

Case Study

Student Group Evacuated in the Aftermath of the Earthquake in Japan

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Situation

March 2011, a devastating 8.9 earthquake and subsequent tsunami hit Japan and ultimately damaged a nuclear power plant that began leaking radiation. EA USA’s 24/7 assistance center received a call from the University of California with a list of 80 students on a study abroad program that would be affected by these events. University of California administrators activated their ACE Accident & Health travel assistance program, seeking EA’s assistance with contacting the students and arranging for their immediate evacuation out of Japan.

Challenges

The local infrastructure and overland routes were nearly wiped out by both the earthquake and tsunami. Many trains were unable to operate due to damaged tracks and collapsed buildings, while others were severely delayed due to aftershocks. Ground transportation was complicated because of damaged roads and buildings. The availability of communication was sporadic with some locations having operational email, cell and land line communication, while others had none. All of these factors made it difficult to reach people locally and determine their status.

Intervention

After the initial call came into EA USA on the dedicated line established for the University of California, EA USA’s in-house Logistics team worked with our security partner and our office in Japan to contact the students and determine their location, with a particular focus on those located close to the nuclear power plant. The Europ Assistance office in Japan assisted in coordinating ground transportation and provided directions to circumvent overland obstacles. With the combined efforts of our Logistics team and the EA office in Japan, we arranged for the students to be transported from their locations within the country to Narita Airport in Tokyo where they were flown back home.

Results

Thanks to our Logistics team who managed the overall evacuation process in coordination with the University of California, ACE and the EA office in Japan, we were able to quickly locate the University’s students, safely move them out of harm’s way and transport them back home to their families.

About Europ Assistance

Europ Assistance takes care of customers when the unexpected happens, anywhere in the world, providing immediate support and assistance to individuals in times of emergency and distress. As the inventor of the assistance concept in 1963, Europ Assistance has handled more than 150 million cases in its 47 year history and today manages 1 assistance every 2 seconds around the world via 39 24/7 multilingual assistance centers. We are the industry leader in protective services for travelers, managing programs for many of the Global 500 and employers of choice.

