

SAFETY TIPS



AFS DEL PERU PROGRAMAS INTERCULTURALES

Av. Javier Prado Este 596 Of. 302, San Isidro Lima – Peru

Telephone: (51-1) - 6527432 Fax: (51-1) - 6381872

<http://www.afs.org.pe>

IMPORTANT INFORMATION DURING MY STAY IN PERU

STUDENT NAME:	HOST CITY IN PERU:
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MY PASSPORT NUMBER IS:	
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MY HOST PARENTS NAMES ARE:

Papa:	Cell phone:
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Mamá:	Cell phone:
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MY ADDRESS IN PERU IS

My home telephone in Peru is:	My cell phone in Peru is:
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My AFS contact person is:	My contact person`s cell phone:
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The name of my school / University is:
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The name of the AFS Local chapter President is:	My AFS chapter president`s phones are:
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The AFS EMERGENCY phone is:	999850227
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MORE IMPORTANT DATA	I WANT TO SAVE HERE:
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INTRODUCTION

Dear AFSer:

Welcome! We wish you a nice and pleasant stay in Peru. Here you will find useful information so you get a good preparation for your experience, considering that there are potential risks everywhere concerning your security. Of course, there is other information that you may get from your hostfamily or from the AFS local chapter, so please bear that in mind. If you feel that the information you get here is not enough, keep asking us. Our role is to help you in your learning process in your AFS experience.

Political Situation in Peru

Peru has a democratic government that is lead by Mr. Ollanta Humala who was elected in democratic elections in June 2011. The country is going through a period of stabilized economy, however the worldwide economical crisis has some impact in the economy. Experts foresee a not so strong impact in our economy during the following months, however they recommend people to be cautious managing their budget. This the first year of Mr. Humala`s presidency, so there is a lot of expectations that his government brings meaningful changes in different areas included education, social benefits for the non privileged people.



Personal Safety Concerns in or around the Home

In general, the family is not likely to know what you are worried about, and needs to be informed about this by you. For example, such questions as "I have heard it is unsafe to walk around outside after dark, is this true here? Is it safe to wear my jewelry to school?"

AFS encourages you to ask the family about how they secure their home, for example: do they lack doors and windows? All the time? How should you respond when a stranger to the family is calling at the door? Will you receive a house key? Whom can you call if you arrive home without a key or there is no one in the house? Your neighbors? Who? What should you do in the event of a fire? What does your family advise about answering the door when you are home alone?

Host families will usually explain about making telephone calls, but may not realize that you may have concerns about how to answer the telephone, especially if you are not comfortable in using the host country language and are not yet familiar with people who may be calling. AFS encourages you to ask your host parents how you should respond when answering the telephone? What information should you give? What information should you not give?

In general we should say that we do not give any information to a person who has not identified him/her self or if she did, we don´t know him or her well. It is expected that the person who calls, first would greet you, then will identified him/her self and then would ask to talk with somebody in particular.

For more specific measures please ask your hostfamily:



A list of names of their relatives and friends who usually phones them.

What is the latest time they can answer phone calls.

What personal information should you give out (address, telephone number)?

Who you can give safety personal information?



HOSTFAMILIES WILL EXPECT YOU TO ASK FOR PERMISSION..

Regarding the role expectations of female and male teenagers, we may say that Peruvians acknowledge an adolescent culture, with its own music, behavior and preferences, but at the same time young people who live with their parents, even if they are adults, they must request their parents, permission to go out. Your hostparents will take care of you in the same way they will with their own children. Some limits to your independence will be based on your own of security. Here there are important examples:

- You can't bring friends to your bedroom, - please don't insist - .
- You can't expect your parents will let your boy/girlfriend stay over a night in your house. That will not be permitted.
- Although there are some changes, in general, it is not acceptable for a girl to spend the night out of the house.
- Children are not allowed to go out during week days, and not every weekend – If so, it will be interpreted as you don't want to share with your hosts as a family.

Personal Safety Concern outside the Home !!

In some countries or in communities where there may have been incidents of crime or violence, (burglaries, purse snatching, thefts, assault, pick pocketing), there may be public service organizations (schools, the police, community service) advising local residents about the problem and giving recommendations regarding personal safety. Students should read what is available, share it with their host family and ask for any clarification. In general, if such information is not available, AFS encourages you to let your host parents know whenever you are concerned or frightened. Ask them what they recommend to help you feel more personally secure. When you are going out, AFS suggests that you leave at home the information about where you are going or telephone number of where you will be. Your host family knows the most about their community and is best prepared to give you advice about places it would be better for you to avoid and how best to get around. In general, you should take their advice seriously and follow their recommendations.

