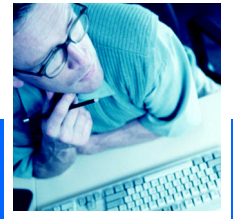


Expatriates – getting ready to go

By Alison Town



Synopsis

Going abroad as an expatriate means tackling several major life changes at once and is not for the faint-hearted. This article helps the expatriate understand the practical challenges ahead and provides guidance on how to plan your move, what you need to ask your employer before you go, and where to find help.

How to ...

How to plan and prepare your expatriate move.

How to handle all the practical issues you will face.

How to handle all the work issues involved in the move.

Alison Town

Alison Town is an international training consultant based in Paris, providing inter-cultural coaching and development. She is multilingual, an avid traveler and keen people-watcher. Her professional background includes human resources experience in a variety of international organizations. Areas of special interest include expatriate management, cross-cultural negotiations, team working and people development.

Introduction

So, you're moving abroad and you have a great new job. Or, perhaps the job is a secondary consideration and your main interest is the chance to live in a new culture for a few years and learn the language. You're mentally prepared to move abroad, you've considered the impact on your family and your social life, and you are now ready to get on with sorting out the questions of how and when.

Hardly anyone spends sufficient time preparing for a foreign relocation. Whatever your circumstances, you may have to move quickly and you will probably have less time to prepare than you would like.

I actually moved country with minimal planning, hardly any of the necessary paperwork, taking only as many belongings as would fit in a car of questionable mechanical reliability – and lived to tell the tale. However, this is not an approach to be recommended if you are starting work any time soon, taking a family with you, or simply want to maintain your blood pressure levels.

The importance of planning

For most expatriates, planning and organising the practicalities of the move is not a luxury but a necessity, even if there is very little turnaround time