

# Unusual laws that could get you in trouble on your next trip overseas

When travelling overseas for business, you will encounter laws that may seem strange to you. While your company will try to prepare you for every eventuality because it's their Duty of Care responsibility, you could land in hot water if you're not aware of certain rules says Corporate Traveller's Oz Desai.



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When you're heading on a business trip somewhere (not-so) exotic, you might want to be aware of the following:

## Weird and wonderful traffic rules

In New York City, it is illegal to honk your horn. If you do, you're at risk of paying \$350 (R4,564) fine. Meanwhile, driving with flip flops is a criminal offence in Spain, while driving without headlights – even during the day - will get you into trouble in Scandinavia.

Driving in France? Remember that all drivers are legally required to carry a portable Breathalyzer in their vehicle. Running out of petrol on the German highway is not only frowned upon, it is a criminal offence. If you do forget to fill up and you break down, you have to pull over and use your horn to attract attention. The penalty? €80 for endangering other drivers.

## Don't chew gum in Singapore

When travelling to Singapore, remember to leave your chewing gum at home. In 1992, Singapore issued a law stipulating that selling and using chewing gum was illegal. The law was meant to keep the streets and public places clean. The law was adapted slightly in 2004, and now pharmacists and dentists have been allowed to sell "therapeutic" gum, to customers with a medical prescription.

The current set of regulations does not have provisions for carrying gum for personal use. If you break this rule for the first time, you'll be facing a \$,1000 fine.

## **Dying is illegal in a great number of places in Europe**

The idea of Duty of Care is that you would not come to any harm - or die - while travelling... and this might come in useful, as it is illegal to die in a great number of places in Europe.

In the Andalusian town of Lanjarón in Spain, it is illegal to die as there are simply not enough cemeteries. In England, one is not allowed to die in the Houses of Parliament. The buildings count as a royal palace, therefore, anyone who dies there is technically entitled to a state funeral.

## **No jogging in Burundi**

Don't go jogging in Burundi, or risk being jailed. In March 2014, the country's President Pierre Nkurunziza banned jogging in Burundi. He said people used jogging as a cover to plan subversive activities. In fact, many opposition members have been jailed for taking part in group jogs.

## **Yellow clothes are a no-no in Malaysia**

Do you look your best in yellow? That's too bad if your next business trip is to Malaysia. Everything yellow, from belts to hats, wristbands, even shoelaces – but especially yellow t-shirts – have been banned in Malaysia. The reason? Yellow is the colour of a group of opposition activists.

## **Bizarre drinking regulations**

Drinking while on a business trip might not be a great idea at the best of times, but in the following countries, there are just a few additional things to take into consideration when having a glass.

In Britain, oddly enough, it is illegal to be drunk in the pub. If you do get intoxicated, remember that it is illegal to operate a cow in the UK and in Scotland while intoxicated. You're also not allowed to 'operate' a horse or steam engine. And if you think the British are strange for stipulating you can't operate a cow while drunk, you should note that in Ohio, it is against state law to get a fish drunk.

## **Don't get a stuffy nose when travelling to Japan**

In Japan, over-the-counter allergy/sinus medications that contain the ingredient pseudoephedrine such as Vicks inhalers and Sudafed are banned under Japan's strict anti-stimulant drug laws. Medications that feature codeine are also prohibited and shouldn't be brought into Japan.

## **Don't go on a skydiving excursion in Florida on a Sunday if you're single**

In Florida, it is illegal for a divorced or a widowed woman to skydive on a Sunday afternoon. Florida has also banished farting in public places, but it's only banned on Thursdays after 6pm.

## **Marmite cravings? Denmark's not for you**

Marmite and Ovaltine are banned in Denmark. Danish Law requires government approval for any foods fortified with vitamins or minerals. The Danes believe that a balanced diet supplies all the vitamins and minerals one could need and that too much of these things can cause harm.

## **Don't be annoying in the Philippines**

It might be difficult to define exactly what 'annoying' is, but in the Philippines you can be fined for being deemed 'annoying'. The second paragraph of Article 287 states that "any other coercions or unjust vexations shall be punished by arresto menor (imprisonment for from one day to thirty days) or a fine ranging from five pesos to 200 pesos, or both." Both legal experts and laymen have condemned unjust vexation as an ambiguous catch-all provision with no specific meaning, merely something to charge annoying people with.

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