

## **SAFETY WHILE TRAVELING IN MEXICO!**

The subject of safety is a common discussion whenever entering a foreign country. When we leave our “familiar” surroundings we are always assuming a certain level of risk. However, it is important to separate “facts” from “fiction”.

### **The Facts**

It is true that the Country of Mexico, like many Latin American countries, has a drug-related war going on between the federal government and narco-drug elements in the Tijuana area. This is similar to Chicago during prohibition. To date this war has been waged between police, federal agents, and the narco-gangs. Nearly all of the crimes and battles have occurred in the deep urban corridor of Tijuana and Rosarito beach – and has always involved the principles. In other words – if you are the member of a narco-drug gang, a corrupt police officer, or a Mexican federal agent – Mexico can be dangerous for you. If you are not involved in illicit behavior and do not find yourself in the wrong area (Red light districts, urban core, wealthy subdivisions) you are very unlikely to ever be involved in any of the strife.

It is also important to remember that most major urban cities in America are statistically more dangerous than Mexico. To a foreigner the cities of Los Angeles or New York are rife with drugs, car-jackings, freeway shootings, child abductions, rapes, and rampant gang wars. To those who live there – it is a wonderful and safe place to live where occasionally unfortunate things occur. The point – don't judge a place by news reports.

### **Missions Trips are Safe**

In our 22 years of working in Latin America – we are aware of no American mission group conducting a mission project in Mexico that has ever been involved in the ramifications of the violence of Mexico. We have had two medical issues in our 18 years – a jogger bitten by a dog, and a twisted ankle from volley ball.

There are several reasons for why a mission trip is a relatively safe activity:

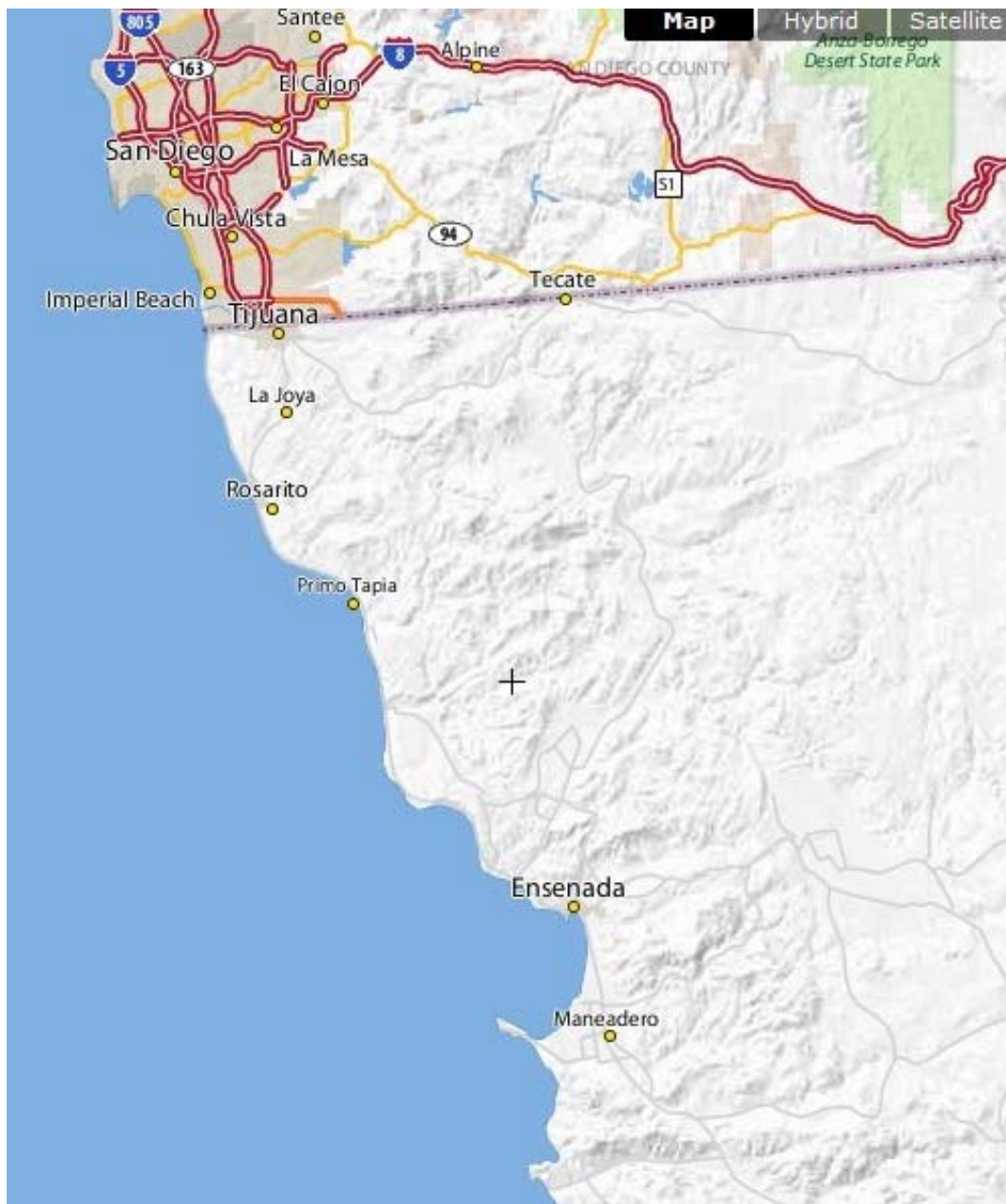
1. We work in areas that are rural and needy – and far removed from the urban core of Tijuana (we will be staying and working 60 miles from Tijuana in an agricultural area south of Ensenada that has a large retired American population, farms, and migrant workers)
2. We travel in and out of Mexico on major roads, in large groups, during daytime hours. We travel on the well lit, populated and insured “toll road”.
3. We are viewed positively by the people and officials of Mexico because we are bringing help and housing to their people.
4. We remain in large groups at all times while in Mexico, on property owned and operated by Americans.
5. We maintain constant cell phone service 24/7 while in Mexico.
6. We have experienced staff that are intimately familiar with Mexico, and offer your group guidance and direction for safety.

## A Final Word

We take the safety of every participant on a Baja Bound trip extremely seriously. We also have deep sympathy for parents who are concerned for their children. We are parents ourselves. If you have any further questions we encourage you to call our Director John Rose on his cell phone at 619-540-1221. We are happy to explain any procedures or answer any further questions you may have.

## MAPS:

We'll be driving past Tijuana and Rosarita and heading just south of Ensenada.



We'll be staying and working in the bay/gulf area on the coast west of Maneadero.

