

# Honduras Baptist Dental Mission, Inc.

## Team Orientation Manual

**A Copy of this manual should be given to each team member.**

### ORIENTATION MANUAL FOR VOLUNTEERS

We're glad that you have chosen to come be a part of God's work through the Honduras Baptist Dental Missions, Inc. May your stay be pleasant and memorable. To help you prepare for your visit, we have prepared this orientation manual. You will find some basic information about the people, our work and some suggestions about what to bring, along with other helpful information.

One of the most exciting aspects of a Volunteer Mission Trip is the chance to meet and work with all types of people. You will experience a lifestyle and culture very different from your own. When God leads you here your life will never be the same.

#### 1. HOW DO I STAY HEALTHY?

Be careful of what you eat or drink is common advice to travelers, but very few understand its implications. Diarrhea affects an estimated 20% of all travelers. It may cause anything from discomfort and inconvenience to misery and disruption of travel and plans. Contaminated food and drink are the most common sources of infection. Careful selection and preparation of food and drink offer the best protection. Do not buy or eat from street vendors. When in doubt, do not even have ice in your drinks. Bottled soft drinks or bottled water are the safest. When in the field, always wash your hands before entering the kitchen. When eating out, the Field Coordinator will know what is safe to eat and drink and what is not. Hand sanitizer is not a substitute for soap and water! Use it but wash your hands often.

**There is no safe tap water in Honduras**, unless the incoming water source is filtered and purified. This means that you **do not use the tap water to brush your teeth**.

## 2. WHAT CAN I DRINK AND EAT?

PURIFIED water

PASTEURIZED products

PACKAGED products

PIPING hot food

PEELED OR PREPARED fruits and vegetables (when processed by our kitchen personnel or recommended by your Coordinators)

You might want to bring certain snacks that you enjoy and would like to share with the rest of the team (and with the missionaries!).

## 3. WHAT ELSE CAN I DO TO STAY HEALTHY?

Wash hands frequently (with soap) and keep out of your mouth. Hand sanitizer is not a substitute for soap and water.

Do not drink after other people.

Do not pet animals that you don't know, especially dogs and cats.

Wear shoes when out of doors. Do not wear open toed shoes.

Wear Insect Repellent containing 20% DEET.

Wear Sun block when out in the sun for more than a few minutes. These countries are closer to the Equator and sunburns happen quickly and at a deeper level than in the U.S. Drink plenty of liquids to prevent dehydration in the heat. The first sign of dehydration is a headache. So if you get a headache drink a full glass of liquid before taking something for a headache.

Shake your shoes out before putting them on in the morning. This will shake out unwanted critters.

Do not bite your nails or put your hands in your mouth.

## 4. IMMUNIZATIONS

Although no specific immunizations are required, it would be wise to be up to date with the typhoid and tetanus immunizations. You may want to have your doctor prescribe for you a suitable antimalarial prophylaxis such as Aralen 500 mgs. Some Team Captains provide Aralen or equivalent for their members. A generic form of this medication is Hydroxychloroquine. There are still areas of Honduras where Malaria is prevalent.

## 5. WHAT CAN I DO IF.....?

The safest and most effective treatment for traveler's diarrhea is a preventive treatment. Pepto Bismol is one of the best treatments for diarrhea according to the Journal of Internal Medicine. Take it according to the package instructions. It has been found to be very effective if you take twice the amount the first 2 doses. Some people might want to take 2 tablets before every meal. If you still have problems, then you may want to take Imodium or similar medications. This must be done cautiously as this can bring on dehydration and other related problems. While taking medications for the diarrhea you, should be drinking 10 -12 glasses of liquid per day. Remember public restrooms rarely have toilet paper. Carry your toilet paper with you. The flip side of diarrhea is constipation. Because you are in an unusual situation you may not take the time necessary to prevent this problem. To prevent constipation, drink plenty of water and take the time necessary in the toilet. The same muscles of the intestines cause constipation and Pepto Bismol will work to relieve constipation. Please let your Team Doctor know immediately if you even think that you might be developing a problem. Early attention from the Team Doctor can prevent the onset of a much more serious problem.

