

Why companies need to protect all their travelling employees

By Roland Raad, Director of Business Travel Assurance at Generali Employee Benefits

Business travel drives business growth. Whilst technology has ensured that the world is a smaller place, it will never replace the benefits of meeting in person when it comes to conducting business with the greatest return on investment.

But while cross-border travel increasingly becomes part of normal life for many employees, it's important for employers to have in place a programme to ensure that business travel is compliant.

Accountability has shifted. Whereas business travel was previously managed by the business functions, this responsibility is now usually passed on to global mobility teams (where a company is large enough to enjoy the benefits of such a team).

However, anecdotal evidence suggests that business travel can often fall outside existing risk monitoring and may even be non-existent if an employee travels outside the mobility programme.

It's the employer's responsibility

Often business travellers are left to make their own travel arrangements and aspects such as immigration requirements and suitable travel insurance cover can be overlooked.

Consequently, inadvertent non-compliance is rising for employees who take extended business trips, especially when effectively becoming short-term assignments, the definition of which is generally anything up to six months.

According to research by [Santa Fe](#), a quarter (25%) of companies do not have a programme in place to ensure that business travel is compliant.

What are the risks?

Aside from the need to cover the immediate and typical risks such as flight cancellation and delays, loss of luggage and laptops – all of which are incredibly disruptive for employees who have to be in a certain place at a certain time, often also with the need to present a certain image – the fact that the world has become less peaceful over the last decade must also be considered.

In a study by [Global Business Travel Association](#) (GBTA), safety and security ranked above cost control as the number one priority by travel managers who organise and manage business travel for their companies.

Terrorism is ranked as the greatest safety concern (45%) for business travellers, far out-ranking the next highest concern, namely street crime at 15%. Other concerns included: outbreaks of disease (13%); property theft (12%); kidnapping (8%); and natural disasters (6%).

Make it easy to travel

Business travel accident and assurance helps give vital peace of mind to all employees travelling for business on short-term assignment.

It covers everything: delay of luggage and flights; accidental death; permanent, total or partial disability in case of accident; over 30 assistance services, including medical expenses cover for emergency treatment, evacuation and repatriation. The consequences of personal liability during a business trip is also included in this pack of cover.

The C suite magazine

What to watch out for

There are many insurance solutions on the market so how should employers assess the best option for their needs?

Firstly, simplicity is key. The amount of regulation around the world is increasing and very different from one country to the next. This, coupled with the demand from employers for more consistent and integrated benefits solutions ensures that only the most straightforward, easy-to-understand and easy-to-buy solutions are appropriate.

On that note, it's worth considering the economies of scale and convenience gained from using one provider for all the company's insurance needs: medical insurance, long-term disability, life assurance, and business travel and assistance.

Also, buying an integrated solution – as opposed to insurance products purchased in silos – fits with the way overseas assignments are arranged and managed these days. The reason that many employees end up making their own arrangements is that the finer detail can often be left until the last minute. Being able to call one company to arrange everything brings huge benefits.

Finally, partnering with one provider also ensures that there's no duplication of cover, thus helping to ensure the best price and keeping administration to a minimum. For example, cover for emergency medical treatment, including evacuation and repatriation, can be included on both international medical insurance and business travel cover.

Experienced providers and consultants will ensure a programme tailored to business needs of small and large multinationals, with any duplication stripped out, and all risks factored in.

By leveraging on the global insurance capabilities of the Generali Group and the assistance services of Europ Assistance, Generali Employee Benefits offers **Generali Global Travel Protection**, a brand new business travel accident and assistance solution. This effectively extends upon Generali's global insurance, health, wellness and risk management capabilities to provide a complete platform to employers.

If you would like to know more, contact us at bta@geb.com