



SAFETY ABROAD

Step by Step Tips for a Safe Trip

University of California Police Department
601 Westwood Plaza, Los Angeles, California 90095
310.825.1491 ■ 310.206.2550 Fax
www.ucpd.ucla.edu

EMERGENCY: CALL 911



Know the Country

Having knowledge about the country you are visiting is critical when traveling abroad.

- Be sure to check out the U.S. State Department web page (<http://travel.state.gov>) regarding student travel before departing on your trip. The website provides valuable information which can inform you of the locations of the U.S. Embassy, health conditions, crime and security information, drug laws, terrorist threats, and recommendations for places that Americans should avoid.
- The U.S. State Department strongly recommends that you register with the nearest U.S. Embassy or consulate prior to departure using the U.S. State Department website. By registering with the State Dept., your presence is known in case it is necessary to contact you in an emergency.
- Every embassy and consulate has a duty officer on-call around the clock to assist in an emergency.
- In some countries, it is highly recommended that you be vaccinated prior to leaving the United States. The Center for Disease Control's website (<http://www.cdc.gov>) will inform you on which vaccinations you should receive before leaving.
- Other aspects to consider include the financial limits of health insurance coverage, whether your insurance applies during independent travel, what countries it includes, whether evacuation is included, the policy's start and end dates, and whether you will have to pay first for treatment and be reimbursed later by your insurance company.

Protecting Your Passport

Your passport is the most valuable document you will be carrying around. To protect your passport:

- Hide your passport securely on your person. Keep it handy since you may need to show it to pick up mail, check into hotels, cash traveler's checks, and be required to carry it as an identity document.
- Do not leave your passport in a handbag or an exposed pocket. Keep passports in pockets, clothing, purses or packs that are inaccessible to thieves and pickpockets.
- Be aware that in some countries, your passport may be retained overnight at the reception desk of your hotel in order to be checked out by the police. However, if your passport is not returned by the following morning, immediately report the impoundment to the local police authorities and to the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.
- If you are traveling with a group, do not have one person carry all the passports. Each traveler should hold on to his or her own passport.
- Make two copies of your passport. Leave one copy of your passport at home with family or friends and another copy on hand with you separate from your passport.

Protecting Your Luggage

To minimize the risk of having your luggage or items from your luggage stolen:

- Contact your airline carrier regarding their policy on locking your luggage.
- Checking with airlines and your personal insurance company regarding lost luggage coverage.
- Do not place valuables in checked luggage.
- Do not leave your luggage unattended or with someone you don't know.

Safety in the Skies

- Try to book a non-stop flight to your destination, as these have fewer takeoffs and landings. If this is not possible, try to get a stopover in airports that have high security standards.
- Choose an airline with a good safety and on-time record.
- Due to the heightened level of terrorism, sharp objects such as box-cutters, scissors, and such are not allowed to be carried onto the aircraft. However, some items can be included in checked luggage. For a complete detailed list, check out the Department of Homeland Security's website <http://www.dhs.gov/xtrvsev/>.

Hotel Safety

- Try to book a room other than the first floor in order to avoid burglary or theft.
- Keep your hotel door locked at all times. Meet visitors in the lobby.
- If you are alone, do not get on an elevator if there is a suspicious looking person inside.
- When you arrive or depart from a hotel, don't linger or wander unnecessarily in the parking lot, indoor garage or public space around the hotel
- If you arrive by auto, park as close to the hotel access point as possible, and park in lighted areas. Remove all property from the car interior and place it in the trunk.
- If using valet service, leave only the ignition key, and take trunk, house, or office keys with you. Keys should be hand carried and personally protected.
- Do not needlessly display guest room keys in public.
- Do not answer the door in a hotel or motel room without verifying who it is.
- Do not invite strangers to your room
- Protect personal travel documents, lap tops, jewelry, and other valuables and sensitive documents.
- Place all small valuables in the room safe, or in a hotel's or motel's safe deposit box.
- When returning to your hotel or motel late in the evening, use the main entrance of the building.
- Do not draw attention to yourself by displaying large amounts of cash or expensive jewelry. Be careful not to

needlessly display credit cards, or to carelessly leave the cards at the vendor's desk.