## 6. WHAT TO DO IN CASE OF ILLNESS OR EMERGENCY?

Bring any medication you will need with you. Advise the team leader of any special medical needs you have before you leave.

If you become ill enough to need medical help or in case of a serious injury your local missionary will know where and how to get help. If they are not available someone with the Mission will transport you or make arrangements for you to return to the States. The insurance provided in your team fee covers "extraction" for serious emergencies. You may be transported by air ambulance or by a commercial flight depending on the seriousness of your case.

## 7. SHOULD I BE CONCERNED ABOUT SECURITY?

It is safe to travel in most parts of this country as long as you listen to the advice of your Field Director about when and where not to go. Of course there are always certain precautions to be taken.

A potentially wonderful and rewarding experience can become disappointing for everyone if we don't follow some well proven, common-sense precautions for everyone's safety and the security of personal belongings. The Director will be able to counsel you on the local area that you are working in. Use the "Buddy system" and never go anywhere alone in an airport, hotel or the streets around the area where you are working or staying. Always ask your team captain for permission to leave the area and agree on where you are going and when you expect to return. **Do not pair off with the opposite sex (especially with villagers). A group of three or more is desirable.**

Only mission personnel are allowed to drive mission vehicles.

Split up your money between a billfold or purse and other locations, e.g., money belt, camera case, or suitcase. Reduce the risk of being a pickpocket's victim by placing your wallet in a front pocket or a fanny pack carried in front. Be careful in crowds where people are likely to bump into you. Do not lay your personal or ministry items around unguarded. It is extremely important that each person riding in a mission or volunteer vehicle take responsibility to see that doors are locked at all times when leaving the car.

#### 8. WHAT KIND OF LIVING CONDITIONS CAN I EXPECT?

Meals: Eat only at places recommended by your Field Coordinators.

Bathing: Depending on where you are assigned, you will probably have a shower. The mission has portable showers that will be available. If running water is not available, you will have buckets or tubs that are filled with water. Most houses will have pilas (scrub sinks with an open tank of water next to it). Please do not put yourself, hands, washcloths or soap in these containers of water. There should be a tub or bowl close by or floating on the water that is used to scoop out the water and pour over your hands or body.

Toilet use: You will find most bathrooms much more primitive than what you are accustomed to using. Public restrooms seldom have toilet paper available, so be prepared with some in your pocket. Even the larger and nicer gas stations usually do not provide toilet paper. Do not put the toilet paper in the toilet. Do not flush anything

but human waste.

In some areas there will not be water in the tank to flush it. Usually there is a bucket nearby. Get water from the holding tanks nearby and pour it into the toilet bowl with the bucket. This will flush the toilet. Some places will only have a latrine. Once again always carry toilet paper.

Bedding: This depends on where you will be staying. You should bring a towel, washcloth, sheets and/or a sleeping bag. In some areas a mosquito net is nice. Tie each corner up until you have a little tent over your bed. After getting into bed, tuck the edges under your mattress so you are sealed inside.

(Note: These bedding instructions only apply if you have been told that you will be in very primitive locations).

Washing clothes: If you must wash clothes, bring clothes that you can wash out by hand and that will dry easily hanging inside. Try to pack one change of clothes in your carry-on just in case your luggage does not arrive when you do. Due to the high volume of washing team linens on a daily basis washing facilities for personal washings are not available at the mission house.

Electrical Outages: Electricity is not real reliable and is unavailable in some villages. Frequent outages keep you on your toes. Be prepared by carrying a flashlight with you to church at night or anyplace you visit after dark. A small battery run fan is nice to help move the air around for sleeping in the villages. We do not carry electric hair dryers to the field. This puts a burden on the electrical system and could easily cause a burnout.

