International Travel with Laptops and Mobile Devices

When traveling internationally, NSF staff must follow Agency guidance for safeguarding all NSF-issued laptops and mobile devices. Following this guidance mitigates risks associated with the possible theft of laptops, mobile devices, and the information they contain. **NSF staff traveling to high risk countries must follow additional security measures to protect Agency information.**

If you are traveling to any international destination

Before you leave:

- Consider if you really need to take your NSF laptop and/or mobile device. If you do not need to bring your device, leave it at home.
- Check [State Department advisories](#) to see if the country you are traveling to could have import restrictions on laptops which could result in delays/confiscation at security checkpoints.
- Back up any data you intend to take, and leave the backup files at NSF.
- If you do not have an NSF-issued laptop and need a laptop for your trip, you can request a loaner laptop from ITHC on a first come, first served, basis.

When you return:

- Bring your device back to ITHC for security scanning **before re-connecting to NSF IT systems.**

If you are traveling to a high-risk country

For a full list of high-risk countries, visit the [Title 15 Commerce and Foreign Trade Electronic Code](#) and scroll to *section (d) Computer Tier 3 destinations.*

Before you leave:

- Review the guidance and tips on this document regarding travel to any international destination, and take action if required.
- Bring your device(s) to IT Help Central (ITHC) located in Stafford I, room 357S, for security scanning **at least 3 business days prior to your departure**. ITHC staff will evaluate your security settings and mitigate against any potential threats.

When you return:

- Bring your device back to ITHC for security scanning **before re-connecting to NSF IT systems.**

Tips for Traveling with Laptops and Mobile Devices

- Keep your laptop as carry-on baggage. Never check it with luggage.
- Never leave your NSF laptop or mobile device unattended. If you must leave your laptop in your hotel room, keep it in locked luggage or hidden from plain sight.
- Remove your phone battery when your phone is not in use.
- Do not use USB or other storage devices that do not belong to you.
- Avoid the use of open Wi-Fi networks (e.g., internet cafes, hotels, coffee shops).
- Do not permit your device to "remember" logon information and passwords.
- Assume all communications via mobile device are monitored.
- Immediately report any lost or stolen NSF devices to NSF and the local U.S. embassy.