

## Safety and Security Tips

Pray and Prepare. Some pray but don't prepare. Others prepare, but don't pray.

Pray and trust in God; ..."*Unless the Lord watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain.* Psalms 127:1 (NIV)

Do your part and Prepare; "*Just make sure you stay alert. Keep close watch over yourselves. Don't forget anything of what you've seen. Don't let your heart wander off. Stay vigilant as long as you live. Teach what you've seen and heard to your children and grandchildren*" Deuteronomy 4:9 (The Message)

### General

- Keep a low profile
- Learn at least a few phrases in the local language
- Leave a copy of your itinerary with your family
- See Doctor or the CDC (Center for Disease Control) site for a list of potential diseases; risks for Malaria, Dengue, etc.
- Conversations: Be careful of your public conversations, and on-flight computer work when working on sensitive matters or discussions that can be heard or seen
- Go-Bags: Always have a emergency evacuation bag ready to grab and go. This bag should contain medical supplies, water pills, energy bars, one set of clean clothes, sanitary tissue, copies of passports, current pictures of family, phone numbers, money, and toiletries. The bag should not be heavy
- Go through your carry-on luggage to remove items not needed or which pose a security risk, such as: Excess credit cards, Membership- or ID- cards for any group that may be targeted Business cards with provocative information or revealing national, ethnic or religious affiliation Political, religious or sexually explicit literature. Anything that looks like a weapon. Expensive or religious jewelry

### Travel Essentials

Depending on your situation, consider bringing:

- All necessary official documents (e.g. passport, visa)
- Photocopy of passport and tickets or a list of essential information (carried separately)
- A list of credit card numbers and loss-notification numbers
- Enough money in the local currency including coins/cards to use a pay phone
- Enough of any required medication to survive delays, carried in

- original container with prescription
- Laptops and notebooks if you must (carry them in your hand luggage)
- Any medical or personal hygiene products which you use periodically, in case of recurring chronic problems
- Locked, non-descript luggage, secured with a strap (hard luggage is safer)
- Use closed-faced luggage tags
- Carry-on bag with necessities in case of lost luggage
- Travel light
- Obtain travel documents (visa, passport, in-country passage approval)
- Conduct an in-country risk assessment before arriving. (Any location)
- Map out the area prior to travelling there – become familiar with the roads, airports, hospitals, etc. Use web resources and maps to get a clear understanding of the journey and destination (Google earth helpful)
- Keep Alert
- Be aware of what is around at all times
- Travel during daylight hours, if possible
- If available, use valet service
- Confirm flight time, arrive at airport early
- Say good-byes at the curb
- Move immediately through security check area to the departure lounge
- Say no if asked to carry any bags or packages for strangers or, for that matter, friends, unless you are certain of what is inside
- Say no if asked to watch luggage
- Social Media: While a great tool, should be used with caution. Don't advertise your plans of travel, many terrorist groups scan the internet in search of potential individuals to kidnap or abduct. Be cautious of the remarks, comments, and postings made on Twitter, Facebook, and other social media sites.
- Move away from any disturbance or anyone receiving exceptional attention
- Don't leave your baggage unattended, even for a minute

## **Dressing**

- Leave behind expensive jewelry and clothes that mark you as a wealthy foreigner
- Dress to blend in with the foreign environment - Keep a low profile
- Be conscious of local norms in dress, speech, etc

## **Aircraft**

- Check under your seat for left luggage
- Don't give any personal information to fellow passengers
- Take note of the emergency exits

## **Arrival**

- Select your taxi carefully, don't ride in unlicensed cabs (during your stay: when ordering a Radio Taxi by phone mention o-n-l-y the area you want to be taken to - not the exact address!)
- Learn how to operate the telephone and carry enough coins or tokens to use a pay phone
- Know who will be meeting you, their names and appearance. If there has been a change, call to check it out. Don't go with anyone you do not trust
- Register with your embassy (depending on your nationality and length of stay)
- Avoid dangerous areas of cities

## **Hotel**

- Meet visitors in the hotel lobby - don't give out your room number
- Make sure to chain lock your door while you are there
- Best to obtain a room between the 2-5 floors. In some countries fire ladders do not exist
- Make sure your room number is not overheard while obtaining your key at the front desk
- Check your exit options, count the number of doors to the nearest exit, and learn how to work the escape systems
- Do not leave valuables or important information (such as your itinerary) in your room unless stored in the room safe
- Do not conduct sensitive conversations over the hotel telephone or fax sensitive information
- In case of fire: Do not open your door if it is hot. If smoke or fire is in the corridor, shut your door and seal it with wet bedding and towels. Open a window, unless smoke comes in from outside. If possible, evacuate immediately, placing a wet towel around your mouth, taking your room key and crouching low near the floor. Do not use elevators

