

Travel advice for South Korea

The ABF will be represented by 6 teams (Open, Women, 2 x Senior, Junior, Girls), at the Asia Pacific Bridge Federation Championships in Seoul, South Korea, from May 28 – June 7, 2017. We have received enquiries about the implications for this commitment of current news reports about international tensions in North-East Asia.

The ABF notes that:

1. The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has not changed its travel advice for South Korea. It remains at the lowest of DFAT's four levels: overall, exercise normal safety precautions.
2. However, it is recognised that the situation in North-East Asia is atypical. The risk of rapid escalation to full-scale war, while small, is higher than most destinations.

ABF Policy for Overseas Destinations

ABF policy for overseas participation by Australian representative teams is:

- We only enter international representative events if the DFAT travel advice for the destination is level 1 (*overall, exercise normal safety precautions*) or two (*high degree of caution*). We will not enter events if the DFAT advice is level 3 or 4.

(Note that Bangladesh is level 3: "Bangladesh overall, reconsider your need to travel. Think seriously about whether you need to travel here due to the high level of risk. If you do travel, do your research and take a range of extra safety precautions, including having contingency plans. Check that your travel insurer will cover you".)

- If DFAT increases its advice level following entry but before the event starts:
 - we will withdraw if the advice is increased to level 4 (*do not travel*). Players will be required to reimburse the ABF for any travel subsidy already paid, except to the extent that they have already incurred expenses and such expenses are not recoverable under any policy of insurance¹.
 - if the advice changes to level 3 (*reconsider the need to travel*), we will consider whether to take place on a case by case basis in consultation with team members. Individual players or pairs will have the right to withdraw if they choose, and the rest of the team may continue if it still has enough members. Arrangements as above will apply if the team or any team members withdraw.
- If DFAT increases its advice level to level 3 or 4 after players arrive at the venue, team captains in consultation with the designated ABF representative on site (if applicable), will be empowered to decide what action to take. Any costs incurred as a result will be a matter between participants and their travel insurers¹.

¹ Note that players are covered by an ABF travel policy, and are free to arrange their own cover if they wish. Tony Bemrose Insurance Brokers have advised that, to make a claim under the ABF travel insurance policy for cancellation costs, the DFAT advice would need to change to "do not travel". It remains a matter for the ABF and those travelling to decide whether they are happy to travel to South Korea but at this stage any cancellation costs incurred would not be covered by insurance as any change in travel plans would be discretionary.

Special Arrangements for Seoul

ABF Policy: For members of Australian representative teams for Seoul:

- If the DFAT travel advice increase to level 3 or 4, the policy above will apply.
- If the DFAT travel advice remains at level 1 or 2, anyone who is concerned about the perceived risk of tensions escalating rapidly may withdraw. They will be required to reimburse the ABF for any travel subsidy already paid. Players should note that ABF travel insurance is unlikely to cover costs of withdrawal in these circumstances.