- When out of your room, leave the television or radio playing low. At night leave your room lights on.
- Promptly report suspicious activity to the management.

Tourist Safety

- Plan your excursions.
- Ask for directions at your hotel on how to get to those attractions you want to visit.
- Select tour guides carefully.
- Ask if there are any areas in town you should avoid. Stick to well-lighted main streets and public areas.
- Only carry with you the cash you will need, and only small denominations.
- Do not leave maps or obvious travel books in plain view in your car.
- Only take taxis clearly identified with official markings. Beware of unmarked cabs.
- Many countries do not acknowledge a U.S. Driver's license. Most countries accept International Driving Permits. If you intend to drive overseas, check out the embassy/consulate of the countries you plan to visit to learn about requirements for a driver's license, road permits, and auto insurance. If you possess a valid U.S. driver's license, AAA is authorized to issue International Driving Permits.
- There are restrictions on photography in certain countries. Students should check the Consular Information Sheet (located on the U.S. State Department's website) for the countries where they plan to visit.
- If you get lost, find an open business and ask for directions. Stopping and looking at addresses or staring at street signs may make you look like an easy target for crime
- When overseas, avoid demonstrations and other situations that may become unruly or where anti-American sentiments may be expressed.
- Avoid forming large groups of Americans or other foreigners. Smaller groups attract less attention.
- Leave a copy of your itinerary with friends or family at home in case of an emergency.
- Deal with only authorized agents when you exchange money to avoid violating local laws.

Getting Arrested

- Remember while in a foreign country, you are subject to its laws. Once you leave the United States, U.S. laws and constitutional rights do not cover you.
- Don't assume what is legal in the U.S. is also legal in other countries.
- Familiarize yourself with local laws and customs of the countries to which you are traveling.
- If arrested, ask to contact the nearest embassy or consulate representing your country. As a citizen of

another country, you have this right. If you are refused or just ignored, continue to make a request periodically

until they accede and let you contact your embassy or consulate.

- Stay calm. Do not do anything to provoke the arresting officer(s).
- Do not admit anything or volunteer any information.
- Do not sign anything. Decline politely until such time as an attorney or an embassy/consulate representative examines the document.
- Do not accept anyone at face value. When the representative from the embassy arrives, request some identification before discussing your situation.
- Do not fall for the ruse of helping the ones who are detaining you in return for your release. Contact the consulate or your embassy for protection and assistance in getting out of the country once released

Alcohol/Drugs

- Use moderation and good judgment when drinking alcohol and remember that drinking may place you at risk because it reduces your awareness and ability to judge potential dangers.
- Be aware of what and how much you're drinking and how much you're drinking.
- It is your responsibility to know what the drug/alcohol laws as well as the legal drinking age while in a foreign country before you go.
- A number of countries have enacted more stringent drug laws, which impose mandatory jail sentences for individuals convicted of possessing even small amounts of drugs for personal use. In some countries, anyone who is caught with even a very small quantity for personal use may be tried and receive the same sentence as the large-scale trafficker.

Rape and Sexual Assaults While Traveling

- Before leaving, take the time and initiative to learn as much as possible about your host country's language, religion, customs, and appropriate dress.
- Talk to local women. Follow examples of culturally appropriate dress and demeanor. A smile, hairstyle, the way you carry yourself, eye contact, the distance between people talking can have profoundly different interpretations from culture to culture.
- Cultural differences, however, should not be an excuse to endure verbal or physical abuse.
- Do not go to a secluded area (or even be alone in your room) with a person that you do not know well.
- Immediately report a sexual assault or rape to local authorities and contact the United States embassy or consulate in the country you are traveling in for further assistance.
- If you are victimized and traveling with others, have a companion stay with you.

Resources

Education Abroad Program (EAP) (310) 825-4995

<http://www.isop.ucla.edu/eap/>

<http://travel.state.gov/>

<http://www.cdc.gov>

<http://www.dhs.gov>

<http://waittime.tsa.dhs.gov/index.html>

<http://www.aaa.com>

University of California Police Department 601 Westwood Plaza Los Angeles, California 90095

(310) 825-1491

**Crime Prevention Unit
(310) 825-6111**

www.ucpd.ucla.edu