

A close-up photograph of a woman wearing a white blazer over a dark top. She is holding a smartphone in her hands. A necklace with a circular pendant is visible around her neck, and a watch is on her left wrist. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light color.

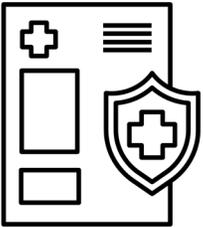
CONSCIOUS

TRAVEL SAFETY GUIDE

CONTENTS

- 3 BEFORE YOU GO
- 4 ON THE STREET
- 6 HOTEL SAFETY
- 8 GETTING AROUND
- 10 WHAT TO DO IF
YOU ARE SICK OR INJURED
- 11 ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

BEFORE YOU GO



1. Look up, familiarize yourself with, and adhere to all relevant laws in the destination countries.

2. Check insurance coverage with your carrier and specifically identify whether or not you are covered while traveling abroad. Ask for advice on medical care while traveling. If your insurance policy does not cover you abroad, you may wish to consider purchasing a short-term health insurance policy that does. There are short-term policies specifically designed to cover travel.



3. Determine whether trip cancellation, medical evacuation or other types of insurance may also be necessary (particularly if traveling during Covid-19).

4. Visit the U.S. Department of State (DOS) website for country specific information and postings of travel advisories and to sign up with the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP).

5. Notify your bank and credit card companies of your travel, and check exchange rates.



6. Research your destination. Learn about the local culture, political environment, weather, geography, traffic patterns, road conditions, prevalence of crime, and the perception of foreigners.

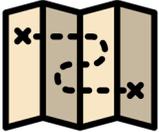
7. If possible, engage friends and colleagues who have traveled to your destination previously or who are originally from there to see if they can provide insight. Ask questions about daily life and the safety/security situation in-country.

8/ Create a "mugger's wallet" with a small amount of local currency, expired credit cards, and old receipts to be ready to hand over in a potential robbery attempt. This should be kept separate from your actual wallet and easily accessible.

9. Make a copy of your passport, driver's license, and other important documents and keep a copy in your luggage and provide a copy to someone you trust at home. This will help your embassy if you lose your passport or if it is stolen

10. And don't forget to keep your passport with you at all times.

SAFETY ON THE STREET



1. Avoid walking alone at night. Stay on well-lit main streets when possible.
2. Do not accept rides from strangers or new acquaintances. If disoriented, ask for directions only from uniformed officers or individuals of obvious authority.



3. Blend in as much as possible, especially in your dress and appearance. Avoid an obvious tourist appearance and don't wear anything flashy or expensive looking.
4. Avoid viewing maps in plain view; thieves often prey on travelers who seem lost or disoriented.



5. Never pull your money out and leaf through it in public. You may want to keep a small amount of currency for purchasing inexpensive items separate from petty cash to avoid "flashing" your entire bankroll and attracting attention.
6. Watch your drinks. It is easy for someone to slip something inside when you are not looking. Never leave your drink unattended.
7. Be cautious of an encounter with an unknown local national who strikes up a conversation and wants to:

- + Practice English or other languages.
- + Talk about your country of origin or your employment.
- + Buy you a drink because they have taken a liking to you.
- + Talk to you about politics. Do not engage in «black market» activities such as the illegal exchange of currency on the streets. Thieves use this tactic to either sell you discontinued currency or to try and figure out how much cash there is.

8. Withdraw money from ATMs only during daylight hours and preferably only in banks or hotels. While ATMs are the most efficient way to withdraw local currency in many countries, they may not be as prevalent or secure. Know the safest methods to withdraw cash at your destination and be vigilant of ATM "skimming" equipment.

9. Do not engage in «black market» activities such as the illegal exchange of currency on the streets. Thieves use this tactic to either sell you discontinued currency or to try and figure out how much cash you have on you.

10. Be wary of public Wi-Fi. When you use public Wi-Fi, hackers looking to steal valuable information can access your data including credit card or Social Security numbers. If you do need wireless Internet service while traveling (and you almost certainly will), you can set up a virtual private network (VPN) that will allow you to access the Internet securely while traveling.



HOTEL SAFETY

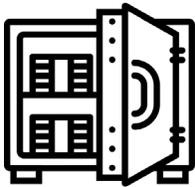


1. Once you've checked into where you will be staying, identify the location of the nearest emergency exit from your room, and a backup, if possible. Form a mental map of the escape route and count the number of doors between your room and the nearest exit in the event you need to escape in a darkened or smoke-filled environment.



2. Do not discuss personal matters with strangers, including your itinerary, place of lodging, or mode of transportation.

3. Lock your hotel room, connecting room, balcony doors, and all windows once in the room and before leaving.



4. Consider carrying a door stop as an easy backup to faulty or flimsy door locks.

5. Know the local emergency assistance phone number and how to use the local phone system. You should research this before your trip, but also get a feel for the phone in your room once you've arrived.

6. Store all unneeded personal documents and excess cash in the hotel or room safe. But remember, do not leave behind your passport for any reason.

