

# **Nova Scotia Government Out-of-Country Travel Security Awareness**

Nova Scotia government officials and employees are frequently required to travel outside the country on government business. Travel of any type, but particularly foreign travel, brings with it certain risks. A particular area of risk for government officials and employees, over and above their own personal security, is the safe guarding of government documents and IT equipment they take with them. These risks can be mitigated by taking certain precautionary measures.

***When traveling on government business anywhere outside of Canada it is recommended that you:***

- Ensure you have a legible copy of your legal documents (i.e. passport, birth certificate, drivers license) in a secure location at your residence/work back in Canada so that if your original documents are lost/stolen, someone can access the copies and courier them to you.
- It is recommended that you advise your credit card company of your upcoming travel so that they can expect to see charges to your card originating from that country.
- Be honest with Customs and Immigration officials and declare all goods and do not attempt to smuggle any goods in or out of the country.
- If you travel with sensitive information or IT equipment, you must safeguard it at all times against unauthorized disclosure or use.
- If you are transporting or accessing personal information in an electronic device during your travel outside of Canada you must receive approval to do so from your Deputy Head. This approval must be noted on the Out-of-Country travel approval form.

***When traveling in some countries you should also consider the following:***

- Be aware of entry and exit procedures and of political, religious, cultural or economic issues in the country being visited.
- Where possible, register with the Canadian diplomatic mission upon arrival or advise the mission beforehand. You may register on line at the Foreign Affairs web site at [http://www.voyage.gc.ca/countries\\_pays/menu-eng.asp](http://www.voyage.gc.ca/countries_pays/menu-eng.asp).
- Respect the laws of the country. When in doubt, ask the proper authorities for clarification. Also, be aware of possible criminal elements and of trouble spots, be aware of restrictions that may apply on the use of cameras or other equipment in public, and take precautions to guard against becoming a victim of crime.
- Refrain from engaging in behavior that could attract the attention of police authorities or foreign intelligence services, such as black market activities, alcohol abuse, drug use and illicit sexual activity.

- Be cautious when meeting individuals alone, unless the full circumstances are known.
- Do not accept letters, gifts, documents or goods for delivery to persons in or out of the country unless you know and trust the sender. Avoid signing any documents under pressure.
- If you travel with sensitive information or IT equipment, you must safeguard it at all times against unauthorized disclosure or use. For example, turning your blackberry and cell phones off during meetings is not sufficient. You must remove the battery to ensure it cannot be compromised. Do not leave any information unattended in your hotel room. Certain intelligence services actively assess visitors of interest. They may use hotel staff, guides and translators to gain information.

The Security Intelligence Management Services (SIMS) Unit, a unit within the Department of Justice/Public Safety Division, is available to assist you in your preparations for out of country travel. A personal face to face security briefing can be provided for you by the SIMS Unit. The briefing would cover both your personal security and that of any government IT equipment or sensitive documents you are taking with you. The briefing would contain specific details on potential risks/threats that you might encounter while traveling in that particular country. It would also provide recommendations for measures that, if taken/followed, would reduce or mitigate the level of potential threats/risk.

It is your responsibility to contact the SIMS Unit to determine whether a face to face briefing or phone conversation is sufficient for your travel destination. In addition it is your responsibility to request the security briefing prior to your travel. A minimum of seven (7) days advance notice is required before a briefing could take place.

### **Security Intelligence Management Services (SIMS) Unit**

5151 Terminal Road, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
P.O. Box 7  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
B3J 2L6

Manager	(902) 424-6437
Admin. Assistant	(902) 424-6835

### **IT Equipment:**

If you travel with sensitive information or IT equipment, you must safeguard it at all times against unauthorized disclosure or use.

If you have any questions or concerns about the security of IT equipment that you will be taking out of the country, you should contact the SIMS Unit, a minimum of seven (7) days prior to your date of departure. They will be able to provide you with current information on IT equipment security issues as well as measures that can be taken to address them.