From our own experience we recommend you the following:

1. Fill a form and registrate yourself at your Embassy – The AFS Office in Peru will assist you.



2. Get a photocopy of your passport and have it legalized by a Public Notary in your host community in Peru. Use this copy all the time, unless you need to go to a bank or have to do any other official procedure.
3. Don't go out alone at nights. Listen carefully to your hosts and AFS about safe and unsafe places, so you avoid dangerous areas. It is better to be in the company of somebody who speaks Spanish.
4. Be careful with people who exchange dollars with national currency in the streets. It is safe for you to go to a bank or a Money exchange house, thus you got to be careful with the fake money.
5. If you need an ATM, it is safe to use it during the day time, never at night. Go with someone else.
6. When ever you go out, always carry a small amount of money, what ever you are going to need for the few hours you will spend out of your home.
7. Leave your credit cards at home, unless you are sure you will use them. Don't show them unnecessarily. People will imagine you have lots of money.
8. Look as simple as possible, do not wear expensive sun glasses, jewelry, watches, rings etc.
9. Keep valuables and passports safe. Ask your hostfamily where to keep them at home.
10. Outside home, always keep your belongings under control. If you use a bag, cross the belt on your chest.

Public Transportation:

During day time and early night hours you may use our public transportation: small vans called "combis" or normal buses. Always carry the exact change needed. Never ride a bus or "combi" where there are no passengers.

If you are alone use private taxis, that belong to a Company taxi. If you are alone do not hail taxis on the street. Taxis should be reserved by calling well known radio-taxi companies. Ride taxis with 4 doors and never sit on the front

You should not hitchhike. It is also one of the AFS rules

Possession of weapons legal

Weapons are not available to private citizens unless they have a proper authorization from the Police department.

Personal Safety Concern in the School

Students are obliged to follow the internal school policies concerning discipline, schedules, personal appearance.

Schools do not allow students to smoke cigarettes, or to have any disruptive behavior that will deserve a detention or any other disciplinary measure.

Ask to your School tutors (a teacher) if it is safe to leave your belongings on your desk while you leave the classroom.

There is not much violent behavior at private schools. Isolated situations may occur in crowded public schools, mostly in Lima, the capital city





What can you do if you get lost ?



If you get lost, call immediately to your hostfamily's phone number. In those cases it is extremely useful to carry your hosts address and a list of phone numbers of your hostfam members at home and at work. Include your host's relatives numbers as well. Also the phones of the AFS chapter members and the National Office numbers including the emergency numbers. Always carry your AFS ID. You can get help at any grocery shop, or any transit police officer could help you.

Traffic laws:

The cars are driven on the right hand side. There are police officers conducting the traffic in downtown corners, besides the traffic lights.

Be careful while crossing streets and avenues. Even if the red light is on, you have to look in all directions since drivers may be distracted.

In case of any unfortunate car accident, take the number of the car and try to call your hostfamily or any one in your emergency phone list.



Travelling in the country:

The infrastructure of highways and railroads is now being improved. The Panamerican Highway which connects the northern and southern boundaries is now in generally good condition and is used by tourist buses. Roads in the interior, especially in the mountainous regions are sometimes dangerous and there are constant reports of serious accidents. In such areas only daytime road travel should be considered, by first class bus. We strongly discourage the use of any non formal buses, those usually don't give you an invoice as don't have any formal registration before the transportation authorities. Travelling by boats in isolated rivers in the jungle can be very risky, so AFS Peru will not authorize this trips.

Uncomfortable Social Situations - Illegal Drugs, Alcohol Abuse



Drugs and alcohol

Avoid contact with overly friendly strangers who may wish to entrap you in illegal schemes, including drug trafficking. Use of drugs or/and drug-trafficking is a serious offence and long prison sentences are the norm.



All participants are forbidden to use drugs except those prescribed for medical purposes. Similarly, abuse of alcoholic beverages could be cause for dismissal from the program.

Explicit violation of this rule is cause for dismissal from the program and immediate return to the home country. It is most important that you remember this in case you find yourself in a situation where illegal substances are being used or there is an excessive use of alcohol.

In general, knowing the culture is usually the best preparation to handle uncomfortable situations. It is also good for your host parents to meet your friends and to know with whom you spend your free time. Parents refuse to let their children go out with people they don't know well.

If you are invited to go to a party or other event such as a rock concert or soccer game and are not sure if it is safe to go, AFS recommends that you find out a little about the party or event, where is it being held and who will be there. Usually, your host sibling, parents, friends or teachers at school can give information about the event and the people expected to attend. Some host parents may also "forbid" students to attend certain places or kinds of parties, soccer games, etc. Students should respect the parents' advice, even if others he or she knows are going.

