

Trip Leader Checklist

Hola!

Thanks for considering being the group leader on a trip to Tijuana, it's easier than you think!

Leaders come from all walks of life: youth pastors, parents, business people, volunteers, and even college students. Leaders that typically thrive in Tijuana have a healthy appetite for coordination, team work, and adventure.

Of course, we're here to support you and help set your group up for success. If it's your first time, we even encourage you to come down for a day and just see what it's all about. We're happy to show you TJ, our partners on the ground, and partake in some delicious tacos! For first time groups we also reserve the right to have a Doxa Leader accompany you throughout your entire trip. While nothing we do is rocket science, it does help to have someone with experience be with you the first time.

Just about all groups use this house building experience as a platform for something else. Whether its youth ministry, team building, family time, company retreat, alternative vacation, fulfilling volunteer hours, or a combination of things, the common theme is that the house isn't the only thing getting built.

Leading a group of 8 is much different than leading a group of 100+ people. So take all of the information in this packet with some perspective. We do recommend assembling a leadership team of appropriate size. For smaller groups, it's possible that one person fulfills several tasks while larger groups may require a larger leadership team. We see this as a critical point for success instead of burning yourself out with all the details. Additionally, using a leadership team provides opportunities for everyone with different gifts to shine.

All groups have considerable latitude in crafting their TJ experience. This flexibility is essential as every group has its own needs and knows what will work best for themselves. We do, however, ask everyone to follow some common guidelines to ensure that the actions of one group will not have lasting consequences for future groups. These are outlined below.

As with most things in Tijuana, an excellent and impactful trip starts with sound preparation. The information below is meant to help with that preparation. This packet is organized in a checklist format, meant to be completed in the months prior to your arrival in Tijuana. Some sections that require more in-depth information reference additional materials. All resources can be found on Doxa's website: <http://doxaserves.org/home/home-building/trip-resources>



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Trip Leader Checklist

This checklist is meant to be used as a general guide, as all parts may not apply to your group. It also references many documents that contain more in-depth information and are available on Doxa's website: <http://doxaserves.org/home/home-building/trip-resources>

Assemble leadership team

- There are a lot of moving pieces to consider and we recommend surrounding yourself with a solid team of people to help lighten the load. While none of this stuff is rocket science, it does require a little thought and planning. Several of these tasks can be completed by one person, so feel free to divide and conquer in whatever way makes the most sense to you.
- If this is your first trip to Tijuana with Doxa, we'll make sure you have an experienced leader with you. The ultimate goal, however, is that you'll learn from this experience and become comfortable with doing it on your own.
- Some leadership team positions may include:
 - Transportation and logistics
 - Administration
 - Food and cooks
 - Medical and emergency planning
 - Construction and work crew
 - Program and activity time
 - Trip budget and funding
- If your team will build more than 3 houses, consider sending an advance team so they can prepare the day before your full team's arrival.

Recruitment and trip marketing

- Questions to help shape the tone of the trip:
 - What is the purpose for this trip? Ideally, what will people get out of it?
 - Who is the ideal participant?
 - What is the target number of participants?
 - What is the signup process?
 - Is a trip application or team contract necessary?
- How will the trip be announced and marketed to people?
- When will the marketing and recruitment process start?
 - We typically recommend that teams start to form 3-6 months out. However, trip planning can start 6-12 months out, especially if this is your first trip. More time can't hurt.

Transportation

- There are 3 main legs of transportation: home to Tijuana, around Tijuana, and Tijuana back home. Ultimately, you need to decide what makes the most sense for your team. Some common solutions include:
- Airlines: flying from your home to San Diego International Airport (SAN).
- Vehicles: either using your own or renting.

