Travel Safety



What are some tips when travelling to a different country?

While most trips will be enjoyable and uneventful, it is a good idea to do some research and be prepared before you leave home. One good place to start your research is with government agencies that report safety, security, and health issues related to travel in a foreign country.

Here are some travel tips.

- Ask people who have been to that country for information about their experience with safety, customs, and the culture.
- Ask a travel agent or research about the customs and culture of the area(s) where you will be travelling.
- Bring the appropriate identification (e.g., a passport). Check the expiry date on your passport. Make sure your passport does not expire until after you return home (often 6 months after you return is required). Expiry date requirements may vary depending on the country you are visiting – check with your local passport office.
- Find out if you need special or additional documentation to travel to that country such as a visa.
- Find out where to contact Canadian government offices abroad (e.g., check the Embassies and consulates directory). Keep this information with you, and keep a copy at home and/or work.
- Prepare an itinerary which lists where you will be each day and night. Include as much detail as possible (e.g., hotel addresses and phone numbers). Give a copy of the itinerary to your emergency contact at home, and/or work if you are on business travel.
- If you are away on business, record the contact information for the client's workplace.
- Make photocopies of your passport and visa and keep separate from your passport and other travel documents. Also keep a record of credit or bank card numbers along with contact telephone numbers if lost or stolen. Leave copies of these documents and numbers at home or work as well carrying a copy with you.
- Bring a small amount of local currency (if permissible) to cover expenses for the first couple of days. In most countries, you can then withdraw more cash using debit cards.
- Call your bank and credit card companies to determine if they require notification that you intend to use your credit and debit cards while you are

away.
- Store your passport (if you do not need to carry it on your person while in that country), airline tickets, extra money and other documents in the hotel safe.
- Use a money belt when you need to carry your passport, travel documents, money, credit cards, etc. Divide your money and cards between different locations and pockets in case your wallet is lost or stolen.
- Depending on your destination, check with a travel medicine specialist or a travel health clinic to see if any vaccinations, immunizations or other requirements are necessary. Also find out how far in advance you should get your immunization shots or when you should start taking medications (e.g., anti-malaria drugs) before you depart.
- Bring enough prescription and over-the-counter medications to last the trip with you (e.g., in your carry-on luggage if permissible). Take some extra medication with you in case your return flight is delayed.
- Keep the medication in its original packaging when travelling through customs. You should also have proof that you need the medication (a prescription with the name and address of the dispensing pharmacy, drug name and dosage, D.I.N. (Drug Identification Number) and perhaps a note of explanation from your doctor).
- Consider purchasing travel health care insurance. Carry this documentation with you while you travel.
- If flying, be aware of what items you can and cannot bring in your carry-on baggage.
- If permissible, bring your most valuable items with you in your carry-on baggage.
- Pack your luggage yourself.
- Do not put anything in your carry-on luggage that could be used as a weapon (e.g., nail clippers/scissors).
- Do not leave your luggage unattended or in the care of a stranger.
- Use a unique tag, sticker or ribbon to help identify your baggage. Place your address on the inside of your baggage to protect yourself and in case the tag is removed.
- Be honest when going through customs and declare all items as required.
- Never carry parcels or packages for strangers.
- It is against the law to even joke about hijackings or bombings when going through customs or pre-boarding screening.

Does the employer have health and safety responsibilities for a business traveller?

In most cases, yes when the travel is for business purposes. This responsibility usually relates to the employer’s general duty to take every reasonable precaution for the protection of workers. Attending training or conferences would also be considered business purposes. In general, a person would be considered “working” when driving or flying, staying at a hotel, or eating at a restaurant. Exceptions may be when there is a personal errand, or if the employee goes to an event that is not related to work activities. Always confirm duties and requirements your local jurisdiction.

Employers can:

- Identify any hazards associated with each travel event and assess the risk.
- Provide education and training about hazards and risk associated with travel.
- Develop and instruct workers to follow personal safety guidelines while travelling.
- Provide a reliable vehicle if one is used for business travel.
- Confirm that other workplace policies apply such as restrictions on cell phone

use while driving, or to use working alone procedures.

What are some travel tips at your destination?

Most business travellers do not expect trouble while away, especially when they are travelling in their own country. However, incidents can occur whether you are in your home country or if you are travelling abroad. As with other aspects of safety, being prepared and aware of potential risks are the key to a safe trip in your home country or elsewhere in the world.