#### 9. IS THERE ANYTHING THAT I SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE CULTURE?

The Honduran Christians we work with consider the use of tobacco and the drinking of alcoholic beverages inappropriate behavior for a Christian. Without passing judgment, we ask all volunteers to refrain from the use of tobacco (smoking, chewing, etc.) and drinking alcohol (beer, wine, or liquor) while serving as volunteers from the time you leave the States until your return. In some of the rural cultures, the wearing of shorts is inappropriate. Earrings worn by men and any type of body piercing by men or women

are considered inappropriate Christian behavior in this country. You would not want anything to affect your Christian testimony. As ambassadors for Jesus we need to be sensitive to Honduran culture, traditions and customs no matter how strange they may seem to us. We must be careful not to complain or make negative comments about Honduran people, food or customs. Our actions often speak louder than our words. When in doubt concerning proper conduct, you should consult the Field Director or the missionary you are working with. Because of the primitive conditions, many bathing and restroom practices are different than in the U.S.

#### 10. IN WHAT WAY WILL THE CHURCH SERVICES BE DIFFERENT?

Worship styles vary greatly from church to church. Watch the pastor and others around you to discern acceptable actions. Some churches clap and sing and even dance as they worship and others do not. In some churches all members pray out loud at the same time. In many churches all prayers and scripture reading are done standing. Be prepared to follow the accepted routine of that church. We are not concerned with their worship styles as long as the Spirit of Worship is from the heart. We do not want to appear as spectators or tourists. Sit among the people, not apart from them. Participation in the Worship Service by team members is encouraged. In some cases, teams will stand before the congregation and sing one or two songs. The local church members seem to enjoy hearing the North Americans sing.

Offering plates are not passed from person to person. The usher will just hold it out in front of you. You may touch it to stabilize it but do not expect the usher to let go of it. You may give in either dollars or the country's currency. Remember that what may seem like a small gift to you will seem extremely large for most churches. If you desire to make a large donation, speak to the missionary about the best way to handle it.

#### 11. WHAT SHOULD I WEAR?

Honduras is generally warm and tropical. Cool and comfortable cotton clothing is a must. You should dress modestly. During the day when out in the villages, long pants, Capri's, or scrubs are a good choice for the women. Men should wear khakis or blue jean pants. Please, no tank tops for the men or women. Scrubs are acceptable for all team members during working hours. Men and women, remember that the more

exposed your body is to the elements, the more opportunity there is for mosquito bites day or night. The mosquitoes in this area often carry Dengue Fever or Malaria. For church services, men usually wear long pants and casual shirts. Women may wear casual dresses, long pants or skirts and blouses. A good pair of walking shoes will be your best friend. Make modesty a priority with all the clothing you bring to wear in public, in church and in the villages. Do not wear open toed shoes. If there is a question of certain cultural requirements in dressing, please direct your questions to the Honduras Field Director for appropriate dress required.

NOTE: If your team is to serve in a mountainous region you will need to be prepared for much cooler weather. It can be very cool at night. You will need warmer clothing and bedding. Your Team Captain will be informed by our missionary in Honduras ahead of time concerning what climate you will be serving in.

## 12. CLOTHES FOR THE BANQUET

Dress for the banquet is informal but you may want to bring a nice dress or a nice shirt and slacks.

## 13. WHAT SHOULD I BRING?

The following is a suggested list of items you should bring (remember you should carry at least one change of clothes and your medicine in your carry on).

### Clothing

See item 11 for more details.

Shorts and T-shirts for sleeping

Cool, casual clothes for walking in the villages during the day

Casual clothes for the banquet, usually held the last night of your stay in Honduras.

Light jacket or sweater during the evening

Avoid dark colors as they attract mosquitoes. Khaki is one of the best colors.

Comfortable walking shoes are very important.

Flip Flops for bathing

Underwear and socks for a week

### Personal Items

Soap

Deodorant / body powder

Toothpaste and toothbrush

Shampoo

Toilet paper

2-3 towels & washrags

Flashlight and extra batteries

Ear plugs (Latin America is noisy at night and so are teammates)

Medical Items

Insect repellent

Antiseptic ointment (e.g., Bactine) and Band-Aids

Pepto Bismol

Advil, aspirin, Tylenol, or whatever you take for pain

Sunscreen (15 or higher SPF)

Hand wipes (antibacterial)

Other Items

Cap or hat

Pair of leather or cotton work gloves if on a construction team

Bible, Prayer Walking Journal, pens/pencils

Camera (Try to select a person on the team who is a good photographer and let him or her take photos for the whole team while in the Villages or communities. )

#### 14. WHAT SHOULD I NOT BRING?

Please do not bring bottled water from the States. Bottled water may be purchased locally. Don't bring or wear expensive watches or other jewelry. Don't bring your worries, leave them at home and trust God will care for them.