7. Meet people, especially strangers, only in the hotel lobby and not in your room. Do not tell them which room you are staying in.

8. Note any hotel staff that are uniformed and identified. Many "pretext" crimes occur by persons misrepresenting themselves as hotel employees on house telephones to gain access to guest rooms. Avoid permitting a person into the guest room unless you have confirmed that the person is authority.



GETTING AROUND

Always be aware of where you are in relation to where you are going. If an incident occurs, you need to know how to avoid it and get out of the area.

Avoid all demonstrations or other civil disturbances; leave the area immediately if caught in an impromptu assembly.

Seek immediate shelter from violent situations; hotels, large restaurants, museums and police stations are good places to take refuge.

Be knowledgeable of any restricted areas requiring entry permits and attain these documents before traveling to such locations.

Do not photograph police stations, military installations, government buildings, airports, ports, or train stations without first determining whether photography is permitted. If in doubt, ask permission from someone in authority before taking any photographs.

Research, prior to traveling, the local customs on taxis services: meter agreed upon fare, tipping, etc. Know which are the "official" taxis versus the unregulated taxis and only take these official taxis.

Most genuine licensed taxi drivers' vehicles are equipped with a meter (for determining the charge) and in most countries, the taxi driver is required to carry and display their ID badge in the vehicle. If you don't see a license or other driver information, do not enter or stay in the vehicle.

Choose a pickup point: for added security use a taxi stand or arrange for a pickup at your hotel or at a restaurant where personnel will document the taxi number, license plate, and driver information.

Some hotels provide taxi services which, while very secure, are often the most expensive. Research if your hotel provides taxi services and how much you can expect to pay beforehand.

Pre-program the local emergency number into your cell phone (the "911" number) and be prepared to use it if you sense a problem.

Have the local currency ready, including small bills, as the driver may not have change for large bills. The most common taxi rip-off is the "I don't have small change" line.

If you are traveling alone, make a call or send a message to a friend letting them know where you are, where you are going, in what taxi (taxi company, taxi number, taxi driver's license info, etc.) each time you leave your hotel.

If the taxi is damaged, take another one. Door handles, window controls, and door locks should work. This is all important to keep you safe.

Never get in a taxi that has an occupant (in either the front passenger or rear seats) and do not allow any extra passengers – if the taxi driver tries to let someone else in – you should get out.

Test door locks – while the door is still open and you have not gotten in yet (this prevents you from being trapped inside via the child-safety lock).

Keep doors locked and windows up, and wear a seat belt (if there is one available).

Know where you're going ahead of time and approximately how long it will take to get there. With smartphones, you can map the most likely route and track your movements, but be realistic about your knowledge of the area. If the driver decides to go a different route which is mostly in the direction you want to go they may just know the city and its traffic patterns better than map applications. While the taxi driver may know a better route or one that avoids toll booths, etc., if you feel they are headed the wrong way entirely, get out at the first opportunity.



WHAT IF YOU'RE SICK OR INJURED



1. Be sure to have your health insurance identification card and a claim form with you while traveling.

2. Be sure to complete the information page on the inside of your passport, providing the name, address, and telephone number of someone to contact in case of emergency. This will help to facilitate identification in case of an accident.



3. If you have a pre-existing medical condition, carry a letter from your primary healthcare provider describing the condition and any prescription medicines you are currently taking. These should include generic names for these medicines.

4. Be sure to bring any medicines you are taking with you outside the United States in their clearly labeled original containers. Some medicines are considered to be illegal narcotics in foreign countries. You may want to check with the foreign embassy of the country you are visiting to be sure.



5. Lists of English-speaking foreign healthcare providers can be obtained from the International Association for Medical Assistance to Travelers. You should have this on your person at all times, just in case.

6. If someone you are traveling with becomes sick or injured, call the appropriate emergency number as soon as possible. You should remain with the sick/injured individual until professional help arrives to treat the accident on site or transport them to a local hospital. Attend to the injured team member as needed/able until someone more qualified can take over (this may just be talking to them reassuringly or holding their hand). If conscious, ask for permission before rendering care. Identify and/or remove any dangers to the safety of the injured individual or others in the vicinity. DO NOT move the injured individual unless their life is endangered by their current location. Write down or otherwise record your account of what happened as soon as possible after the incident, as this information may be needed by emergency medical services, first responders, or insurance carriers.

CONTACT INFORMATION



Overseas Citizen Services Bureau of Consular Affairs U.S. Department of State

Routine and emergency services to Americans at embassies and consulates around the world.

Phone: (202) 501-4444 (24 hours)

Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) U.S. Department of State

Departmental point of contact for interface between the U.S. Government and the private sector.

Phone: (202) 663-0533 (8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. EST)

Operations Center U.S. Department of State

Primary point of contact between U.S. citizens residing in the United States and American Embassies and Consulates overseas.

Phone: (202) 647-1512 (24 hours)



**EMPOWERING PEOPLE EVERYWHERE
TO CHANGE THE CONVERSATION**

CONSCIOUSMAGAZINE.CO / @CMAGAZINE