Things to do:

- Use a travel agent or do research using the internet (e.g., user/guest comments, hotel web sites, etc.):
  - Select a hotel in a safe location.
  - Select a hotel that takes extra measures to ensure your security.
  - Make sure your hotel reservations are guaranteed if you are arriving late.
  - Make sure the hotel has the services you need (e.g., Internet, external calling from the hotel room, an in-house restaurant, etc.)
  - Recommend a safe taxi-cab company.
- Make arrangements to arrive before dark whenever possible.
- Make sure your contacts at home or work know your schedule and know how to reach you. Use an established check-in procedure.
- Call your pre-arranged contact (home or office) when you arrive at your destination to report that you have arrived safely.
- Be sure your office knows not to tell others you are away.
- Keep some money in an outside pocket to avoid fumbling through your purse or wallet for tips and other small expenses.
- Read or work while you travel, but remain aware of your surroundings. You look less vulnerable when you are busy.
- Ask at the hotel for safe areas to visit or walk through in the neighbourhood. They will be able to make recommendations of areas “not” to visit. Even if a restaurant is close by, ask if it is better to take a taxi or not.
- Consider carrying a second “dummy” wallet to “give up” if necessary. It should contain some local currency, a small amount of US dollars, a few old receipts, and “fake” credit cards to make it look real.
- Ask about local customs for clothing. In some areas, wearing clothing that is revealing, or shows bare shoulders or skin above the knees is not be appropriate (for either women or men). In most cases, dressing conservatively is best.
- If travelling solo, ask about the local situation regarding travelling alone.
- Ask the hotel for their business card or an item with their address on it. Keep a copy with you so you can help direct a taxi driver, or if you need to ask for directions.
- Study a map before you leave. Keep a copy in your pocket, folded open to the area you are in for easy reference.
- Take only what you need for each outing.

Things to avoid:

- Do not draw attention to yourself by displaying large amounts of cash, expensive jewellery or electronic equipment.
- Do not carry large amounts of cash. Use debit cards to get cash as you need it. Check with your bank beforehand to confirm if your debit card and PIN will work in that country.
- Do not allow your travel plans to be given out to strangers.

What are tips when staying at a hotel?

When checking in, do:

- Request a room with a peephole, dead bolt and chain lock.
- Keep your name or home information private – give the check-in clerk a business card or use your first initials.
- Leave instructions with the hotel not to give your room number or name to anyone.
- Request a room change immediately if the clerk accidentally announces your room number out loud.
- Ask for a room that is above ground level and close to the elevators, but away from stairwells, fire stairs and exits.

Other tips include:

- Check your room immediately for any damage. Be sure the locks and telephone work. Report any concerns to reception.
- Keep your hotel key with you. Dropping off the key at reception is an easy way for others to know when your room is not occupied.
- Close the door securely whenever you enter or exit the room. Check that any sliding glass doors, windows and connection doors are locked every time you return to your room.
- Consider bringing a simple rubber door stop to prevent your door from being pushed open from the outside.
- Immediately request a security check if you notice a suspicious change in your room when you return.
- Report any suspicious activity to the hotel management.

Do Not:

- Do not answer the door without verifying who is there. If the person claims to be an employee, call the front desk first to confirm his or her identity.
- Do not enter the room if you suspect someone is in there, if you are being followed or if someone is lingering near your door.
- Do not invite strangers or acquaintances into your room or accept invitations to others' rooms. Arrange to meet in a public location such as the hotel lobby or restaurant.

How should I respond if I am attacked?

If you are attacked:

- Make a scene, yell or scream as loud as possible. Try shouting words like "stop", "fire" or "help".
- If you are being pulled along or dragged, fall to the ground and roll.
- If someone grabs your purse, briefcase, deposit bag or other belongings, DO NOT resist. Throw the item to the ground several feet away from the thief and run in the opposite direction, yelling "help" or "fire".
- DO NOT chase a thief.
- Run to the nearest safe place – the hotel lobby, an office, or an open store.
- Call the police immediately after the incident.
- If the attack does not warrant calling the police, inform your supervisor or authorities at your workplace.
- Be prepared. Try to imagine yourself responding successfully to different types of attacks. Practice your responses.

How should I respond if I am robbed?

If you are robbed (in person):

- Remain calm. Be polite and cooperative.
- Listen carefully to what the robber says, and obey him or her.
- Speak only in response to the robber. DO NOT volunteer any information.
- Note the robber’s height – use a landmark or door frame to help judge more accurately.
- Note any other characteristics of the robber such as hair colour, obvious scars, etc.
- Call the police or security. If you are on business travel, contact your workplace.

If your room is robbed while you are out, touch as little as possible. Call hotel security or the police immediately.

DO NOT be a hero. Go along with the demands of the person. Give him or her all the cash and merchandise he or she wants.

DO NOT stare or fix your gaze too long on the robber.

DO NOT resist by fighting or pulling a weapon. DO NOT jeopardize your own safety or that of other employees or members of the public.

DO NOT delay or argue. Cooperate fully with the robber.

DO NOT attempt to apprehend, impede or chase the robber.

Source: © Copyright 1997-2021 CCOHS