

Ukraine Crisis

Frequently Asked Questions

We encourage our clients to ensure they are signed up for our latest Ukraine alerts via email, through the App, or the Online Portal which contain our continuing assessment on the evolving situation as well as communicating with our 24/7 Assistance Centres for any further security information and advice on the evolving escalation. These channels remain the most appropriate for real-time, expert-led assessment and advice.

This document provides information on the Frequently Asked Questions we are receiving from our clients. Any updates will be released on a scheduled basis thereafter.

Q: Should we evacuate our employees from Ukraine?

A: International SOS is advising people who have the opportunity and ability to relocate from areas experiencing combat operations and can sustain themselves (access to food, water, medication and fuel, as relevant) during the journey, to move as soon as possible to a south-western province (Zakarpattia, Ivano-Frankivsk, Chernivtsi, Lviv or Ternopil province, by order of preference).

If people prefer to leave the country due to the conflict, borders with Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Hungary and Moldova are currently open. Movement poses significant risks due to the security environment, long journey times, weather, limited availability of support and high demand for accommodation and essential goods.

People should shelter in place if in immediate proximity to ongoing armed clashes, air raids or artillery shelling or at the launch of a public raid siren and prepare to move as soon as feasible.

Managers should conduct an individual risk assessment for all remaining workforce in country, and, if feasible, consider internal relocation to the south-west of Ukraine (Zakarpattia, Ivano-Frankivsk, Chernivtsi, Lviv and Ternopil provinces, by order of preference). Managers should prepare for movement when feasible to enable evacuation (for those who can depart) from Ukraine when possible.

Q: Does International SOS have an on-the-ground presence in Ukraine currently?

A: International SOS has deployed two Incident Management teams to Ukraine during the crisis and maintain Incident Management Teams in Poland and Romania supported by our vetted security providers. Our Incident Management Team will remain in theatre to support coordination and ground moves within Ukraine and to support clients and engage with our local trusted provider networks in Ukraine and neighbouring country safe havens.

Q: Can International SOS assist with evacuation from Ukraine or internal relocation?

A: International SOS deployed members of the security team into Ukraine on two occasions in January and February, on which occasions we refreshed our broad network of fully vetted security and ground transport providers. The scale and fluidity of the conflict in Ukraine has constrained movement and security support options in country. Despite this, International SOS continues to conduct successful

ground missions in Ukraine on a case-by-case basis and in line with robust planning and risk assessments.

Staff who have the opportunity and ability to relocate from areas experiencing combat operations and can sustain themselves (access to food, water, medication, fuel as relevant) during the journey should move as soon as possible. You are not advised to wait for International SOS' transport providers, but instead to find alternative means of transport, including private vehicles, government evacuation trains and other government or humanitarian options that are made known to you by reliable local sources. International SOS has providers ready to assist on the other side of the Ukrainian border in Moldova, Poland, Romania and Slovakia. We also relocated our Incident Management to Warsaw to support clients there. Services that may be available, depending on the location and circumstances, include reception at the border crossing, onward ground transportation, and the provision of basic refreshments or supplies.

Commercial aviation:

Ukrainian airspace is closed due to the conflict.

Land border crossings:

Multiple land border crossings with Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania and Slovakia are still operating. Though some queues should be anticipated, we assess these as a credible option for a land-based evacuation, dependent on access routes, viability of transport options, border status and prevailing security environment. Queues have significantly reduced since the early days of the conflict.

International SOS maintains direct relationships with accredited security providers capable of supporting land movement from the Ukrainian border in Hungary, Poland, Romania, Moldova, and Slovakia. All border crossings with Russia and Belarus have been temporarily closed by the Ukrainian authorities. International SOS recommends using whatever border crossing is geographically closest to your evacuees.

Lack of fuel availability in Ukraine means that there is no specific preferred crossing. All crossings can be expected to have wait times of between five and 12 hours, or very rarely, longer, depending on events in Ukraine (for example, if a major attack takes place in Lviv, crossings with Poland will become more congested for a period of a few days). We do not recommend relocating long distances to access a different or further away crossing. Crossing times can vary significantly and depend on the capacity of the border authorities, which changes hourly and daily.

International SOS recommends using whatever border crossing is geographically closest to your evacuees. Lack of fuel availability and long queues reported at all crossings mean that there is no specific preferred crossing at this time. All crossings can be expected to have wait times of between 24 and 48 hours – or longer at the most crowded crossings to Poland. We do not recommend relocating long distances to access a different or further away crossing; crossing times can vary significantly and depend on the capacity of the border authorities, which changes hourly and daily.