- Vehicles will be used for transport to and from the house building sites (i.e. 15-passenger vans). They are also typically used to cross the border. Pick-up trucks (i.e. Ford F250s) are used to transport construction materials to the worksite.
- If using your own vehicles, higher ground clearance is preferred as bumpy dirt roads are common. Long-bed pick-up trucks are preferred, as they can fit an entire sheet of plywood in the back with the tailgate up.
- If renting vehicles, there are many vendors who provide airport pick-up and drop-off in San Diego.
- See Trip Resources webpage for more in-depth information, documents include:
 - Driving in Mexico & Renting Vehicles
 - Mexico Border Crossing Information
 - United States Border Crossing Information
 - Driver's Letters for Unidos por Siempre and Hogar de los Niños
- Directions
 - Google Map available at bit.ly/doxamap and contains many frequently used locations by house building groups.
 - Written direction packets are also available on Trip Resources webpage.
- ☐ Medical
 - While Doxa teams have a great track record with worksite safety, it never hurts to be prepared for the unplanned.
 - Bring a copy of everyone's emergency medical forms.
 - Have a first aid kit available at every worksite.
 - Quick safety talk each day before work begins. Keep safety on everyone's mind!
 - Think twice before petting or engaging with any dogs in Tijuana.
 - Know the location of the nearest hospital to your worksites.
 - Establish a medical response protocol for any accidents that may occur.
 - Ideally, there would be a doctor, nurse, EMT, or someone certified in basic first aid coming on your team. If not, all of this planning can be done by anyone.
 - See Trip Resources webpage for the following in-depth resources:
 - Medical Information document for local resources and guidance.
 - Emergency and Medical Form that your team fills out.
- ☐ Administration
 - There are some documents and forms that every group completes. These are in addition to any forms that your organization, church, or company require.
 - Waivers
 - Every person who comes to Tijuana with Doxa needs to fill out a waiver. These waivers must be returned to Doxa by email at least 3 weeks prior to your trip. You can find the appropriate waiver for your group on the Trip Resources webpage.
 - Emergency and Medical Form
 - If your group does not have its own medical forms, please use Doxa's version. This is to ensure that, in the unlikely event of an emergency, appropriate medical care can be administered. As a

reminder, it is each group's responsibility to plan for their own medical care while in Tijuana. However, Doxa can be a great resource to help with this planning.

- You can find the Emergency and Medical Form on the Trip Resources webpage.
- Trip Participant Roster
 - This spreadsheet must be completed and returned to Doxa by email at least 3 weeks prior to your trip.
 - Find the spreadsheet template on the Trip Resources webpage.
- Make sure to review the Trip Planning Timeline document. This serves as a guide to make sure nothing falls through the cracks! You can download it from the Trip Resources webpage.
- Border crossing documents
 - Everyone must have appropriate documentation to cross into Mexico and come back into the United States. For most people, this means having a valid United States Passport.
 - For other documents, see <https://www.usa.gov/enter-us#item-34787>
- Cell phone coverage around Tijuana is good, but you should check with your carrier about coverage in Mexico and any added roaming charges. Typically, a leader's phone can serve as an emergency contact. Doxa's Executive Director can also serve as an emergency contact, if needed.
- As you start to think through the rhythm of each day in Tijuana for your group, it may help to consult the Trip Daily Schedule document. It provides a general bird's eye view of how some groups choose to structure their days. At the very least, it can be a starting point. It's available from the Trip Resources webpage.
- Trip budget & funding
 - There are several pieces to consider when putting together your trip budget.
 - For most groups, all construction materials, lodging, prepared dinners, and pickup truck rental costs are paid through Doxa. See Doxa Price List document on the Trip Resources webpage for current prices.
 - Items that you might consider, but are not paid through Doxa include: food, rental vehicles (except pickup trucks), airline tickets, insurance, medical supplies, and program/activities.
 - There are many ways to help fund a house building trip. Typically, groups use a combination of efforts to fund the entire trip. Here are some ideas:
 - Participants: pay out of pocket, send support letters to friends/family, crowdfund through social media or GoFundMe, and matching donations from employers.
 - Church, company, organization: youth ministry budget, mission budget, charity fund, or company donates a portion of all sales.
 - Activities for everyone: auction, fundraising event, yard sale, car wash, bake sale, tamale/taco meal, or dinner/dessert social.
 - If you're looking for ways to decrease trip cost, Doxa's Executive Director would be happy to help provide some creative ideas.

❑ Food

- Your lodging location will have a kitchen that you can use. Typically, groups do a combination of bringing their own food to cook and having a dinner or two prepared by the local orphanage staff. Going out for tacos is also popular.
- Tijuana has Costco, Sam's Club, and grocery stores that you can access for food purchases. Most stores accept credit/debit cards and we suggest letting your bank know of your travel plans ahead of time.
- See the Sample Food Menu document on the Trip Resources webpage for some menu ideas to get started. Each group is responsible for crafting their own menu.
- While larger groups tend to use disposable plates, cups, and utensils. We encourage smaller groups to use the orphanage supplies and wash them.
- Drinking water will be provided for your group, this is part of the lodging fee.
- We recommend putting together a daily menu for your team, taking into account food allergies. You can also assign cooks by day or designate a cooking team for the entire trip. Much of this depends on the size of your team.

❑ Packing lists

- Checkout the Packing Lists document on the Trip Resources webpage for an idea of what most groups and individuals like to bring with them.
- If Doxa is not providing your worksite tool kits, then checkout the Tool Kit Inventory document on the Trip Resources webpage for a recommended list.
- While power tools are not necessary to build the house, many groups prefer to use them. Doxa has some power tools that groups can use, but feel free to bring your own as well.
- For cooks and construction leaders: if you're picky about what tools you use, then we'd recommend bringing your own.

