

## SAFETY AND SECURITY

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### PERSONAL SAFETY AND CRIME AVOIDANCE

Before departing, seek travel advice from your own country's consular Web site regarding local safety and political stability. Don't travel to a region if there has recently been any civil disturbance.

#### Upon Arrival at Your Destination

- Adhere to advice on districts or regions to avoid when given by your tour operator, employer, or organization. Such advice is usually based on prior experiences of someone just like you.
- Always ensure that someone knows where you are and where you will be. If staying for any length of time, register with your country's embassy.
- Keep your passport locked in a safe and carry a photocopy. Keep your passport number and issue details in a separate place.
- Avoid carrying large sums of cash. Carry an ATM card and travelers checks, and change them as necessary.
- Ask your hotel or colleagues upon arrival about common local scams and distraction techniques.

#### While Out and About

- Prepare your routes before setting out. Avoid studying your map in the street; you will be broadcasting the fact that you don't know where you are.
- Lock your room before setting out.
- Don't wear expensive clothing or jewelry; don't carry expensive cameras or a portable computer.
- Avoid clothing that declares your nationality or political beliefs.
- Avoid alleys, poorly lit streets, and walking alone at night.
- Beware of pickpockets, especially in crowded stations, busy streets, or market places.
- Keep one hand free to protect yourself and your valuables. Specific targets for thieves are shoulder bags, outside pouches of backpacks, and cameras that hang from straps. Wear them under a jacket or shirt so they are less accessible to thieves. Do not hand your luggage or personal belongings to anyone you cannot directly supervise or observe.
- Avoid being intoxicated at night on the street. Use a taxi.

#### While in Your Hotel

- Rooms on floors 3 to 6 are generally regarded as optimal for safety and security.
- Look for fire safety instructions in your hotel room. Familiarize yourself with escape routes upon arrival so you are prepared to find it in poor visibility.
- Keep your hotel door locked at all times. Always sleep in locked and secured accommodations.
- Meet visitors in the lobby.
- Don't advertise your room number. When out of the hotel leave your key with the concierge.
- Keep valuables in the hotel safe. Room safes are less secure.
- Inform someone, including the front desk, when you expect to return if you will be out late at night.
- Do not use electrical equipment in the bathroom if the floor is wet.

### WATER SAFETY

- Currents, tides, and underwater hazards pose a risk to swimmers and can lead to drowning. Designated or supervised areas pose the least risk.
- Always check water depth before jumping or diving in order to avoid spinal injury.
- When diving or snorkeling, swim with a buddy.
- Don't combine alcohol consumption with water sports or activities. Accidents and drowning may occur.
- If traveling with children to accommodations with a pool or other swimming facilities, make sure the water is in a fenced off area with childproof access. Children near water require constant supervision; drowning is all too frequent in public places. Do not rely on siblings or other children.
- Do not swim in water where there is sewage contamination or algae present.
- When traveling on a ferry or ship, learn the evacuation procedures and where the life belts are stowed.
- Wear a life jacket in small boats. If you can't swim, take particular care. Don't depend on flotation devices or swimmer aids.

- Do not walk on any beach after dark, no matter how busy, well lit, or well patrolled it appears.

## **MOTOR VEHICLE AND ROAD SAFETY**

### **When Traveling by Car**

- If possible, travel with a locally purchased or rented mobile telephone. These are increasingly available in almost all countries.
- Where appropriate, hire a local driver who is familiar with the terrain, the road rules, and customs. Inspect the vehicle for tire wear and general condition before closing the deal.
- When renting a car, avoid those with rental markings.
- Ensure the rental car is fitted with safety features such as seat belts, air bags (if at all possible), and relevant child protection.
- Don't drive when jet lagged or tired.
- Don't drink and drive.
- Don't drive at night.
- Don't pick up hitchhikers.
- Keep your car doors locked and windows rolled up when driving. Use cars with air conditioning.
- Car jacking and thefts happen when stopped at gas stations, parking lots, or in slow city traffic.
- Never hire or ride on motorcycles. If you choose to do so, always wear a helmet.

### **Using Taxis and Public Transport**

- Use only "registered" taxis, preferably radio taxis.
  - Negotiate the fee before entering the taxi.
  - Carry money in small denominations at all times, so you have change for the taxi bill and don't need a large note where you may not receive change.
  - Avoid sharing taxis with unknown passengers.
- Avoid overcrowded public transportation, when possible.
- Don't accept food offerings; they may contain sedatives to induce sleep and allow you to be robbed.
- If the driver is acting in an unsafe manner or appears intoxicated, disembark at the next stop. Better to be late than in an accident in a remote area.
- Keep your luggage locked and in your view at all times.
- Beware of bogus porters who may disappear with your luggage.

## **LOCAL REGULATIONS**

It is wise to learn in advance the rules and regulations of the country to which you are traveling. Penalties for breaking the law can be more severe than they are at home. Exercise good judgment and remember that some countries have a "zero tolerance" policy with severe penalties for those driving under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. Drug violations, firearms possession, photography of government or military installations, and antiques purchases are frequent cause of detention by local authorities.