

Travel Crime Prevention Tips

A security-wise traveler needs to learn how to travel safely. This awareness begins with a realization that the traveler must take reasonable precautions to protect him or herself, their family and personal property.

The following are a series of crime prevention tips or recommendations that should be embraced and adopted by travelers.

Parking At a Hotel

- Park your car in a well-lit area close to the lobby or use valet parking.
- Do not park in a space with your room number on it, if possible.
- Before getting out of your vehicle, check your surroundings for suspicious-looking people.
- When you get out, lock your vehicle. Do not leave valuables in the vehicle or in the trunk.
- Walk confidently and briskly from your vehicle to your destination.
- Be aware of loiterers when moving valuables from your vehicle to your room.
- Memorize your vehicle's license number so you will not have to go outside to get it when registering.



Checking In

- Always make reservations ahead of time and secure them with a credit card. Otherwise, if desirable facilities are not available, you may become stranded or in an unsafe room.
- If your room is not ready when you attempt to check in (e.g., if you arrive early in the day), ask to store your luggage in a locked room. Many hotels and motels have a "day room" where you can temporarily store your luggage.
- When completing the guest registry, some women prefer to sign their name in a gender neutral fashion using only their first initial and last name, such as M. Johnson.

- Register with your business address rather than your home address.
- Advise the front desk never to release your room number.
- Avoid “shortcuts” such as back stairwells when moving about the lodging.
- Ask the front desk clerk specific questions about the hotel’s security features:
 - ✓ If there are hotel security officers, how can they be reached?
 - ✓ Does the hotel lock the outside doors at a certain hour?
 - ✓ If they do, what is the best way to re-enter?

Room Location

- If the hotel has more than one building, request a room in or near the main building.
- Request a room that faces inward toward other rooms or toward the lobby.
- Request a room that does not have easy access to its window, such as from the roof or street.
- Request a room:
 - ✓ On the second floor, but no higher than the seventh floor.
 - ✓ Near a fire exit.
 - ✓ Away from stairwells, elevators, ice machines, vending machines, basements or garbage/refuse rooms.
- A room near (but not next to) the elevator helps to avoid long walks down stairways.
- If you are a woman traveling alone, request the concierge or key service floor, if there is one.

When You Arrive at Your Room

- If a bell person shows you to your room, ask him or her to point out the room’s safety features, locks and exits.
- If you are not shown to your room by a bell person, conduct a quick visual check of your room to see if anything appears to be out of place. Leave immediately if it appears like someone may have been in your room.

- Do not let strangers show you to your room or carry your luggage if they are not affiliated with the hotel.
- Do not enter your room if someone appears to be watching you or loitering nearby. Walk confidently by such people, but not into a dead end. Go where there are other people. If that is not possible, enter your room quickly and report your concerns to the front desk.
- Never leave money, checks, credit cards, car keys or valuables in a hotel or motel room. Take them with you.
- Particularly if you are staying in a hotel or motel more than one night, unpack and place belongings in the room closet and dresser. Arrange your belongings so you will know if anything is missing.
- Maintain a daily check of your belongings.
- Lock your empty suitcases so they cannot be used to carry your belongings out of your room.

Valuables

- If you have valuables or important documents (e.g., a passport or airline ticket), store them in the safety deposit box at the front desk and get a receipt.
- Use an in-room safe to store only items of moderate value. Large sums of money and jewelry should be placed in the safe at the front desk.
- If there is not an in-room safe, put valuables in a money belt you wear, or possibly bring a “portable safe” such as hollow books, shoes with hollow heels, suitcases with secret compartments, etc.

Elevators

- When riding on an elevator, always stand next to the elevator controls.
- Do not enter an elevator if it is occupied by anyone you consider to be suspicious.
- If someone is watching when you enter an elevator, press several floor buttons so they will not know which floor you got off on. Notify the front desk if the person made you feel uncomfortable.

Door and Window Security

- Things to look for in hotel or motel door security include:

- ✓ Sturdy locks
- ✓ Reliable key system
- ✓ Visibility to the hallway
- When occupying or leaving your room, use all auxiliary locking devices on doors and windows. (You may want to purchase a portable door lock for traveling).
- Windows should open and close easily from the inside.
- Use the extra lock or stick on windows, sliding or patio doors so they cannot be lifted out of their tracks.
- If you have a physical disability, request a room where locks are reachable and easy to operate.

Telephone Tips

- Learn how to use the room telephone to summon help quickly in the event of an emergency.
- Learn the number for the front desk.
- Learn how to call 911.
- Memorize your room number and the name of the hotel.
- Read any information printed on the face of the room telephone, if available.
- If you receive unwanted, harassing or threatening telephone calls, hang up immediately and notify the front desk.

General Hotel Safety Recommendations

- Keep your room key in a safe place, such as safety-pinned to the inside of your pocket.
- Request a key that does not have your room number on it.
- Report missing or lost keys immediately and move to a different room.
- Use the door viewer to identify anyone requesting entry. Open the door only if you are certain the person has a legitimate reason to enter your room. If in doubt, call the front desk.
- If you are expecting someone to come to your room, pre-arrange an exact time of arrival, as well as some form of introduction or identification.

- Completely close the room curtains, especially in the evening or if you will be away from the room for some time.
- Do not leave magazines around your room or the pool that have your home address on them.
- Ask the front desk staff for the safest areas for jogging, walking, shopping, etc. Ask for a map of the area you are staying in.
- If you feel uneasy about going to fax, telex, photo copying, laundry, pool, or exercise facilities alone, have someone go with you or tell the front desk where you will be.
- Hang the “Do Not Disturb” sign on the outside door knob when you exit, and leave a light and radio on. These discourage burglars.