## **Street**

- Stay alert and aware of your surroundings; keep an eye on belongings and your hand on your valuables
- Do not pay with large bills or count currency in public
- Stay away from crowds and don't investigate a disturbance; just leave. Even peaceful gatherings can turn ugly
- Carry the phone numbers of emergency contacts - e.g. your host, organization, and diplomatic representation
- Always carry an ID card or a copy of it - a legal requirement in many countries
- Guard against pickpockets
- Keep your distance from the curb
- If you are followed, change direction and enter a well-lighted business

establishment

- If a car follows you, turn and walk the opposite way

## **Car**

- Road Safety: This is one of the leading global cause of death. Annually 1.3 million people are killed worldwide. Always wear a seatbelt. Speak up when the driver is operating in an unsafe manner. Obey the local traffic laws. Be aware of potential roadblocks. Keep vehicles in roadworthy conditions. Don't text, or use cell phone while driving. Be aware of pedestrians and their habits. Drive responsibly.
- In high-risk Countries Travel at night should be limited. Travel in groups, versus alone. At night, whenever possible use well lit streets.
- Carjacking is on the increase!
- Do not drive yourself in a city or country with which you are unfamiliar
- Select a rental car with a lockable trunk which is as inconspicuous as possible
- Ask the rental agent about driving laws and customs, road signs and maps
- Carefully check your travel route on a street map in advance
- Be aware of areas you should avoid
- Keep your car doors locked at all times and the windows closed
- Be careful where you park your car
- Always lock your car when unattended and avoid leaving valuables in the car

## **Crime**

- In a criminal attack, give up your belongings willingly, without argument
- Report the crime immediately to local police authorities. In certain countries check your embassy before contacting the police
- If someone with a weapon approaches and corners you, remember your life is at stake and one wrong move could be your last. Plan ahead how you will react and remember to think rationally
- Report passport theft to your embassy immediately, and initiate the procedure to obtain a new passport
- Report loss of tickets, travellers cheques, credit cards and other documents to the organization that issued them

## **Kidnap / Hostage Situations**

- If kidnapped or abducted, do not resist, listen carefully to their instructions and follow them as best as possible. Studies have shown that those who do not resist and follow instructions have a higher percentage of survival
- Do not behave in any way to make yourself stand out; avoid

- threatening movements and do not stare
- Do exactly as you are told, and do nothing without asking permission first
  - Remain alert and prepared in the event of rescue attempt or escalation of violence
  - If you are singled out for questioning, your answers must be consistent with documentation you are carrying. Volunteer no additional information
  - Remain courteous, but dignified
  - If there is a rescue attempt, stay as close to the ground as possible
  - Do not try to be a hero. What is more important? To be a living coward or a dead hero?

### **State Emergency (coup d'état, revolution, social unrest, etc.)**

- If trouble starts, contact your local embassy
- Call or have someone contact the embassy with your location to facilitate your evacuation if needed
- Stay off the streets, remain in your hotel, and if necessary move only in daylight in groups
- Avoid main squares and boulevards, government buildings, radio/TV stations, military installations, the airport, harbour, banks and shopping centers. All are key targets during take-overs or coups
- Do not discuss opinions about the political situation
- Have the hotel management or embassy update you on any developments

### **Natural Disaster**

- Have a pre-established plan (with family and colleagues) for where to go in the event of a disaster; that plan should include going immediately to your local diplomatic representation or the Red Cross to report yourself alive. (Note: the symbol for the Red Cross in some Islamic countries is a red crescent in place of the Red Cross.)
- Contact your home to save your family worry

### **Medical Emergency**

- Never be afraid to avail yourself of local medical care
- Some medicines are dangerous for people of different countries; find a doctor who has treated foreigners, such as a hotel doctor, recommended by your embassy, the Red Cross, or another expatriate

### **Emergencies / Personal assistance**

- Contact your higher organization (Institution, Union, Division, GC as necessary). Develop a system to keep important contact numbers

- available
- Don't admit fault or make any statement (other than for the police)
- Contact your diplomatic representation and your air carrier if necessary

## **Additional Resources**

Below you will find additional resources on personal safety and security from Red Cross and the United Nations (courtesy of Paul Muniz, ADRA International Director for Agency Safety & Security, who contributed on the sections above):

### **Red Cross Personal Safety & Security:**

Herein are the instructions that will assist you to register and take the personal safety course.

1. Turn off all pop-up blocking programs. Go into your tools file and look for pop-up blocker and click in the box to deactivate the program. If this step is not taken you will **not** be able to log in!
  2. Go to <http://www.ifrc.org> home page.
  3. On the home page scroll down to the middle of the page and look for a link titled "Learning Network". Click on that link, and it will take you to another page.
  4. On the new page look for another link titled "Learning Platform". Click on that link, and that will bring about another page.
  5. On that new page you will need to complete the registration process by creating your profile. (You will need to create a username and password. This is of your choice. When completing the registration process you will encounter a part where you need to choose a Division; select one that is closest to the USA. The area is not of important for us but needs to be checked. This is more for Red Cross employees.)
  6. At this stage at the top of the page select the language of your preference.
  7. Once the registration process is complete, in the upper right hand corner look for the search box and type the words "Stay Safe" and then hit enter.
  8. In the new window search for the "Stay Safe Personal Security " course in the language of preference. Please note that there are several different languages. (English, Spanish, French, German, etc.)
  9. Once you have found the language of your preference click on the "Stay Safe Personal Security" link. (Make sure it is not the "Stay Safe Security Management" course.) A new page will open.
  10. Once the page has refreshed click on the word "register", which is next to the title of the course. (This is in the middle of the page.)
  11. Once the page has refreshed click on the word "launch" at the far right of the page.
  12. Once the page has refreshed you will have launched the course. Just listen to moderator who will guide you the rest of the way. (Make sure to turn up your speakers so you can hear the moderator.)
- Don't forget to turn off any and all pop-up blocking programs, this needs to be your first step. If you need further assistance please let me know.

### **UN Personal Safety & Security Link (Also Free)**

[https://training.dss.un.org/courses/v21/pages/dss\\_login\\_register.php](https://training.dss.un.org/courses/v21/pages/dss_login_register.php)