The legal age in Peru is 18. Before 18 you are a minor, considered under the Children and Adolescents Law. It means that if for any unfortunate situation you are involved in any violations of local or national laws, you may be still considered for a special court. Although it may occur rarely, if stopped by police or security forces, ask to see official identification. Record the officer's name, badge number and district. And always call your host family and any body from your emergency phone list at the local or national level.

As far as drugs are concerned, peruvian law is clear and very strict, forbidding all possession of, use of and dealing in narcotics, including marijuana and cocaine. Violators are not deported, but are jailed and tried under peruvian law. Foreign offenders are usually dealt with as international traffickers with sentences ranging from 15 years to life. The entire legal process from arrest to sentencing can take nine months to two years! There is no bail.

If you smoke, avoid to use tobacco that needs to prepared a cigarette with it, as people will react strongly as they would think you are using marihuana. It will be a very uncomfortable moment, as you and AFS will be demanded to prove that what you are using is not a drug. Meanwhile you may be expelled from your hostfamily or the institutions you belong in Peru.

Avoid to engage in any political demonstration or any political activity. As a foreigner with a student visa you are not allowed to participate in any kind of political activity.

Drinking Age

The drinking age: 18 - is not much enforced. For a youngster It is quite dangerous to get drank, not only for health reasons but for security. Under such a state, you may loose control on yourself and will easily suffer from any robbery or personal attack. Lately criminal events include poisoning with drugs the drink of a person. Out of control, the person can be attacked and robbed. Remember that according to our culture being drunk is no sign of maturity. Hostfamilies will strongly reject the idea of having their AFS son /daughter coming home drunk.



Driving

As AFS students are not permitted to drive and are dependent on other relatives or friends who drive. In case the driver of the car is drunk and incapable of driving responsibly, you should kindly request somebody else to do it, or call a company of taxis. If you consider necessary you may call the local chapter members or the AFS emergency phone numbers. Under no circumstances you should ride a car driven by a drunk person.

Uncomfortable Situations

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment happens in all societies. It occurs when someone intends to impose some other an affective and/or a phisical relation.

Cultures differ in their views of appropriate sexual behavior and practice for young people. Often clarification of attitudes may be necessary and here, again, the advice of people you have come to know and trust is very valuable. Knowledge about the people you socialize with is important, and this is acquired best through increasing knowledge of the culture. Equally important are your own values and beliefs regarding your behavior. In societies where some young people are sexually active, there are also many who are not.

You may be unsure in some situations if you are being sexually harassed or if a particular person's behavior would be considered normally friendly. An important resource is your own instinct. Also, often your host siblings/parents and friends will be able to advise you about normal behavior of people you do not know. Other resources to whom you can turn for advice or help are teachers at school, and the AFS contacts within your community or at the AFS PERU National Office.

- Unfortunately anyone can be exposed to sexual harassment, even small children. In this section we give you some hints to recognize if somebody may be harassing you.

Some one keeps looking at you in a very strange way

Some one wants to be close to you all the time and you feel uncomfortable

Someone familiar to you is talking about sexual issues and you don't agree or don't feel all right or is telling you something in private that wouldn't say it in front of other people.

Someone proposes you to go to a place without telling anyone.

Someone close to you becomes too gentle and warmth when you are alone.



These are general examples, but the most important is that you don't paralyze, just follow your intuition and DO SOMETHING. Don't let the situation go any further if you feel uncomfortable. Stop and ask for help, talk to your AFS counselor, call the National Office immediately or send them an e mail. Just, think you are not alone!!

- How do people greet each other ? How much do they touch?



- How do people greet each other ? How much do they touch?

It would be interesting for you to know that one (only one) kiss in the cheek is acceptable while greeting between a boy and a girl, a father to her daughter, or between females. No kisses among males, just shaking hands. Hugs are acceptable as a sign of a warm relation between adult people, or from parents to children or viceversa. Touching without any reason is not acceptable Remember: nobody can touch you without your consent.



- **Some recommendations:**

- **At home:**

- Getting dressed or undressed is done by yourself in your room with the door closed.
- Toilet's door is closed and locked while you use it .

- **Outside**

When you go out, of course wiith your hostfamily permission, always make sure you and your hosts know and agree how are you going to return home, what time, who will bring you back home. Remember you should not go alone, neither come back home late at night by your self. This is a very important recommendation for you.

While in the street, some males may whistle or try to flirt with female. In this case our recommendation is just to avoid any response or contact with them. Don't look at them or respond. Just keep your way.

If a car pulls up near you, just go away and avoid any contact.

- We don ´t have a system of chaperons, however, if you don't have anyone to go with you to some place, you may request the company of a friend, a member of the family or a member of the AFS local chapter. If you plan in advanced you always will find somebody who would gladly go with you somewhere. Don' t expect people go with you if you ask them with a short notice.

