

Hotel Safety Tips

Before Your Trip:

- Copy all credit cards, airline tickets, and important documents, front and back.

What to Look for in a Safe Hotel:

- If you lose or misplace your key, ask to have your room re-keyed immediately.
- **Is each room equipped with a dead bolt lock and a peephole?**
- Fire sprinklers in hotel rooms, hallways, and meeting rooms likewise for smoke detectors. If each room is not equipped with a smoke detector, are sprinkler systems installed in the hallways or is your only hope the local fire department.
- **Each room telephone should allow outside dialing.**
- Secure locks on windows and adjoining doors.
- **Well-Lit interior hallways, parking structures and grounds.**
- Hotels that have limited access to hotel structure, generally the more limited the access; the less likely a trespasser will enter.
- **Does hotel provide personnel trained in guest security and available for escorts to rooms and auto when requested?**

When Arriving and Checking into the Hotel:

- If you arrive in a bus or cab, stay with your luggage until it is brought into the hotel lobby.
- **Keep a close eye on your luggage, purse, etc when checking in.**
- If the lobby is busy, thieves will often take advantage of the distractions to take your things with them.
- **If you are staying in an older room which still has the older guest door locks with metal key, one of first signs of how a hotel treats the issue of security is to observe how hotel room keys are controlled.**
- Your room number is a matter of security, and the fewer people that know your whereabouts, the better. There's no need to announce it to the entire hotel lobby.
- **When registering, sign only your last name and first initial. Don't use titles or degrees. Makes it harder to determine gender, marital status or profession. If you are a women traveling alone, you might consider booking your room as Mr. and Mrs.**
- Don't leave your credit card lying on the check-in counter while you complete your registration. Also make sure the credit card that is handed back to you by the hotel clerk is really yours.
- **Instruct the desk not to give out your name and room number and ask for them to call you if someone inquires about you.**
- Immediately upon check in, get two business cards or matchbooks with the hotel name and address on them. Place one by the phone in the room so you know where you are and keep the other on you when you leave so you know where to come back to. If you get lost, you have the address and phone number handy.

Room Selection:

- Maximize safety and security. Select a room located between the 4 and 6th floor. Avoid rooms above the sixth floor--the maximum height that fire-department ladders can reach.
- Hotels with interior hallways tend to be generally safer. For security in motels, avoid ground floor rooms off the parking lot. If you can't get a room on a higher level, take one facing the interior courtyard.
- Guestrooms that are as close to the elevators as possible are safest but tend to be noisier.

Elevator Safety:

- Women should be accompanied to hotel room and room should be checked.
- Observe all passengers in elevators.
- It is wise to board last and select floor buttons last.
- If possible position yourself near the elevator control panel and if attacked, push as many floor buttons as possible. Keep your back to the sidewall.
- If someone suspicious boards an elevator, exit as soon as possible.

When Checking into Your Hotel Room:

After checking into a room, examine the following:

- Examine the guest room lock and be sure it is functioning properly.
- The closets and bathrooms are checked to make sure no one is hiding.
- All windows and outside doors are checked to insure they lock and operate properly.
- The lock on the adjoining door is checked to insure it is locked and works.
- The telephone is checked and you know how to make a outside call.
- Look for information in room about fire safety and read to become familiar with nearest fire exit / stairway. Locate nearest fire exit. Find one at each end of the hallway. How many doors away? Does the door open easily? Are the exit signs illuminated? If the lights are out, be helpful and contact the front desk to let them know. Is the stairwell clear of debris? Make a note on the back of the business card that you place by your bed noting the number of doors away to the emergency exit, in each direction, and the location of the fire extinguisher and fire pull box.
- When you enter your hotel room, make sure the door closes securely and that the deadbolt works. Keep the deadbolt and safety bar on at all time. It cannot be stressed enough that you should never prop your hotel room door open. Anyone could walk in.
- Place your room key in the same place every time, preferably close to the bed.
- If you have to leave the room in a hurry due to an emergency, you won't have time to be searching for your key. Also, you'll need the key to get back into the room.
- When inside a hotel room, for whatever length of time always use the deadbolt. If the room does not a dead bolt or heavy-duty security clasp but has a chain, twist it to take up the slack before latching it.
- The door to your room must never be opened by anyone unless the guest is absolutely known.
- If you receive a phone call to your room and the person states they are with the hotel and need to come to your room and repair something, use caution. Always

get the employee's name and call the front desk to verify that it was a legitimate employee who called you and they do in fact need to come to your room. Some criminals are known to wear hotel uniforms or pose as plainclothes security. The best bet is to be your own security guard. No matter how effective hotel security is, it can't think of everything.

- If you want to test the hotel, call the switchboard from a house phone and ask for yourself. Tell the operator you are not sure of the room number. If the answer is, "She's in room 203," this is not a good sign. The correct answer is, "I'll connect you." Good security requires that the hotel switchboard not give out room numbers and the best hotels strictly adhere to this policy.
- **Never leave your key in the lock inside your room.**

Place a Flashlight Next to Your Bed:

- It's much too dangerous to be stumbling around in a dark hotel in the middle of the night if the electricity goes out. Also, if you have to evacuate in the event of a fire, the flashlight will help guide you down a smoke-filled hallway.
- Remember, if there is a fire or other such emergency, you are pretty much on your own to evacuate yourself, especially at night. What you learn in the few minutes it takes you to orient yourself to your room and the surrounding areas could mean the difference between life and death.
- If you lose your key, ask for a new room or have the lock or electronic key card changed.

