

## THE DENVER CENTER FOR CRIME VICTIMS

### TRAVEL SAFETY TIPS

*When traveling for pleasure or for business, consider certain precautions to make sure you stay safe. Below are tips to reduce your risk of becoming a crime victim.*

#### **What to Do Before Leaving**

- If possible, have a family member or a trusted friend stay at or visit your home while you are away. Have them pick up the mail, attend to your yard and take care of your pets. If you can't get a house sitter, let the local police know you are going away and when you will be returning.
- Have your neighbor park their car in your driveway or close to your home and ask your neighbors to keep an eye on your house.
- Arrange for a neighbor to collect your newspapers and mail or put a stop on them and put some of their trash into your empty garbage pail.
- Set radio alarms to go off at different times and install timed switches to lights so that the lights go on and off periodically.
- Write down serial numbers and identification numbers of cameras, binoculars and any other valuables you will be taking. Accurate descriptions of stolen items will be helpful if possessions are recovered, for insurance purposes and in reporting your losses to police.
- Make sure that your prescription medicines are filled properly and labeled accurately. In some countries certain prescription medicines are forbidden.
- If your cell phone will not work outside of the country, rent one for the trip.
- Use a reputable travel agent in setting up the trip. Get an agent who knows the area so you're not in a hotel or places that may not be safe.
- If traveling with children, bring along an updated photo of each child in case of separation.
- Discuss with your family what they would do in an emergency while away, e.g., whom to call, how to contact emergency personnel, etc.
- Familiarize yourself with train and bus schedules before traveling. Have an alternate plan in place in the event your transportation plans change.
- Leave important non-travel papers (social security and credit cards) at home. If needed, take a copy. If traveling to a foreign country, photocopy passports, visas, credit cards and tickets and give copies to a friend or family member. Fill in the emergency information page of your passport.
- Leave a copy of your itinerary with a family member or friend.
- If traveling to many different countries, before leaving try to get a little bit of currency from each country so if you need money in an emergency, you have it. .

## **TRAVEL SAFETY TIPS** (cont.)

### **Hotel/Motel Safety**

- Stay in a hotel that uses cards to open room doors and make sure your room has a peephole and a deadbolt lock. Secure the chain and secure the door by pushing a rubber stop under it.
- If you do stay in a hotel or motel where keys are used, don't carelessly leave them on restaurant tables, at the swimming pool or other places they can be easily stolen.
- Stay in a room near a stairwell. Never take the elevator if fire or smoke is detected. Stay in a hotel where doors enter the hallway: not directly from outside.
- Request personnel identification before answering the door in a hotel or motel. If the person claims to be an employee, call the front desk and check.
- When returning to your hotel or motel late in the evening, use the main entrance.
- Close the door securely whenever in your room and use all the locking devices provided.
- Check to see that any sliding glass doors or windows and any connecting doors are locked. If you see any suspicious activity, report your observations to the management.
- Place all valuables in the hotel or motel's safe deposit box.

### **On the Trip**

- Never list your home address on the luggage tag. If on business, put the company's address on the tag; if visiting friends, list their address. Use covered luggage tags as well.
- Stay with your luggage until it is checked. If you must put your bag down, keep one foot on the handle. NEVER check anything at the hotel or airport that you simply cannot afford to lose.
- Write your child's name and your hotel number on a card; include a close friend or relative's contact information on the card. Give a card to each child to carry with them as long as you are away. Destroy once home.
- Carry important papers with you in a secure place. Photocopy your passport, driver's license, credit cards, etc.
- Bring a small flashlight. You never know when you'll suddenly be "in the dark" and in unfamiliar surroundings. At night, keep your flashlight by your bed.
- Never wear anything that projects affluence. No gold chains, expensive watches, rings or other items should be in easy view. Better: leave your jewelry at home.
- If possible, travel with only one or two credit cards. Inform your credit card company you will be traveling so they are aware of charges from unusual places.
- Women particularly should never accept a drink from a stranger. Watch your drink at all times.

## **TRAVEL SAFETY TIPS** (cont.)

- Vary your schedule; try not to come and go at the same time every day.
- Do not wear name tags in public.
- Do not use unmarked taxi cabs.
- Sit behind the driver so you can see him, but he cannot see you. Pay the driver on arriving at your destination while you are still in the vehicle.
- If you rent a car, rent from a reputable company.
- Travel well-lit routes when walking or driving.
- Back into parking spaces to enable a quick exit. Park only in well-lit, well-traveled areas.
- If detained for whatever reason by an official, ask for identification. If in doubt, tell them that you want to see his superior. Keep your emotions in check.
- Do not discuss travel plans, your room number or other personal information in public within earshot of strangers.
- Do not flash your passport in public. Discreetly show important documents to officials only.
- Consider purchasing portable alarms that emit a loud sound.
- Watch for scams on the street. Children working with adults are notorious as pickpockets. Be aware of people bumping into you or spilling things on you.
- Never flash money in public. Exchange funds with reputable and recognized exchangers only.
- Have tips ready in advance for service personnel.
- Consider renting an escort [security] service if traveling where crime is high.
- Familiarize yourself with local conditions and laws: While in a foreign country, you are subject to its laws.
- Stay alert to what's happening around you. Make sure someone knows where you're going and when you expect to return.

**The key to safe travel anywhere is situational awareness.  
Distractions due to luggage, children, hotel personnel,  
strangers, etc., can put you at risk.  
Know your surroundings and stay in control of every situation.**