to avoid taking

Cologne/perfumes

Expensive jewelry (or anything else of value that you'd be sorry to lose)

Weapons, knives, sharp scissors etc.

### Important Special Notes!

If you can't carry it, don't bring it!

Any liquids you bring in carry-on luggage must be in no larger than 3 oz. bottles, and placed in one quart-size zip-lock bag.

### TIPS FOR THE AIRPLANE TRIP:

- In your carry-on bag, carry a light jacket or sweater since planes are often cold, plenty of reading material, crossword puzzles, headrest or special pillow, headphone and tape player or portable CD player with extra batteries, your favorite music or book on tape or CD, and light snacks.
- Rest, or sleep, as much as possible.
- During the flight, drink plenty of fluids, preferably water or fruit juice (provided to you by the flight attendant) to offset possible dehydration caused by the low humidity and lowered atmospheric pressure onboard planes.

### 8) Health Hints

#### AVOID JET LAG:

Everyone will be affected to some degree by jet lag, but there are some things you can do to lessen the effects. Go to bed a little earlier each night before your departure to help you adjust to the difference in time zones. It is seven to eight hours later (or ahead) in Europe than Central Standard Time (for example 8:00 a.m. is 4:00 p.m. in Eastern Europe). Prepare yourself psychologically by setting your watch to the local time once onboard the plane. Be sure to rest during the flight as much as possible.

Upon arriving, even though you will feel like going to bed to sleep, but stay awake and active. Get some exercise, if possible. Shower, relax and go to bed at your normal time. This will help to reset your body clock to a new time zone. Expect to wake up at odd times, and perhaps be hungry at the "wrong" times for the first couple of days. Try making yourself stay in bed and rest even if you can't sleep, and eat light snacks between meals if needed. You should be well adjusted soon. When you come back home, of course, you get to do this all over again!

Melatonin is an over-the-counter supplement that can help with jet lag. Take two 5 mg tablets on the day of your departure. Take one tablet a day for the next three days (the first three days of your stay in Europe). Stop taking the medication for the rest of your stay in Europe.

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Repeat the procedure as you come back. Start by taking two tablets of Melatonin the day you fly back to the U.S., at 10:00 PM (your residence local time). Continue taking one tablet a day for the following three days at 10:00 PM. Stop taking the drug after your first three days back home.

#### **MEDICATIONS AND SUPPLIES:**

In many European countries there is a lack of common medicines. Take with you any prescription medications you require, as well as any over-the-counter drugs you think you might need. You should take medicine with you for headache, diarrhea and sunburn. Also, you should ask your doctor for a prescription for an all-purpose antibiotic. Have it filled and take with you. The medical team with us will be able to treat common ailments that might strike.

Women should be sure to take any feminine hygiene products that might be required, as these may be difficult, if not impossible, to find.

**DO NOT bring, transport, carry or provide ANY medicines or vitamins in any form for the purpose of dispersing to host country persons or natives during your participation on a RAM mission trip. All medicines purchased in the US for a mission trip are to be inventoried and packaged prior to departure and managed by the team leader per RAM procedures.**

#### **TRAVELERS DIARRHEA:**

This is a common problem. You may want to take Pepto Bismol as a precaution. Take one tablet the day before you depart, at least one tablet each morning while there and continue until two days after you return.

This problem can usually be prevented, however, by taking special precautions about what you eat and drink. A good rule to follow is, "If you peel it, you can eat it." (Example: bananas, oranges, etc.) Do not eat anything that has been washed but not cooked, such as green salads, raw fruit that cannot be peeled, etc. Tap water should be considered UNSAFE. Bottled soft drinks, hot coffee and hot tea are safe beverages. You should ONLY drink water that is bottled or that has been purified by boiling.

#### **This applies even to the water you brush your teeth with!**

It is a good idea to take with you from home a six-pack of small bottles of water. You can use this for the trip over and then refill the small bottles for carrying water in your backpack each day. Bottled water, referred to as apa minerala, is available in most restaurants and shops. Drinks containing ice which has not been made with purified water are not safe to drink. You may want to bring a "hot pot" – plastic, electric pot to boil water in, or a gadget that will boil water when immersed in a cup. Both of these are available at Wal-Mart.

**Take these precautions seriously.** THINK before you eat or drink! Your trip can be ruined if you have to spend the entire time sick in the bathroom!

#### **INSECT BITES:**

Protect yourself against insect bites, especially mosquitoes. Bring insect repellent and always wear it! You might want to spray your hotel room curtains at night also, since there may be no screens on windows and you might need to sleep with the windows open.

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**While on the mission trip:**

Never go anywhere by yourself. Every time you leave the clinic or living quarters, make sure you go at least in pairs. Let the Trip Leader know where you are going. In a group, always take a head count. Passport and monies should stay in the dorm or room in a locked suitcase or in a safe location designated by your Trip Leader. Do not drink anything with ice, and do not eat lettuce or anything that requires cleaning with water - except food at the clinic dining room. Your Trip Leader will provide other rules to promote safety on your specific mission trip.

Related Forms and documentation:

- F-001 Trip Application
- F-003 Background Check