When You Leave Your Hotel Room for the Day or Evening:

- When you leave your room, always leave the television on.
- Ask maid to make your room up during breakfast. Place "Do not disturb" sign on door. If you want maid service, call to housekeeping and tell them to make up the room but leave the sign on the door. The sign is valuable when you aren't in the room because it gives the impression you are still inside.
- At night, leave a light on and drapes should be partially opened as if someone was inside.
- Always place any valuables in the security vault in hotel. The in-room safe is adequate sometimes.
- Don't display your guest room key in public or even inside the hotel or at the swimming pool. Crooks have known to walk by casually, observe the number in the key if stamped on it and make false charges in the hotel restaurant, bar or store and using your room number.

What to Take With You When Leaving Your Hotel Room:

- Take a minimum of cash, and only enough travelers checks for that outing.
- Carry "bait money" for potential thieves.
- Wear minimum jewelry, especially women. Women, wear only a simple wedding band in lieu of a diamond ring. Remove the temptation!
- Keep credit cards and travelers checks in separate pockets.

Laptop Safety While Staying in a Hotel Room:

- Laptop computers or other expensive items can be easily stolen from hotel rooms. The only way to protect them is to leave them at the front desk in a safety deposit box or to secure them in your room. Would you leave your wallet or purse sitting on the table in the middle of your room? Usually not, but you would leave a \$3,500 laptop sitting there! Which is more valuable?

Hotel Parking Lots:

- Always walk in numbers at night, especially in hotel parking lots.
- Do not leave valuables in your vehicle. Crooks know that rental cars contain items of value.
- Park as close to an exit as possible.
- When approaching a car, always have keys in hand.
- Women should keep purses close to their bodies not loose around or dandling off a shoulder. Keep it in front of you with a hand on top of it.
- Do not feel awkward to ask for an escort to your car. It is recommended to use the valet service at night.

How to Protect Yourself:

While purse snatching is a common crime facing women, strong-arm robbery (hold-ups, muggings) is the most prevalent act where men are generally the victims. By observing the basic rules of "common sense" your chances of being victimized are greatly reduced. Since most strong-arm robberies occur during the hours between sunset and sunrise, the best rule to follow is simply to stay inside at night or go out as a group.

However, to even consider being confined to a secure area after the sun goes down is not only impossible, it is also ridiculous. By observing basic precautionary measures, chances of your becoming a robbery victim are greatly reduced. Here are some general rules to follow:

- Travel well lighted streets. Avoid dark corners, alleys and entrances to buildings. Always try to walk on the side of the street nearest oncoming traffic.
- If you must travel at night regularly, don't carry more than you can afford to lose. One suggestion is to carry a second wallet containing a few \$1.00 bills and old credit cards, which are normally destroyed or discarded. If confronted at knife or gunpoint, give the suspect the second wallet and concentrate on a good physical description to give to the police.
- There's safety in numbers! If possible, walk with a companion, either male or female. An armed robber is less likely to confront two or more, than a lone individual.
- When waiting for a bus or taxi, try to select a well-lighted area. Aim for a busy stop where many people will be coming and going.
- Don't hitchhike or accept rides from strangers.
- Avoid taking shortcuts through deserted areas such as parks, playgrounds, vacant lots, etc.
- Be cautious entering your car as someone may be hiding inside. Or, when leaving your car, someone may be waiting. Park in well lighted areas.
- Never carry weapons that can be used against you.

- If someone asks directions, keep a polite but maintain a safe distance.
- If you are alone and think you are being followed, head for an occupied building such as a bar, restaurant, gas station, fire station, etc. If none is available, cross the street in the middle of the block. If there is street vehicular traffic, try to stop a car for help.

If You Are Confronted:

- **DO NOT RESIST!** Cooperate! Give the criminal whatever he asks for: wallet, keys, jewelry, credit cards or whatever. Your life is more valuable than replaceable possessions.
- Don't make any sudden, unexpected moves. A nervous criminal may think you are reaching for a concealed weapon.
- If the suspect claims he has a gun, knife, razor or whatever in his pocket, never try to force his bluff.
- Never try to be a hero and apprehend the criminal yourself.
- Notify police as soon as possible.

Avoiding Pickpockets:

- Pickpockets work with a nasty bag of tricks to divert your attention.
- Pickpockets can rob your vacation or business trip of its joy.

**** Following are 2 of the most commonly used scams by Pickpockets ****

1. The Coin Con

- Someone drops a bunch of coins on the floor of an airline terminal. Nice person that you are, you stoop down to help pick them up. Then an accomplice waltzes by, taking your laptop or luggage.
- Female distraction: A skirt is lifted, and so is the wallet of a man distracted by the sight. He should have kept that wallet in a hidden pouch instead of his back pocket or jacket pocket.

2. Splattttt!

- Some white matter lands on your coat and you assume a nasty pigeon has flown by. But, oh no, it's a pickpocket who has distracted you with ice cream, toothpaste, or cigarette ashes. An accomplice wants to help you clean up and advises you to remove your coat. You know the rest.