

Premier Assist 10 Tips for Tips for International Business Travelers and Expatriates



- 1 DO YOUR HOMEWORK.** Have your business travelers' research cities they are traveling to in advance of their trip, for important information such as travel alerts, terrorism threats, street crime updates, visa and passport requirements, and local laws, and other potential problems. Helpful websites include the U.S. Department of State (www.state.gov) and the British Foreign & Commonwealth Office (www.fco.gov.uk).
- 2 THE HELPFUL EMBASSY.** Have your travelers and expatriates register online with the U.S. Embassy in the country in which they'll be staying. In the event of a nationwide emergency, U.S. officials will know how to locate and assist getting these employees out of the country. By registering, employees can also receive emergency messages from the Embassy or Consulate. This type of communication, often referred to as "Warden Messages," is like newsletters and provides individuals with local information and contact names in case of an emergency.
- 3 THE LESS CARRIED THE BETTER.** Your company's overseas travelers should leave copies of passports and other travel documents at home with your company's travel risk management company or with a trusted colleague back in the States. Also, make sure that sensitive personal information is stored on a USB drive at home and suggest they remove such information from their laptop. Have your travelers keep backup discs in another location, carry TSA-approved laptop locks, clean systems daily to remove excess files, and use portable hard drives.
- 4 BE WARY OF LAW ENFORCEMENT.** Your employees should know that seeking the help of law enforcement is very different outside of the United States. They cannot assume that if they have a problem, the police will immediately come to their rescue – in fact, the police may even make the situation worse. If someone is the victim of a crime, that person should call his or her corporate travel department or travel risk management company immediately. The traveler should also report the incident to the hotel where he or she is staying.
- 5 BLEND IN AND BE AWARE OF SURROUNDINGS.** It is equally important for employees to be familiar with the customs and culture in the part of the world to which they will be traveling. They should be able to blend in with the local surroundings and follow the local customs. The best way to make oneself a target for crime is to stand out.
- 6 LEAVE THE VALUABLES AT HOME OR IN A HOTEL SAFE.** The advice here is simple for travelers; it's best to leave the expensive and/or designer goods at home. This includes jewelry, handbags, luggage, briefcases, and shoes. They can all make a traveler a target and these items are easy to steal. In many poorer nations where jobs are lacking, crime becomes a way of life for some and they become quite skilled at what they do. Criminals will even work in teams. For instance, in some countries, "markers" will brush up against a potential victim and lightly tap that person's shoulder with some chalk. Once one is "marked," another member of this crime team – maybe on a moped or motorcycle – will grab that expensive handbag or briefcase right out of the person's hand.
- 7 DO NOT DISTURB.** When in a hotel, your employees should always leave the "Do Not Disturb" sign on the door at all times when the maid doesn't need to be there. This is a deterrent to a thief who will not want to take a chance on burglarizing a room that is occupied at the moment. On the same note, travelers should not put the sign on the door telling the chambermaid to clean the room.
- 8 LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION.** Travelers should avoid staying in hotels located near government offices, embassies, landmarks, or religious centers.
- 9 STAY IN A LOWER FLOOR OF A HOTEL.** When it comes to fire safety, the general rule of thumb is that most fire brigade's ladders don't extend higher than the sixth floor. However, in less developed nations, they may not even have ladders that extend that high. If this is the case, advise your employees to request a room on the second or third floor – depending upon the configuration of the hotel. If forced to jump out of a burning building, staying on a lower floor could save one's life.
- 10 VARY THE ROUTINE.** Expatriates should be aware that they may be watched by local criminals. Varying a daily routine can be helpful. For example, they can go to work two hours late some days and come home a little early on others or alter the times they purchase groceries or visit the dry cleaner.