

Traveling for business or pleasure these holidays - things to consider

Cape Town, 28 November 2018: When you picture yourself travelling for business does it look like this: you and your brand new suitcase dashing elegantly through a foreign airport en route to freshen up at your five-star hotel before a successful client meeting? Or like this: you at the airport lost luggage counter, tears streaming down your smudgy cheeks, the reality slowly dawning that you'll be meeting your most important client in a pair of grubby travel sweats?

Travel – for business or leisure or both (bleisure?) – can be extremely exciting. But it comes with its own set of risks. According to short-term insurer, Travel Insurance Consultants (TIC), a division of [Santam](#), some of the most claimed for travel events are pre-existing medical expenses, cancellation of journey, luggage loss and travel delays. Being prepared for these risks is critical.

In a recent panel discussion, three travel industry experts - Monique Swart from African Business Travel Association (ABTA), Albie de Frey from The Travel Doctor and Jason Veitch from Travel Insurance Consultants (TIC) discussed all things travel insurance.

The experts suggest looking at the following aspects of travel insurance before hopping on that plane.

1. Credit card – know what it covers

There is a common misperception that your 'free' credit card cover will adequately insure you for all risks when travelling. And while it has its advantages, assuming that your credit card cover will pay out is not enough. You need to look into exactly what is covered by the credit card insurance and weigh up whether this is sufficient.

Veitch says that credit card insurance can be very specific and usually has a range of exclusions. "Typically, it excludes undeclared pre-existing medical conditions, which means that if someone suffering from diabetes has a medical event when they are abroad, they will not be covered. It is vital for anyone with a pre-existing medical condition to be adequately covered when travelling."

He said this is but one example of where credit card insurance does fall short. Others include the low level of cover for medical incidences and accidents, no or low luggage cover

limits, no cover in the event you need to cancel your entire holiday and cover for sporting activities.

2. Free travel insurance on your medical aid cover

Free travel insurance attached to your medical aid cover also sounds great, but again it is critical that you look carefully at how it is structured.

De Frey says that some medical aid travel insurance will pay out at South African medical aid rates. “Which may be adequate in some parts of the world, but in countries like the USA or France, where medical costs can be up to 15 or 20 times higher than South African ones, this is not going to be enough. Extra travel insurance can help avert an extremely expensive situation.”

3. Business trip? Are the ‘bleisure’ days also covered?

Often business trips have a day or two of leisure tacked on to them. Swart says that if the trip has been insured by the company it is important to investigate whether the days of leisure are also covered by the policy for the trip.

“Often a family member may join you and, in that case, additional insurance will most likely be necessary because they are not a company employee. The onus should be on the travellers to investigate the insurance offered by the employer to ensure that all aspects of the trip are covered for all parties travelling,” she says.

4. Corporates: know the health of your employees

With medical preconditions excluded by many insurance policies – unless declared – it is vital that employees travelling are open and honest with their employers about any such conditions.

Veitch says it is vital that corporates not shirk responsibility in this regard. “Employers need to make sure that they have frank conversations about declaring medical preconditions with employees before they travel. If something does happen connected to an undeclared medical condition, it can end up being extremely costly, and it may result in the expenses not being paid by the insurer. Transparency is vital – and so is ensuring an insurance policy that covers the precondition is in place.”

5. Travelling in high risk areas: make sure kidnapping/ransom and malaria are well covered

“When travelling to high risk areas, the necessity for travel insurance is even more important. In countries where malaria is prevalent, both preventative treatment and extremely good medical cover are vital. In Africa, this is particularly important, as the preventative programs that have previously been implemented in various African countries to reduce malaria have been curtailed, which means incidences of malaria are now increasing at an alarming rate” according to de Frey.

And some countries in Africa and the Middle East have heightened kidnapping and ransom risks, so cover for these is vital. “And making every attempt to remain trackable via tech when you are in these countries is also a very good idea.”

Travelling soon? Visit <https://www.santam.co.za/products/specialist/travel-insurance/>.

Santam media release

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