#### 15. HOW MUCH MONEY SHOULD I BRING?

You will need money for souvenirs or snacks. Bring only US dollars in small bills (\$20, \$10, \$5, and \$1). Travelers' checks are not recommended because they are not readily accepted. Credit cards can be used in some places. You will have an opportunity to change U.S. dollars to lempiras when you arrive.



## 16. LUGGAGE

Your Team Captain will be the one to advise you concerning how many pieces of luggage you are allowed to carry and what the weight limits are. The Team Captain should check with the Airline that you will be flying with in advance of departure to see what the most up to date requirements are. We recommend that you check with the Airline right up until the time you depart. They are known to change what they will and will not accept.

Websites for frequently used Airlines are:

[www.aa.com](http://www.aa.com)

[www.delta.com](http://www.delta.com)

[www.united.com](http://www.united.com)

## 17. DO I NEED A VISA?

No entry visa is required for US citizens to enter these countries. Everyone must have a valid passport. You will pay an airport tax as you leave (approximately \$40 U.S.). Many team captains collect this from you before going to Honduras and then pay the fee for you. You will be asked for an address when you come through customs. If you are traveling on a foreign passport, check with the Laurel office and we will make sure you do not need a visa and make sure the person has a multiple entry visa. Upon arrival at the airport an immigration agent will ask you for the address where you are staying while in Honduras. Give them the following address.

Mision Bautista Dental De Honduras

Villa Esther Bloque 30

El Plan

San Manuel, Cortes, Honduras

In case of an emergency or if you have a need for information while the team is in Honduras your relatives can call the following numbers in Honduras.

011-504-3174-0120 -- John Ward

Dial the above numbers as they appear (you do not have to add any additional 1's or 0's in front of the number) or email [jward@medicaldental.org](mailto:jward@medicaldental.org) and [hondurasoffice@medicaldental.org](mailto:hondurasoffice@medicaldental.org).

Remember that you are working and traveling in a foreign country. It may be difficult to reach you while you are on the field. Our average drive from the airport to the site of the mission is about 5 hrs. In some cases you may be traveling 10 - 12 hours.

Most often there is no telephone contact in the field. Our staff will do all that is possible to contact you in case of an emergency. Even if you get back into town it may take a couple of days for you to fly out.

## 18. GIFTS

Gifts should not be given until the last day or as you are leaving. Do not give away personal items at the beginning of the week. Do not give away money or make any promises of sending money. Do not even allude to visits in the US. If you feel you must invite a Honduran to the States, please talk first with the Field Director. Obtaining travel visa's for Hondurans to the U.S. is not a simple matter. If you make a promise, keep it! All monetary gifts to mission staff and interpreters must be distributed through the Field Director to avoid confusion among the staff and interpreters. All money that is donated for translators, helpers, etc. will be given to the missionary to be distributed equally among all that helped the team.

*The one exception to the above rule would be a monetary gift given to our missionaries in the form of a love offering.*

## 19. HOW DO I PREPARE PHYSICALLY?

It's a good idea to begin walking regularly. You will probably do a lot of walking. Make sure that you have comfortable walking shoes.

## 20. HOW DO I PREPARE MENTALLY?

DON'T expect to live by your watch.

DON'T expect to communicate with the U. S. regularly.

DON'T expect to have a flush toilet.

DON'T expect to take a shower every day or to have hot water.

DON'T expect to have beds like you have at home.

DO expect a simpler lifestyle that focuses on the value of people and relationships.

Do expect that God will use this experience to cause you to reevaluate your priorities and your relationship with Him.

