

# Digital Safety Checklist

## For journalists traveling to the U.S.

**Journalists traveling across the U.S. border should consider taking the following steps before entering or exiting the United States:**

*Journalists who are at high risk of being detained at the border should consider leaving their personal and/or work devices at home and instead carry separate devices and a new SIM card. These devices should only have the information needed for your trip and not be linked to your personal or work accounts. Be prepared for border guards' questions about why you are crossing a border without your personal or work devices.*

- ☐ Backup, delete, or remove access to any information you would not want others to obtain. If you need to access data while traveling, consider backing it up to a cloud account not linked to your devices. Do not hide data on your devices; border guards could view this as illegal.
- ☐ Log out of any accounts and browsers and delete any apps you would not want a border guard to access. Review your browsing history and delete any accounts or sites you would not want others to see.
- ☐ Review the content of any messaging apps or social media on your devices to ensure there is no data that could compromise you or others.
- ☐ Practice good basic digital security practices by ensuring you have two-factor authentication turned on using an app such as Google Authenticator. Ensure you have the backup codes for each online account with 2FA turned on.
- ☐ Be aware that border guards may ask for social media handles to check publicly viewable content, and consider making social media accounts private before traveling.
- ☐ Look through your contact list and remove any details that could put you or others at risk. Be aware that contact details may be stored in multiple places on a phone, including the cloud, apps, and the device itself.
- ☐ Turn on full-disk encryption for all devices. iPhone users should ensure they have enabled Apple's end-to-end encryption known as Advanced Data Protection.
- ☐ Turn off biometric access to your phones and laptops. To secure your devices, use the longest PIN possible.
- ☐ Before crossing the border, power down all your devices and leave them off until the crossing is complete. Be aware that you may be asked to turn on and open a device.

**Editors and journalists should consult CPJ's digital safety kit for more information.**

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