International SOS is constantly monitoring COVID-19 related restrictions and any evacuation planning should factor in the lead times for PCR tests as well as any potential delays / impact of those testing positive.

Air charter:

Due to the current escalation of conflict, Ukrainian airspace has been closed to all civilian flights, and a further warning against flights including also a region of 100 nautical miles within the borders of Belarus and Russian Federation surrounding the borders with Ukraine has been issued by the European Union Aviation Safety Agency. Moldovan airspace has been partially closed to all civilian flights, however an airspace corridor on the Moldovan/Romanian border has been opened leading to and from Chisinau, and restrictions on flights to Chisinau have been removed.

International SOS retains the capability to arrange air ambulance, charter and commercial flights from Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Russia as required. Should restrictions change, this guidance will be updated accordingly.

All usual travel requirements including visa and COVID requirements remain in place for all nationalities subject to the destination of any charter flight.

Q: Can International SOS coordinate medical assistance in Ukraine?

A: Access to medical care is difficult. Urgent and emergency care is still available in some locations. However, in territories where active hostilities persist the health system is not functioning, power is not available and access to safe water is not assured.

Shortages of oxygen, insulin, cancer therapies and other essential supplies persist.

Urgent ambulatory and inpatient emergency care is currently available in the western regions of Ukraine. The influx of Ukrainians from the capital Kyiv and its environs as well as from the central part of the country have decreased. Therefore, the healthcare situation in western Ukraine is under less stress and some facilities (even in Kyiv) have almost resumed their usual activity, backed up by supply from international help that is now dispatched more easily. There continues to be reliable access to urgent and emergent care in Odessa province. Same situation in Lviv and in the major part of West Ukraine that is still spared from fighting. There is still a functioning health system, with supplies that can more easily come from neighboring EU countries (mostly Poland).

The situation in each location will continue to fluctuate depending on the security situation at the time. We have been informed that emergency and non-emergency ground ambulance capability is currently significantly reduced, due to these resources being reallocated to military use. Response times will therefore be inconsistent with delays to be expected. Cross-regional transfer is currently significantly hampered due to limited access to assets, security checkpoints and traffic congestion on key routes.

Scheduled care (e.g. routine outpatient appointments) cannot be arranged. Teleconsultation services have been disrupted due to the impact on private healthcare providers.

Q: Can International SOS provide emotional support to clients in Ukraine?

A: Intl. SOS has access to providers who are able to provide remote/telephonic counselling to clients in Ukraine, across a variety of languages.

Q: Are commercial flights flying to or over neighbouring countries currently being affected?

A: Airspace in Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Romania is open and commercial flights are operating as normal. The exception to this is flights by Russian-owned, Russian-registered and Russian-controlled aircraft, as per restrictions put in place by the European Union. Some flight availability, particularly out of airports near land borders with Ukraine, may become limited in the coming days due to ongoing refugee flows. However, we don't anticipate that flight availability out of capital cities will be affected.

Moldovan airspace remains partially closed to commercial or private passenger flights until 25 April. This may be further extended if the military operation in Ukraine is ongoing at that time. However, an airspace corridor on the Moldovan/Romanian border has been opened leading to and from Chisinau, and restrictions on flights to Chisinau have been removed.

We do not expect further airspace closures in neighboring countries, as this would indicate an escalation in military tensions between the EU and Russia that we do not currently assess to be likely. Airspace closures to specific categories of flights, such as those coming from Russia or Belarus, will continue and may be imposed by additional countries in the coming days, but normal commercial air traffic will continue as normal between countries unaffected by the conflict.

Q: Can International SOS support in our operational planning in Ukraine?

A: International SOS can support through access to our security, medical and operations teams via our 24/7 Assistance Centres. Consulting engagements can also support the review, guidance in, and design and development of bespoke escalation plans and provide expert crisis management advisory services to our client CMTs.

Q: Can International SOS provide cash advance services to clients in Ukraine?

A: International SOS is currently unable to provide emergency cash services in Ukraine. The provision of cash advances is not a feature in the Scope of Services of International SOS' Workforce Resilience solution.

Q: Can International SOS guarantee payment for medical services in Ukraine?

With the limitations on the healthcare system at present, emergency care at major public facilities in Kyiv and Lviv is being provided without charge. In other locations where private care may be available and chargeable, clients should prepare to self-pay medical expenses. Intl. SOS should be contacted as early as practicably possible in the event medical assistance is required.