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More for your money: Getting out of a country in crisis

By Jane Engle | February 13, 2011

Security and evacuation companies: These contract with businesses, schools and other groups to safeguard employees and members on the road.

One company that also sells such services to individuals — a rarity — is Boston-based Global Rescue. Its \$655 upgraded annual membership includes medical and security-related evacuations, a 24-hour helpline, intelligence reports and more. By Feb. 4, the company had evacuated nearly 200 travelers from Egypt, said Chief Executive Dan Richards.

Many travel insurers cover medical evacuations in their package policies; fewer appear to cover nonmedical evacuations. Check the limits, because an evacuation can cost \$20,000 or more, Richards said.

U.S. State Department: Its website for travelers, <http://www.travel.state.gov>, gives country-by-country security updates and general advice for safety abroad. Its embassies and consulates aid thousands.

During the Egyptian crisis, its charter flights have flown more than 2,300 Americans to safety in Europe. Evacuees will be billed for “the basic cost of a one-way commercial ticket,” said Michelle Bernier-Toth, the State Department’s acting managing director of the Office of Overseas Citizens Services.

Here’s a free service: the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program. You register at <http://www.travel.state.gov>, giving your passport info, trip itinerary and emergency contacts. Enrollees get State Department travel alerts about their destinations, and “if a friend contacted us looking for you, we would know how to reach you,” Bernier-Toth said.