



MINGAHOUSE
FOUNDATION



COLOMBIA SAFETY GUIDE FOR VOLUNTEERS

COMMITMENT TO SAFETY

Minga House Foundation is aware of the U.S. Department of State's Travel Warning regarding Colombia. The safety of our volunteers is our top priority, and we are actively monitoring the situation. Currently, we have found no reason to alter our program itineraries, based on our extensive experience facilitating volunteer experiences for over 2,000 international volunteers since 2013.

Regarding the travel advisory, the U.S. Department of State notes that tens of thousands of U.S. citizens safely visit Colombia each year for tourism, business, university studies, and volunteer work. In recent years, security in Colombia has shown substantial improvement.

The central tri-state area comprising Caldas, Risaralda, and Quindío has long been one of the country's safest and most stable regions for both residents and visitors. Known as the "coffee region" or "Zona Cafetera," this area of the Colombian Andes has benefited from the stability and prosperity of the coffee industry, ensuring steady financial growth, high employment for the local workforce, and a peaceful environment throughout.

Minga House Foundation volunteers fly into Pereira Airport in Risaralda's capital city and travel by private transportation to Chinchiná, Caldas—a journey of about 45 to 60 minutes. The U.S. State Department considers the states of Caldas and Risaralda to be stable areas. Volunteers engage in activities within the Caldas municipalities of Chinchiná, Palestina, and Villamaría, as well as in the city of Manizales, Caldas' capital, where they participate in hospital and university visits and enjoy recreational opportunities, including shopping and visits to popular hot spring resorts.



SAFETY GUIDE FOR MINGA VOLUNTEERS

Your safety and well-being are our top priorities. This guide provides essential contact information and instructions for handling emergencies.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

In case of an emergency, please follow these steps:

- 1. Stay Calm:** Remain as calm as possible to think clearly and assess the situation.
- 2. Report to Your Supervisor:** Always inform your program coordinator or the nearest staff member about the situation.
- 3. Contact Emergency Personnel:** Use the contacts provided in this guide for immediate assistance.
- 4. Follow Instructions:** Adhere to the instructions given by emergency personnel or staff.
- 5. Evacuation Plans:** Familiarize yourself with evacuation routes and procedures. In case of a fire or natural disaster, know where the nearest exits are located.

MINGA HOUSE FOUNDATION'S COMMITMENT TO YOUR SAFETY

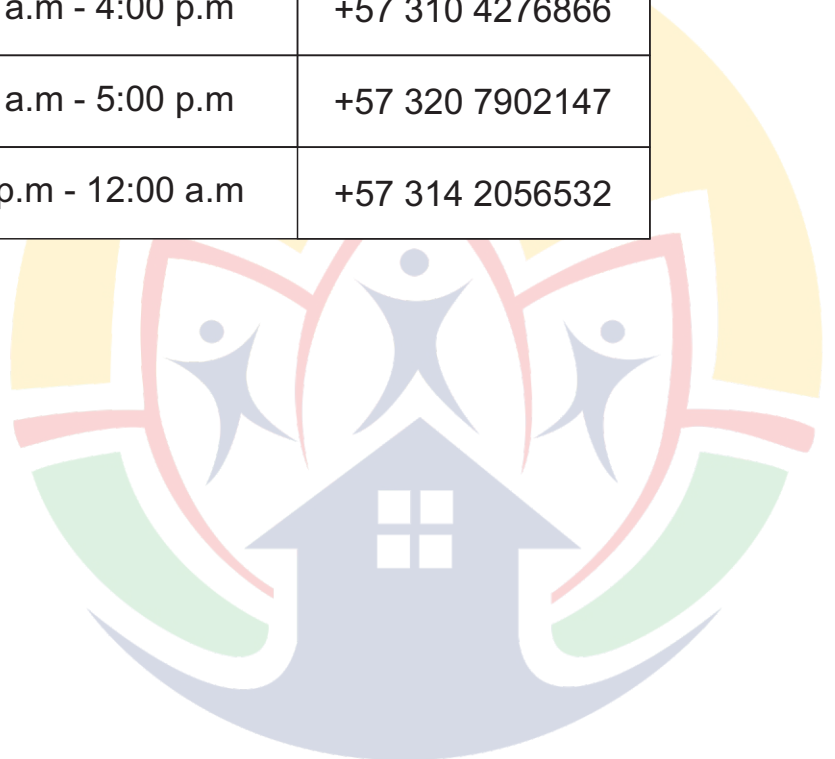
At Minga House Foundation, we are dedicated to ensuring a safe and supportive environment for all our volunteers. Please feel free to reach out to us if you have any concerns or need assistance.

