

# Travel FAQs

## **How do we get to Mexico?**

Most teams use their own vans, buses, or rentals. Note that the registration fees do not cover your transportation costs. Teams traveling from longer distances usually fly into Ontario, San Diego, or Los Angeles, California, and rent vans from the airport.

## **Is there housing available at APU before and after the event?**

If you are flying into the area, we do provide limited on-campus housing at Azusa Pacific University for the evening at no extra cost. Keep in mind that you might be sleeping in classrooms on the floor. There is a Housing Request Form online and in the Registration Manual available online as a downloadable PDF.

## **What maps do I need?**

Maps can be confusing. Make sure to look them over before you leave. Map Guides can be accessed online in the Resource Center.

## **Why is the Mexico Outreach bumper sticker required?**

Please use the bumper stickers so that as you travel, other teams and our staff can recognize you. Place them in the window if using a rental vehicle. If you get lost, look for vehicles with a Mexico Outreach bumper sticker or with "Azusa Pacific University" logos.

## **What if I get lost?**

In the U.S., please call (626) 812-3027 and we'll try to help. If you get lost in Mexico, we do not have a number you can call, but most locals in the area can give you directions.

## **Why is Mexican vehicle insurance required?**

In Mexico, if you get into an accident (hopefully you won't), the police and insurance agents will determine if all are covered before they release you from their custody. This can happen very quickly, especially if you buy Mexican insurance before crossing the border. If you are not covered, this is a serious problem, so **MAKE SURE YOU HAVE MEXICAN VEHICLE INSURANCE** before crossing the border. Buy your insurance before the border or at a gas station near the border. Insurance coverage is the same at each agent; costs vary only slightly. Protect your team and your integrity with their parents by making sure you have full coverage, unless you are certain your U.S. policy covers you across the border (most do not). "Liability Only" may keep you out of jail, but does not pay for repairs on borrowed vehicles or cover medical expenses. Often times, rental companies in Southern California will offer Mexican insurance coverage, so check with them before renting a vehicle.

## **Where do I buy gasoline in Mexico?**

You can use the gasoline in Mexico. Every station is run by the national company, PEMEX. Find one that sells "magna" or "magnasine"; that's the unleaded kind (not every station carries it). "Rojo" (or red) is the higher octane gasoline. So if your Spanish is limited, just say "Rojo" (sounds like Santa Claus saying "ho ho").

## **Which of my vehicles requires the Vehicle Permission Form?**

For each of your vehicles where the owner is not driving their own vehicle, be sure to have a letter from the owner giving other driver(s) permission to use the vehicle and cross the border during the dates of the

outreach. It is wise to have this notarized, listing the names of all potential drivers. This form can be found in the “Before Traveling to Mexico” section of the Registration Manual and online.

**Is it ok to decorate my vehicle with slogans?**

Please do not decorate your vehicles with slogans. It will draw more attention than you want when you cross the border and while in Mexico.

**How do I get cargo vehicles across the border?**

If you have a cargo vehicle, make sure it crosses into Mexico with the rest of your team. That way, if you are stopped for inspection, it does not look like you are trying to smuggle goods into the country. Cargo vehicles that are bigger than a passenger van will be forced to go through the truck crossing, which takes more time and requires paying additional fees. We ask that you do not to use large commercial trucks.

**What will it cost us to cross the border with construction materials?**

If you have construction materials purchased in the U.S., you may have to pay a duty on them when crossing into Mexico. Be prepared to pay up to 20% of the market value!

**Do we need to take original proof of citizenship with us into Mexico?**

Each person needs to have proof of citizenship including all original documents (i.e., passport or birth certificate and state-issued photo I.D.) for entering Mexico and returning into the United States. International students may require an additional visa prior to entering Mexican territory. See our website for the latest details.

**Why should the driver have a list of everyone in their vehicle when crossing the border?**

When stopping at the border, your driver may be asked for names of passengers and their citizenship.

**What does each vehicle need before crossing the border?**

Each vehicle needs a current registration certificate, proof of U.S. vehicle insurance, and a Mexican insurance policy (should be purchased before crossing the border). See our website for Mexican insurance options.

**Who is required to have a special visa to go into Mexico?**

Don't forget that every participant born in another country, or citizens of another country, may have different requirements for getting across the border. Please check the website for the latest information before traveling.

**What should each driver know before crossing the border?**

- Know the citizenship of each of the occupants in the car.
- Know that each occupant has the appropriate travel forms and identification.
- Know the contents of the vehicle.
- Know that there is no contraband (weapons) in the vehicle.
- Know that the official status of the group is “camping” and “participating in non-lucrative activities in support of the community” (only offer this information if asked by the official).
- Know that your personal and vehicle documents are close at hand.
- Know that no one has written religious propaganda on the windows.

**What border crossing should we use?**

We only have an official relationship with Baja California, not Sonora, Mexico. For Mexicali trips, participants should cross at Calexico, CA; for Ensenada trips, participants should cross at San Ysidro, CA.

#### **How can we reduce the chance of hassles at the border when we cross?**

- The least conspicuous vehicle has the least trouble crossing the border.
- Remember to remain quiet while crossing the border.
- Please speak respectfully and truthfully when spoken to by an official.
- Have your documentation ready.

#### **What are the import limits going into Mexico?**

- \$50 dollars worth of goods per person
- \$300 dollars maximum per car
- No guns, mace, or other weapons

#### **What are the import limits going into United States?**

- \$400 dollars worth of goods per person (for personal use)
- No guns, switchblades, fire works, drugs, fruits, etc.

#### **What happens when we arrive at our base camp?**

Arrival at camp can be an overwhelming experience. You will likely be met at the entrance by a staff member who will guide you into camp and where you will be encouraged to set up your tents. Please be patient with this process.

#### **What is tent set-up?**

At every site, there is a similar tent city pattern that allows you to drop off your tents and gear near where you will set up. An event staff person will designate the area for you based on the number of tents and people in your group.

- We typically will give you a tent set-up in the form of a circle with a common meeting area in the middle for your group to have some limited privacy.
- First, layout all tents in a circle without staking them down.
- Next, get approval from the event staff person to stake down.
- Gear can then be unloaded from vehicles and tents staked down.
- All vehicles used for sleeping can remain in your circle but cannot be moved until the end of the event.
- All other vehicles must be moved after unloading all gear to give room for the next team to set up.

Set-up is usually a fast paced process, and event staff will hurry you on to complete your unloading of gear, especially if there is a long line of teams waiting to set up.

#### **When do we report to the Info Booth?**

After your area has been set up, make sure to report to the Info Booth where any final payment can be settled, and you can exchange shirts and receive your armbands, which will allow you to eat. You will also receive your immigration status, which will let you know if you need to go to the border to verify citizenships of any members of your team. See the Registration Manual for more information.

#### **Will there be dinner and chapel on the arrival day?**

When you have finalized your registration, your group has free time until dinner, which is usually served about 7 p.m.. After dinner, chapel usually starts at about 8 or 8:30 p.m. Ask the Info Booth for the exact times at your site.