Do expect that God will use you and the team to encourage Honduran Christians and their families, their churches and to attract nonbelievers to a faith in Jesus Christ. It is extremely important that each volunteer prepare to be flexible in all things as living and serving in a Foreign Country is not the same as in the United States. There are three things that each volunteer needs to practice when on the Mission Field: FLEXIBILITY, FLEXIBILITY and FLEXIBILITY. Many Volunteers and Missionaries have ruined their witness for Christ over this very issue. Seek to be a team builder by promoting team unity and love. Be forgiving of teammates and staff and be considerate at all times. It is just like the sign that read: "Cheer up! Things could be worse. So, I cheered up and sure enough..... things got worse." We have days like this on the Mission Field but with a flexible attitude and spirit, the victory is ours!

Misión Bautista Dental de Honduras is focused on sharing the Gospel with a lost world, and helping to meet the medical needs of the poor people of Honduras. We are constantly searching to see where God is at work and we will drop everything, previous plans, etc. to go and join Him in that work. Your pastor or team captain will want the names in advance of where you will be serving but that can always change by the time you leave the States and land in Honduras.

## 21. HOW DO I PREPARE SPIRITUALLY?

Jesus sent his disciples out saying, "Freely you have received, freely give." Think on how much God has given you and pray about how much He wants you to give of yourself. Giving of yourself, making sacrifices, withstanding discomfort, meeting hardships head on, and committing yourself to this mission is the purest form of Worship there is, and God will bless and reward you in ways you cannot imagine. All other things such as material possessions, tithes, etc, are already His, but when you give of something of yourself, you are freely giving, freely committing, freely worshipping!

Each team should consider studying as a team "The Purpose Driven Life" by Rick Warren in advance of your trip. You will need 40 days to complete the course.

## 22. MEDICAL PERSONNEL LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Team Captains will need to gather and send legible copies of the following documents for all Doctors, Nurses, Pharmacists, Veterinarians, and other medical professionals who will be serving as volunteers with your team:

1. One copy of your CURRENT license. No expired dates please.
2. One copy of your diploma.

3. One copy of your vital statistics page of passport for all professionals. These documents can be scanned and sent as an attachment to an email to the following email addresses: [jward@medicaldental.org](mailto:jward@medicaldental.org) and [hondurasoffice@medicaldental.org](mailto:hondurasoffice@medicaldental.org)

Scanning is the preferred method. These documents need to be in the hands of our missionary not less than 60 days before the team arrives in Honduras. If possible, 90 days would be better. If you don't have all of your medical volunteers at this time, go ahead and send the documentation for the ones that you have. Don't jeopardize your entire medical staff by not sending in these documents. Our missionary has to have adequate time to hand deliver these documents to the various medical colleges and authorities in Honduras to obtain permission for the medical personnel to practice in Honduras. **If a professional's documents do not arrive in time to obtain permission from the authorities, under no circumstances will that professional be allowed to practice his/her profession as a representative of the HBDM, Inc.**

Team Captains will send a Team List, (Usually on Excel via e-mail as an attachment) to the Laurel, MS office for forwarding to other agencies. This list should contain the last name first, and must read as it is on the passport, the passport number, DOB, the country that issued the passport and the position of team members. It should be listed in alphabetical order.

Team Captains will need to send a list of the inventory supplies. This is also easier if it is compiled on a program such as MS Excel or a compatible spreadsheet.

Please refer to the Team Captains Manual for these required schedules and needs. Your missionary will need these documents as stated in the Team Captains Manual. Under

no circumstances should a non-medical professional perform medical procedures such as pulling teeth or giving shots.

The Team List and the Inventory List should be sent to the following addresses:

[jward@medicaldental.org](mailto:jward@medicaldental.org)

[egibson@medicaldental.org](mailto:egibson@medicaldental.org)

[hondurasoffice@medicaldental.org](mailto:hondurasoffice@medicaldental.org)

[usoffice@medicaldental.org](mailto:usoffice@medicaldental.org)

### 23. FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

All costs for the project must be borne by the volunteers and the sponsoring churches including the medicines, medical supplies, and construction material.