

Information from Cartus on Relocation and International Assignment Trends and Practices.

Improving Business Fluidity and Establishing Best Practices in an Evolving Relocation Landscape



During these uncertain and turbulent times, organisations need to find new and innovative ways to stay connected while they constantly review and re-prioritise objectives to maintain a focus on employee safety and well-being, without losing sight of their strategic goals.

From establishing revised communication protocols to reviewing policy entitlements and viewing relocation planning through a new lens, taking an agile and flexible approach is essential.

As a global organisation working with companies across all industry sectors all over the world, Cartus focuses on supporting our clients to navigate this global crisis. In these challenging times, partnership and information sharing are critical, so here are some tips and best practices for you to consider as you continue to make key decisions relating to your mobility program.

COMMUNICATION

At a time when the world is in crisis, and teams are working remotely, the need for effective communication is greater than ever. This applies to internal business stakeholders, your mobile employees, and your supplier partners.

Here are some best practices to keep your mobility program on track and your employees safe:

- Establish a dedicated COVID-19 communication channel (e.g., Intranet site, internal social media, global email inbox, etc.)
- Increase communication to your mobile population to daily or bi-weekly (depending on the host country)
- Hold regular internal Crisis Committee meetings to assess the evolving situation regularly and determine next steps.
- Increase the frequency of your partnership calls with your relocation vendor(s) for information sharing and to align a clear communication strategy for your mobile employees in each location.

COST PLANNING

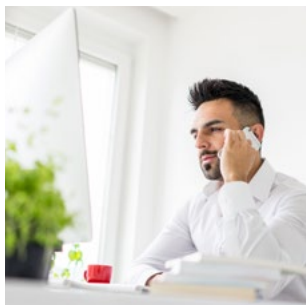
Irrespective of your standard policy types and benefit offerings, you should recognise that, during these unprecedented times, costs are likely to increase for your mobile population. There may even be an opportunity for you to make some broad policy adjustments, though most organisations are currently reviewing and approving additional support on a case-by-case basis.

Here are some common considerations:

- Do any of your mobile employees require an extension of their temporary living?
- For in-progress shipments, will extended storage-in-transit be required?
- If employees have returned to their home countries during this crisis, will you maintain host country benefits and allowances?
- Are your employees in host countries where additional or enhanced health insurance coverage is now required?

Work with your Cartus team or relocation vendor(s) to understand best practices when it comes to cost planning and policy exceptions to help you ensure employee safety and security while minimising unnecessary additional costs to the business.

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RELOCATION ACTIVITY

Although most organisations have put international transfers temporarily on hold due to global travel restrictions, it is critical that you maintain a focus on ensuring the safety and well-being of your mobile population already on assignment.

- Ensure you have a comprehensive list of all mobile employees by host country with all relevant contact information.
- Work with your relocation vendor(s) to obtain comprehensive reporting to help you understand and monitor the different moves phases and where each employee is in the relocation journey.
- Work with your relocation vendor(s) to determine a course of action for in-progress moves—e.g., increasing time in temporary accommodation, reviewing relocation allowances, and delaying the provision of certain services.
- Leverage technology—both internally and through your relocation vendor(s)—to streamline communication, track and monitor your mobile population, and make critical decisions about your mobility program.

Immigration restrictions are likely to dictate how soon you are able to begin relocating your employees again. However, if you are starting to plan for this, here are some key considerations:

- Ensure you have a strong assessment process in place for new relocations. As countries begin to open their borders, pay careful attention to any restrictions in place in the departure or destination locations, which could significantly impact the relocation timelines.
- Set expectations with the business that there will be a need for flexibility in terms of start dates. Immigration requirements for entry into countries are reviewed regularly, and some countries now require additional health insurance and/or medical certification.
- Don't overlook compliance and tax implications. If you are considering alternative arrangements for your employees such as commuting or working from a third location, we strongly encourage you to review the scenarios in detail from an immigration perspective as well as with your tax provider to ensure that you are compliant and aware of trailing tax liabilities.
- You may receive personal requests from your employees to return home permanently and to end assignments early. You should consider the implications of each individual request—employee well-being vs. business need vs. early assignment and repayment clauses.

FUTURE-PROOFING YOUR PROGRAM

Now that you have established some processes for managing your mobility program during this crisis, while new relocation activity is temporarily on hold, use this time wisely to think about the future!

Has this global crisis changed the way your organisation is looking at mobility? Can you use this time to evaluate the status quo and consider new approaches to improve your program going forward?

Consider:

- Have you had access to sufficient technology to support you during this crisis? If not, do you need to look for an alternative solution that enables you to track and monitor your employee population with ease?
- Consider the need for flexibility within your policy framework. Should you move to a Core/Flex policy model?
- Should you create a new emergency policy based on some recent key learnings?
- Do you need to re-prioritise objectives and update your mobility strategy to align with new broader business objectives?
- Is cost-containment now a major focus for you? How can you reduce the cost of your program while maintaining a focus on talent management and the employee experience?

WORKING TO SUPPORT YOU

Cartus will continue to monitor the COVID-19 crisis as it evolves, sharing information and best practices to support your mobility program. In the meantime, if you have any questions or want to find out more, please reach out to your Cartus representative or email cartussolutions@cartus.com.

You can find additional insights and resources on our COVID-19 Content Hub at www.cartus.com/coronavirus.

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