❑ Program and activities

- Just about all groups use this house building experience as a platform for something else. That could be youth ministry, team building, family time, company retreat, fulfilling volunteer hours, or a combination of things.
- Scheduling daily time for some type of program or activity can help accomplish the main reason for your trip. It could be just a daily debrief among the group or something much more involved. This structure depends upon your vision.
- Some ideas of what we've seen in the past include: small groups, quiet time, daily devotionals, songs, worship, message, card games, activities, sports, intentional time with orphanage people, visiting house building sites from previous years, testimonies, Q&A session with a house building family, Doxa staff member, or local church pastor.
- We encourage you to make programs and activities intentional, as they tend to fall through the cracks if not prepared or planned for in advance.
- Having a daily schedule communicated to all participants is often helpful.

❑ House construction

- Previous construction experience is not required. Just about anyone can build a Doxa house! A leader who reads the manual and facilitates teamwork is enough.

- Checkout the Trip Resources webpage for House Building Manuals in English and Spanish, as well as a video showing how to build the house.
 - The Spanish building manual can be used to help communicate with the family that you're building with. Including them in the building process of their own house is a way to get to know them and start to build a relationship with them on the worksite.
 - Typically, each worksite functions best with a total of 8-14 people. 1-2 of those people should be the construction leaders and help facilitate teamwork.
 - Depending on what's best for your group, there are a few decisions that must be made prior to your arrival.
 - Would you like the worksite leveled and cement forms laid in advance?
 - Would you like the cement slab poured in advance?
 - Would you like to rent a tool kit from Doxa or bring your own tools?
 - Consult the Tool Kit Inventory document on the Trip Resources webpage to see what's included.
 - While power tools are not necessary to build the house, many groups prefer to use them. Doxa has some power tools that groups can use, but feel free to bring your own as well.
 - Upon visiting the worksite for your first time, we recommend collecting some basic information. Feel free to use the Worksite Info Sheet document on the Trip Resources webpage to organize and collect this information.
 - Upon completion of the house, groups present the keys to the family. Make this time what you want, there's no requirements. Some groups pray, take turns saying some words, take pictures, present some modest housewarming gifts, and give hugs all around. This is the culmination of your hard work, entering into relationship with the family, and persisting through the process.
 - Small housewarming gifts are in no way expected by the family. If you are inclined, however, to give something then consider: kitchen items (dishes, cups, utensils, towels), Spanish Bible, welcome door mat, room items (blanket, sheets, pillows), kids items (small toys, coloring book, markers, soccer ball). Giving cash to families is discouraged.
 - Living in a border city, most people can understand English (even if they say they can't). Please watch what you say on the worksite! We encourage you to learn as much Spanish as possible, too!
- ☐ Lodging
- Your lodging in Tijuana will be at one of three locations: Hogar de los Niños, Unidos por Siempre, or El Rancho. Each location has a kitchen, limited number of beds, limited number of bathrooms, parking, and safe to store valuables.
 - We can accommodate groups that desire a range of comfortability. Some groups sleep on the floor, take bucket showers, and only use portable bathrooms. Other groups sleep in hotel-style rooms with beds. We'll work with you to determine the right type of lodging so your group is setup for success from the start.
 - We can accommodate groups from 8 to 200 people.
 - Do not drink the tap water in Mexico, special drinking water will be provided!

- Always store passports and valuables in the safe at your location.
- When coming and going from your lodging, always lock exterior gates. Never leave them unlocked unless someone is actively present.
- All of the lodging locations have a no alcohol policy.
 - Many of the orphanage kids have had negative experiences with alcohol affecting their lives and we would like to be respectful and sensitive to that. Instead, various taco establishments allow alcohol consumption.
- Please leave all facilities in the same or better condition than when you found them. This may include sweeping, moping, wiping down, disinfecting, trash collection, and organization. Please make sure to focus on the following spaces:
 - Kitchen and eating areas – trash collection, sweep, and mop.
 - Perishable food can be donated to the orphanage or to your house building families.
 - Non-perishable food can be left in pantry for next group.
 - Sleeping spaces – trash collection, sweep, and mop any liquid spills.
 - Gently used clothing and shoes can be donated to the orphanage.
 - Meeting/program spaces – trash collection, sweep, and mop liquid spills.
 - Tool/material storage – put away any extra material and organize.
- Please make sure to leave adequate time for cleaning after completing your house build. When everyone works together, cleaning typically takes about 2 hours. Leaving all facilities clean means the next group can have a great start!