- **Facing any unpleasent emergency:**

- Young people might be subject to an assault on crowded places. Should this happen, move away from the person and if you consider necessary yell at the person loudly to intimidate him. Do not go to isolated places with people that you don't know well.
- In the event of a real assault, the student should first talk to someone he/she trusts, who could be a good friend, the host parents, the counselor and/or AFS local chapter. The National Office will always be willing to help you, and must be aware of the situation to be able to arrange a medical check-up and psychological assistance in case you need it.
- If you realize that someone is following you, try to go to a public place (a shop, a restaurant) and ask someone for help.



OTHER UNFORESEEN SITUATIONS

In most countries adolescent boys are more likely than girls to find themselves being questioned by the police or other civil authority officer. AFS advises that you show respect and cooperation with authorities, even though you may be innocent of any crime and think you are being treated unfairly.

In such a situation, it is unlikely that you will understand what is being said by the authority figure. In general, the best advice would be to say that you do not understand what is happening and identify yourself as an exchange student. It is advisable for students to always carry their AFS Identification card. This is important not only in the event of being questioned by authorities, but also in the unfortunate event of a personal accident or if you become the victim of a crime and may not be able to effectively communicate.

In the event of an actual assault, call your hostfamily, or the AFS local chapter members. With their help you can notify the police and get a report from them.



WHAT TO DO IN CASE OF ANY EMERGENCY

Under any emergency please call:

1st :your hostfamily,

2nd: the AFS local and national emergency phone numbers or the PHONE from the local chapter members,

3rd: the AFS National Office on week days, office hours. Or the AFS emergency number: 999850227

Are there any national or governmental curfews?

No there are not any national or governmental curfews. There are no curfews since 15 or 18 years ago.

What kind of documentation or identification should the student carry?

As we said above, it is wise to get a photocopy of your passport, included the visa and the embarkation card, have it valid by a public Notary. Carry the photocopy with you all the time and keep your passport in a safe place at home. You will need to carry also your AFS ID. We will give you one when you arrive.

Are there places in the country that are considered off limits to the general public, for example - military bases?

The following areas are off limits to the general public: military bases, naval, air bases, military instruction centers, public water and energy plants.

Can you take photographs any where?

The following areas are off limits to photographers: airports, railway stations, naval bases, air bases, military barracks, military instruction centers, public water and energy plants, police stations, harbors, mines and bridges. Tourists have been detained for taking photographs in prohibited zones. When in doubt, look for an official and ask for permission first.

Are there areas of the country students should not visit due to political unrest or civil disturbances?



No there are not such a places. However there are very far areas for example in the jungle, on some rivers where there are some drug traffick operating, or are located in very far and isolated places. We strongly request AFS participants should not insist requesting AFS authorization to travel in those areas.

[What should the student do in the event of any unforeseeable act of terrorism, natural disaster, for example - earthquakes ?](#)

[Terrorism](#)

Thanks God! We don't have terrorists events any more. However the analysts say that after the 11 of September 2001 the world population live in a permanent alert, that's why security measures are taken in all public places, also here in Peru, specially at airports, private and public buildings. If you experience any situation related to terrorism just get in touch with your host family or any AFS volunteer or staff.

[Tremors and earthquakes](#)

In Peru we are used to very short earth movements: Tremors. They last few seconds. Sometimes we even don't notice them. An earthquake is stronger movement, both in intensity and duration. If you ever experience one, try to keep calm and remain in an open space, such a park, a patio. If possible make a call to your hostfamily, or any of our emergency phone numbers. If it is not possible try to reach yours hosts place or the pre designated place by the AFS local chapter.

[Conclusion](#)

The best general advice AFS can recommend regarding issues of personal safety are:

- get to know the host culture well through questions, dialogue and discussion with your host
- family, peers, the AFS local contacts.
- take seriously any concerns that your host family and school have expressed and follow their advice.
- as stated in the Participation Agreement document you signed prior leaving home, the National AFS office will make recommendations and give guidelines for physical welfare and security. Take this advice seriously and comply with these guidelines.
- Use your common sense and do not ignore your own "instinct" in any given situation or feel you have to compromise your own personal behavioral values and beliefs. These are valuable resources in making decisions about what to do.

During the program if you have any doubt or questions about this document, please contact your local chapter President.

AFS PERU National Office: 6527432 Fax: 6381872 - Monday through Friday:
from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

AFS PERU EMERGENCY CELL PHONE: 99985-0227
(after working hours, weekends and holidays)

AFS PERU OFFICE
Av. Javier Prado Este 596 Of. 302 - San Isidro - LIMA 27



**Programas
Interculturales**
Perú

Av. Javier Prado Este 596 - Oficina 302
San Isidro, Lima 27, Peru
Telephone: 51.1.6527432 - 51.1.4410314
Fax: 51.1.6381872