

# Peace of Mind

By: Sarah Gordon

It's that time of year again when we desire to explore the unknown, take the road less traveled to enjoy the beautiful weather, drive route 66 and fulfill the never-ending bucket list. Travel season is at its peak time and this season, make sure you're prepared whether you're traveling for business or leisure.

As a security consultant and traveler myself, I highly encourage proper safety and security measures whether you're traveling locally, nationally or internationally. Since we don't all have CIA fathers like Liam Neeson from the movie Taken, here are ways to keep yourself and others traveling with you safe, secure and out of harm's way while vacationing.

Here is a weekly check-off list of tips and ideas to remember before, during and after your travels.

## 1. Leave An Itinerary

Leave an itinerary of your flight, hotels and travel excursions with a trusted family or friend back at home. If possible, let them know ahead of time how often you'll be checking in; i.e. daily, every other day, etc. This is a great plan to have. That way, if you don't check-in, they can alert the authorities.

## 2. Check the Weather

Check out the weather before you leave. Even though weather can change quickly, knowing ahead of time what to pack and how to plan for it reduces your expense while on travel and allows adjusting to any situation without hesitation.

## 3. Get Travel Insurance

Check with your insurance company ahead of time to see if they offer travel insurance. If not, there's several online companies that offer insurance on your flight or vehicle. They may also cover you in the event you are in a natural disaster, if you visit a hospital, are robbed or, in worst-case scenario, death. Insurance offers what we can never plan for or anticipate while on vacation.

## 4. Home Safety

While you're gone, arrange for a family member or friend to stop by your house. Making sure your home looks lived in while you are gone is another deterrent to individuals scouting neighborhoods for crime opportunities. If a family member or friend isn't available, smartphone applications allow remote access security cameras, doorbell cameras and the ability to turn lights on and off, which is also an option to make sure your home looks occupied. Also, contact the U.S. Postal Service to have your mail held at the post office along with stopping newspaper delivery. These are signs crime opportunists look for when determining to vandalize or break-into someone's property.

## 5. Join Loyalty Clubs

Join the loyalty clubs, which allow perks and the accumulating of points towards free hotel stays. Some of the major hotels offer different room types, shuttle services and business perks. Many of the larger chain hotels have stronger policies on safety and security and the more you stay, the more benefits you receive from your travels.

## 6. Medical Safety

Prior to going outside of the country, a great website to register with is the International Association for Medical Assistance to Travelers (IAMAT). This site helps you find nearby medical clinics with approved English speaking doctors.

## 7. Passport & Identification & Credit Cards

Make sure to make copies or take photos of your passport, drivers license and credit cards that you plan on taking with you while on travel. Use an application such as Dropbox to allow a password protected secure storage in the event that while you're on travel your cards or identification are lost or stolen. This makes the process so much easier if you have the phone numbers and card numbers to immediately shut down the card and notify the proper authorities about the situation that happened.



## 1. Items to Keep in Your Bag/Carry-On

Keeping all necessary medications in your carry-on is always a good idea so it's easily accessible when traveling. A checked bag has the potential to become lost or damaged, therefore keeping all medicines on your person is the best option. When it comes to technology, keep your cell phone, laptop or other form of communication with you at all times and fully-charged. In the event of an emergency, having multiple forms of communication are key to staying calm and safe.

## Upon Arrival:

### 1. Escape Route

When you arrive, locate the best escape route in your hotel. Knowing where to go reduces panic and helps maintain composure when everyone else isn't in your hotel.

### 2. Social Media Sharing

Although we all love to share pictures and what is happening in our life while on travel on social media, consider a few things before sending out that information. Showing that you are by yourself, checking-in and showing your drinking games opens the gate for opportunists and ill-willed individuals to take advantage of individuals in other states and other countries. If you must share your pictures, wait until after you've left and where you cannot be targeted.

### 3. Use GPS

Although many of us use our smart phones for everything including navigation, getting a GPS is always a great "Plan B." Our mobile phones may say that coverage exists in the locations you are traveling, but that may not always be the case. Having a GPS is always a safe and smart decision in case your smartphone stops navigating.

### 4. Rooms & Hotel Safety

When checking in, always get two keys for each person; One key to keep in your bag/purse and one to keep on your person. This way if your purse or bag is stolen or gets lost, you have a backup key to get safety into your hotel room. Regardless of the type of hotel room you choose, always request a room with an interior entrance. This eliminates the opportunity for crime enthusiasts and ensures other people can see you come and go and can say something, if they see something.

Travel is meant to be enjoyable, educational, relaxing and so much more. This safety and security guidelines list can help make your travels a little more enjoyable, a little safer and memorable. Enjoy your summer travels!



Sarah F. Gordon is the owner of SGI ([www.sginc.co](http://www.sginc.co)), a Midwest based private security services company specializing in security personnel, executive protection & patrol services to name a few. For more information on the additional services SGI provides, please call 558-440-4096 or visit [www.sginc.co](http://www.sginc.co).