



GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEERS

This document was provided by Episcopal Relief & Development to groups traveling to El Salvador. For the most part, the guidelines are applicable to just about any other region in the world. As such, they offer some useful advice for travelers preparing to depart from the United States.

Solidarity El Salvador

1. Please **DO** bring your address and emergency phone numbers with you wherever you go.
2. Please **DO** carry a **copy** of your passport on you at all times.
3. Please **DO NOT** wear expensive jewelry or watches or carry expensive items that you don't need.
4. Please **DO NOT** leave the group without advising someone else.
5. Please **DO NOT** give money or other donations to people at the worksite. If Americans give gifts to people at the worksite, it creates the expectation that all Americans will give them gifts, and that opens the door to begging. This can then be uncomfortable for future volunteers and endangers the integrity and sustainability of ERD's projects.
6. Please **DO NOT** accept gifts of food from anyone but staff associated with your trip. Food often carries bacteria that American stomachs are not used to digesting.
7. Please **DO NOT** promise things to people you meet on the worksite. If you see someone with a condition, or situation you would like to help, first speak to a member of the project team, and arrange how best to do so.
8. Please **BE AWARE** that you will see poverty that may upset you. A few dollars will not help these people. It will only help alleviate your feelings of upset and guilt. If you would like to help, please contribute to the project through Episcopal Relief and Development, and we can create systemic solutions that address the root causes of the problem.
9. Please **BE AWARE** that you are guests in a foreign country. As such, be mindful of different cultural expectations, and **DO NOT** seek to direct your surroundings. You are encouraged to enter in as volunteers in service, and fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.
10. Please **BE AWARE** that every project staff person has duties and responsibilities that may include caring for the beneficiaries, paying for materials and labor, finding materials, directing workers, meeting with government officials, architects and engineers, and overseeing the many disputes that come up in the community. Please **BE PATIENT** with their ability to respond immediately to volunteer requests.