



Don't Be A Victim Of Hotel Crime

Hotel crime is more prevalent than most of us probably realize. Travelers can be easy targets since they are in unfamiliar surroundings. Don't ruin your vacation by becoming a victim of hotel crime. Follow the following advice from safety experts:

When reserving your room:

- » Ask if the hotel has installed electronic guest room locks. These locks automatically change the lock combination with every new guest so there is little chance of someone having a duplicate key to your room. If the hotel doesn't have this system, ask about procedures for re-programming the electronic keys. If you lose your key, ask to have the lock re-programmed immediately.
- » Ask if the guest room door has a dead bolt with a one-inch throw lock or a flip lock.
- » Ask if the room has a wide-angle peep hole.
- » Select a room on an upper floor when available. Ground floor rooms and those adjacent to fire stairwells are targeted by thieves because of easy escape. However, you may not want to go above the sixth floor as many fire department ladders can not reach above the sixth floor.
- » Ask if the hotel provides personnel trained in guest security and if they are available for escorts to rooms or the parking lot if requested.
- » Ask if the hotel corridors are monitored and if there are closed-circuit cameras in the parking lots, elevators and corridors.
- » Ask if the front desk is staffed 24 hours a day.
- » Ask if there is a telephone located in each room that allows outside dialing.

When you check-in at the hotel:

- » Make sure the hotel clerk does not announce your room number. If the room number is announced, ask for a different room.
- » When registering, sign only your last name and first initial. Don't use titles or degrees that would indicate gender, marital status or profession.
- » Instruct the desk not to give out your name and room number and to call you if anyone inquires about you.
- » As soon as you check in, obtain two business cards or matchbooks with the hotel name and address on them. Place one by the phone in the room so that you will know the address and phone number of where you are staying and keep one with you if you leave. If you happen to get lost, you will have the name and address of the hotel.

When you arrive at your room:

- » Check the bathroom and closets to make sure no one else is in the room.
- » Make sure all windows and doors are securely locked, including connection doors between rooms. Keep the deadbolt and safety bar in place at all times.
- » Never prop open your hotel room door.
- » Never open your hotel room door to anyone unless you are absolutely sure of the identity of the person. If it is a hotel employee, ask for identification and call the front desk to verify that the person is a legitimate hotel employee before opening the door.

When you leave the room for the day or evening:

- » Always leave either the television or radio on low. This leaves the impression that the room is occupied.
- » Always leave the "Do Not Disturb" sign on the door. Call housekeeping and ask the room to be made up and leave the sign on the door. This creates the illusion that someone is in the room.
- » If you are not in the room at night, leave a light on.
- » Always use the security vault in the hotel for valuables and get a receipt. The safes in the rooms may not be adequate and can be broken into.
- » When returning to the hotel in the evening, use the main entrance.

Parking lot safety:

- » Park in a well-lit area away from trucks, vans and dumpsters.
- » Look around and be alert before entering garages.
- » Do not leave valuables in your vehicle.
- » When approaching your car, always have your keys in your hand.

For more information about American Family's Loss Control Services, visit www.amfam.com

DISCLAIMER

The recommendations printed here follow generally accepted safety standards. Compliance with these recommendations does not guarantee that you will be in conformance with any building code, or federal, state or local regulations regarding safety or fire. Compliance does not ensure your absolute safety.