MINGA HOUSE FOUNDATION STAFF

NAME	ROLE	PHONE NUMBER	EMAIL
Santiago Toro	Program Coordinator	+57 313 6883306	Santiago@MingaHouse.org
Nicolle Piedrahita	Assistant Coordinator	+57 314 6392665	Nicolle@MingaHouse.org
Glen Galindo	President	+57 323 5055710	Glen@MingaHouse.org
Ana Aguirre	Facilities Coordinator	+57 314 5434701	
Anselmo Ortega	Handyman & Groundskeeper	+57 310 5472569	

TAXI CONTACTS

NAME	AVAILABLE SCHEDULE	PHONE NUMBER
Jimmy Mejía	7:00 a.m - 4:00 p.m	+57 310 4276866
José Henao	7:00 a.m - 5:00 p.m	+57 320 7902147
Iván Giraldo	5:00 p.m - 12:00 a.m	+57 314 2056532



EMERGENCY CONTACTS

HEALTH CARE

NAME	REASON	PHONE NUMBER
Dr. Javier Suárez	Medical Check-ups	+57 301 6223710
Clínica Armando Roque	Medical Tests	+57 333 6025679

POLICE

REASON	PHONE NUMBER
Police Station	+57 300 5573705
Emergency Assistance	123

FIRE DEPARTMENT

REASON	PHONE NUMBER
Ambulance	+57 314 7570877
Firefighters	+57 314 7570877

In case of any emergencies or if you need support, remember to contact the key staff members listed. Minga House Foundation is here to help you, ensuring that you have the necessary resources and support during your time with us. Your safety is our priority!



ENHANCED SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

- All Minga House Foundation accommodations are secure and located in gated communities or other guarded, well-lit, and safe areas.
- Due to its secured location, the Chinchina Police Department utilizes Minga House Foundation, as a monitoring and surveillance site.
- The Chinchina Fire Department also uses it for its Firefighting school due to its ample lodging facility and grounds suitable for various training operations. Emergency Medical Services personnel often attend our facility as a direct result of these ongoing joint operations.
- Minga House Foundation always has full-time professional staff present 24/7, and police patrol the grounds regularly throughout the day and night.
- Our executive director houses his own family in our headquarters.
- Transportation of Minga volunteers is done via Minga House Foundation contracted vehicles under the direct management of Minga House Foundation to ensure proper vehicle maintenance and legal insurance coverage and that safe, well-trained drivers drive them.

OTHER NOTEWORTHY CONSIDERATIONS

- The United States Department of State (2023) reports that over 60,000 Americans live in Colombia and that over 1 million Americans will travel to Colombia for business, leisure, or education.
- As of 2024, Colombia is ranked as the fourth-largest economy in Latin America by GDP, following Brazil, Mexico, and Argentina.
- Colombia now has political and economic stability and is recognized as “the next Costa Rica” in terms of ecotourism and investment opportunities.
- Colombia’s country coordinator, Glen Galindo, is a former US Marine Corps officer with extensive risk management experience. The facilities director, Jaidiber Castano, is a former Colombian Army non-commissioned officer with professional security experience. The Global Health Team leader, Santiago Toro, is a former Colombian Army lieutenant with recent command and control security experience.

