

SRMG HOT TOPIC: TRAVEL SAFETY

Maintaining a heightened sense of your surroundings as you travel—whether domestically or internationally or for business or pleasure—is key to your security, and following some simple tips will ensure that your trip is safe and enjoyable.

DOMESTIC TRAVEL SAFETY TIPS

- Always research your destination in advance. Know the basics of the city or town, such as where the local fire and police stations are in reference to where you are staying. Once you arrive, make sure you are familiar with your surroundings in case of an emergency—identify the locations of fire extinguishers, stairways, and emergency exits.
- In hotels and motels, try to avoid staying in rooms on the first floor. These rooms have a higher rate of crime due to the fact that they are easier to exit.
- Make sure a family member or friend knows your itinerary, and provide him or her with contact telephone numbers and addresses for places where you plan to stay whenever possible. In addition, always call him or her once you arrive and provide or confirm the hotel or motel name, telephone number, and your room number.
- Try to keep a low profile, and never draw attention to yourself or your traveling companions. This is particularly important in busy metropolitan areas.

For more detailed information on domestic travel safety, go to the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) Web site at <http://www.nts.gov/>.

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL SAFETY TIPS

- Before making international travel reservations, check to see if the country to which you are traveling is listed on the U.S. Department of State (the State Department) warning list at http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html or alert list at http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/pa/pa_1766.html. These warnings and alerts are issued directly by the State Department, which strongly recommends that Americans avoid travel to these countries.
- Always register with the American embassy or consulate in the country you are visiting at <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/>. Provide telephone numbers and addresses of places where you plan to stay, names of friends or relatives, and any other pertinent information that will help the U.S. government contact you in case of an emergency. This is particularly important if you plan to stay in a particular country for more than a month.
- The State Department provides specific information for every country in the world—such as embassy and consulate locations, health conditions, unusual currency and entry regulations, and crime and security information—on its Web site. Go to http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_4965.html, and carefully review the particulars for the country to which you are traveling before you go.
- When traveling overseas, always keep all your important documentation with you. It is highly recommended that you make a few photocopies of your passport to bring with you as well. In the event your passport is stolen or lost, a copy will assist the local embassy in reissuing another one to you.
- Learn as much as possible about your destination before your trip, including information about local customs, health care quality, foreign language basics, etc.

Being prepared in the event of a natural disaster or emergency could be the key to your survival.

BUSINESS TRAVEL SAFETY TIPS

- Always keep your eyes on your bags, especially your laptop computer. Many business travelers conduct business in public places (such as airports and hotels), and it is easy to become distracted while on the telephone.
- Be wary of accidents, such as persons bumping into you or spilling something nearby. These may be staged in order to distract you or others.
- If you have a rental car, make sure you are familiar with its controls before starting out. This will ensure that you are able to react properly in the event of an incident.
- Always keep your luggage in the trunk, and keep maps and other personal travel documentation out of view. Thieves often target travelers that are unfamiliar with their surroundings.
- Stay alert at all times. Being aware of what's going on around you is vital to ensuring your safety.

For a printable brochure on business travel safety, go to <http://www.ncpc.org/cms/cms-upload/ncpc/files/biztravel.pdf>.

GENERAL TRAVEL LINKS

For general domestic and international travel information, go to http://www.usa.gov/Topics/Usgresponse/Travel_Safely.shtml. This Web site provides transportation safety links for each state in the United States, as well as international travel tips.