



Travel safety & security tips

This document is intended to help the education sector prepare colleagues and students to travel safely. It includes hints and tips to think about before and during their journey.

Security principles

Level of awareness

Ensure an awareness of the nature of prevailing risk levels and take adequate precautions

Profile

Maintain a low profile in your method of dress, look confident and avoid drawing attention to yourself

Vary your routine

Be unpredictable – vary routes and timings

Protection layers

Have in place appropriate procedures as well as physical measures and insurance protection

Mind set of a criminal

Generally criminals will choose their targets randomly, however they will observe potential targets to assess their behaviour and demeanour. Some factors are obvious, the flaunting of cash, wearing of expensive jewellery, carriage of desirable items and walking alone in deserted areas.

During a study of convicted criminals, videos of pedestrians in a busy street were shown. They were asked by researchers to list who they would single out as a potential target. The criminals pretty much agreed on who would be their preferred target.

It was found that those who walk with confidence, flowing movements and at speed were less likely to be targeted as opposed to those who lacked interactional synchrony, organised movements and a flowing motion making them look nervous and easy to overpower.

Criminals do not only target those they can overpower, they also tend to target those they resent. Criminals will often view life as unfair, feel victimised by the success of others. When they see people displaying a superior attitude, flaunting material possessions or hear loud boastful conversations, there may be an increased chance of attack.

Understanding the basic criminal mind set and taking measures to become the 'grey person' may help prevent you becoming a target.

Soft target

- Often alone - easy to overpower
- Predictable behaviour - regular patterns, times and routes
- Unaware - headphones in, use of mobile devices
- Unplanned movement - putting themselves at risk
- Tentative - not confident - a sure way to become a target
- Distractible - easily induced into potential situations

Hard target

- Researches destination and travel route - assessing the risks
- Plans ahead and advises colleagues and response provider of plans - mitigates risk
- Tracking - allows response provider to follow movement
- Security escort - where the risk requires it
- Walks with confidence - will put off the criminal who may look for a softer target
- Employs counter surveillance techniques - will assist in identifying threats

Be prepared

Communications

Check the cellular network for your destination country and pre-programme emergency numbers into your mobile such as British Consulate, 999 or equivalent, medical emergency response, local contact. Ensure your company and your family have the following essential contact numbers

- Your mobile
- Your company
- Hotel/accommodation
- Response provider

Itinerary

Provide copies of your full itinerary to your company, family and response provider

Copies

Make copies of your passport, Visa and credit cards. Keep a copy with you, email a copy to the response provider, leave a copy with your family and company



Vaccinations

Ensure all vaccinations are up to date and carry your international vaccination card

Safety check calls

Have designated check in times with colleagues, family and your response company - if people do not hear from you they can quickly escalate the situation

Check record for natural disasters in destination country - hurricane/typhoon season, volcanoes, earthquake zone

Travelling around your destination

- Keep all valuable belongings such as briefcases and bags away from the vehicle.
- Do not give others personal information and avoid discussing your travel plans. Never indicate to others that you are traveling alone.
- Accommodation – do not disclose your occupation, organisation or position when signing in to your hotel. Ask for a room not on the ground floor and above but not adjacent to a roof. Check whether a safe exists and if so use it to store critical documents such as your passport and money. Read the safety procedures and check the emergency exit.
- Keep well clear of commotions, demonstrations and rallies. If need be stay in your hotel room and report back to the pre-designated individuals within your organisation and/or response provider.
- Do not get involved in debates with strangers as these may escalate into arguments. Avoid eye contact where possible.
- When you know you are going to be navigating around an area by yourself, take time to familiarise yourself with the area first and work out exactly where you want to go prior to travel.
- If you are meeting someone decide on a specific time and place to meet before hand.
- If you get lost, ask for directions in a busy place and do not stand in the street looking at a map. If you have to refer to your map either discretely, use a smartphone application (if safe to do so) or if need be use your paper map in a shop or a busy place. Avoid “looking lost”.
- Constantly survey your surroundings. Keep an eye out for anyone who is hanging around. Note that attackers often pass their victim before attacking them from behind.
- Familiarise yourself with the basic local language.
- Busy, brightly-lit routes should always be taken at night. Avoid walking in dark areas.
- Public Transport should be avoided at night, always get a taxi instead with an official license.
- Use official taxi stands such as those outside hotels rather than hailing them in the street. Where possible hire a private driver for the entire trip and from a reputable company. Use only licensed taxi services with radio communication.
- If you believe you are being followed seek and enter a busy place as soon as possible and contact the pre-designated individuals in your organisation and/or response provider.
- Do not take any narcotic substances and limit alcohol intake to avoid reducing levels of awareness and common sense, which could lead to attacks.
- Do not listen to an music device/ipod or talk on your mobile whilst walking in public.
- Be aware of the threat of potential “scams”.
- Reduce your chances of getting drugged by criminals by politely declining food or drink from strangers. Only eat food that you have bought directly from a shop or a commercial entity. Do not leave your food unattended and come back to eat it later.
- Carry a Dummy Wallet with a small amount of local currency, an expired credit card and some useless receipts - can often be enough to “satisfy” a thief.

On the road

Travellers biggest danger is on the road from Road Traffic Accidents; you should do all you can to avoid being involved. Hire a driver who is familiar with the local road conditions and will know what to do in the event of an accident.

- Do not get into a vehicle with a driver you believe has drunk alcohol.
- Make sure your car has seat belts.
- Sit in the back whenever possible. The seat behind the driver is usually considered the safest.
- Avoid traveling during the evening hours.
- Choose official or marked taxis only.
- Carry the address of your destination written in the local language.
- Carry one to two litres of water for each occupant, especially if traveling in hot, remote areas.
- Stay with the car if it breaks down, as it provides your best chance for rescue.

