



THE CFA CONNECTION

PERSONAL TRAVEL & HOTEL SAFETY

Sharing important personal safety and security travel items and tips for the professional traveler and hotel safety best practices.



Before you leave home on a trip (business or pleasure) double check to make sure you have packed your safety and security mindset.

This provided information, along with photos and purchase links to the travel gadgets are all featured complimentary on The CFA Connection platform's PERSONAL TRAVEL & HOTEL SAFETY page:

<https://thecfaconnection.com/personal-travel-safety>

Here are some of the standard personal safety best practices everyone should be complying to as "rules of the road" while traveling and lodging in hotels and resorts.

TRAVEL & HOTEL PERSONAL SAFETY GADGETS

- Portable Smoke Hood (filter type to avoid TSA travel issues)
- Silicone Adhesive Smart Phone Wallet (for your hotel key card)
- Travel Door Guard Alarm (hangs on door knob and alarms if door moves)
- Door Stop Alarm -or-
- Rubber Door Stop
- Emergency Whistle
- Self Defense Alarm Key Chain
- Katana Safety Wallet or Smart Phone
- Small LED Flashlight (Your smartphone flashlight app is an excellent back up but still doesn't replace a real flashlight with a wrist band attachment)
- Travel Size Duct tape
- Travel CO2 Detector/Alarm (there are several document deaths from CO2 poisoning in hotels)

HOTEL SAFETY TIPS

Safety threats to professionals while traveling (domestically or abroad) are an unfortunate reality. Everyone needs to understand the dangers that exist when we are away from home, so that we can all be prepared since anyone can be a victim of crime or natural disaster. Even the most savvy business travelers fall to prey to their own complacency regarding hotel safety and personal security.

When traveling for business, most of us arrive to the lobby of our hotel feeling tired, dirty, and in a hurry to get to our rooms to shower, sleep, or get to the first item on your agenda. Unfortunately, this is no time to let your guard down regardless if you are traveling with your crew, friends and family, or alone.

Here are a few hotel safety tips to avoid being a target, and how to safely conduct yourself while traveling by establishing your own smart traveler techniques.

- Always stay with your luggage
- Request a room on floors 3 to 6. Criminals prefer lower floors for quick escape and for fire safety you don't want to stay above the 6th floor so fire rescue can reach you
- Try and stay on the same floor as your travel companions or crew. Yes, I know "ugh" not my crew" but if there is an emergency evacuation you can all easily rally at a meeting point
- When checking in and the front desk personnel announces your room number out loud, request to change the room immediately. The majority of hotel staff are very well trained but slip ups happen on occasion
- Electronic keys – always request two keys (we explain why later)
- Write down your travel companions/crew room numbers (I usually write them down on my keycard envelope)
- If traveling alone, request a security escort to your room. This is not being paranoid! This is being a smart traveler
- Once you have arrived at your floor, especially if you are alone, check the corridor (hallway) before starting your journey to your room. If there is anyone in the hallway, wait before proceeding. Pause, talk to yourself out loud. Pretend you are on the phone or cannot find your key. Crime will not happen in a hallways
- Once you have confirmed the hallway is clear, enter your room
- Before entering or placing the key to unlock the door, press against it to confirm it was actually engaged
- Once the door is unlocked - conduct a room security check before settling in and block the door with your suitcase
- Flip the swag lock over or engage the deadbolt while the door is open. If sometime attempts to close the door behind them it will not engage
- (If a security escort accompanied you, never allow them into your room. Have them wait at the entry door threshold while you conduct your own room check)
- Open and check all closets and storage compartments
- Bathroom – check any cabinets, storage compartments, and open the shower curtain (if applicable).
- Bed – check underneath and lift up mattress to see if it is a solid frame. Check around all sides of bed if there is space between it and the wall.
- Furniture – check behind and around all chairs, sofa, desk, etc.
- Curtains – push the curtains against the window or wall (this is an excellent hiding place)
- Windows – Confirm they are locked and the locks are functioning properly. You'd be surprised how many do not work!
- Sliding balcony doors – Confirm it's locked and functioning properly
- Balcony – is it adjoining or secure? Can someone jump over a divider or climb up to access your room?
- Phone – check for dial tone and that it is working properly
- Adjoining door(s) – is the deadbolt engaged? Test it!
- Entry door – Also test the locks if they engage and function properly

IN-ROOM PERSONAL SAFETY HELPFUL TIPS & BEST PRACTICES

- Always ask for two key cards (especially if room power is controlled by key insert) so you are always entering your room with a light already on
- If adjoining doors make you nervous and you don't have a travel door stop, place the ironing board against the door. If it's opened, you'll know it! You can also place the luggage rack and your suitcase in front of the door
- If the peep hole doesn't have a cover plate, place tissue in the hole to cover it up
- Never trust the in-room safes. They actually are not 'safe' at all. Most hotels provide safety deposit boxes on the main floor to protect your valuables and have more liability protections. All in-room safes have master combinations to unlock them and are easy to break into. They will slow them down but are not 100% secure
- Place the Do Not Disturb on your doorknob or the DND button turned on throughout your stay! Only allow housekeeping in your room while you are present
- Never allow hotel staff into your room unless you are expecting them
- When room service, bellman, maintenance or other hotel staff enter your room, always block your door open by engaging the deadbolt or swinging over the swag lock while the door is open. This prevents it from closing completely. Even better, use your doorstep to block it completely open
- Never use the room service door hangers. "Breakfast for 1" shows you are staying in your room alone and when you are expecting them
- Allow housekeeping into your room only when you are present
- Leave the television on (local language channel) whenever away from your room
- Leave one light on in your room

IN-ROOM HYGIENE TIPS & BEST PRACTICES

- Remove the bedspread!
- Never place your suitcase, clothing or personal items on top of the bed cover
- wooden luggage rack isn't recommended either as bed bugs like wood. Metal luggage racks are preferred. The safest place to store your suitcase from bed bugs is actually in the bathroom!
- The television remote control is the #1 most contaminated item in a hotel room. #2 is the bed side table light switch and #3 the phone
- You can sanitize the remote or place it in a zip lock baggie or use the ice bucket bag in your room
- If the coffee maker is stored in the bathroom – DO NOT USE IT! Any other location is also questionable as who knows what the previous guest used it for and housekeeping may not have sanitized it. Best to go down to the cafe or lounge
- Unsealed glassware may or may not have been properly cleaned. Assume it hasn't!
- Don't just check under your bed for safety reasons, check for sanitary reasons! The things we find under a hotel bed - yeeeesh!
- Flip bed pillows over and check if they are dirty, hair, etc. It's one immediate sign of knowing if the bedding has been changed or not

HOTEL FIRE BEST PRACTICES

- As soon as you are settled into your room, the first thing you should do is check the hotel floor diagram (usually on the back of the entry door) and find the closest emergency exits.
- Physically walk to the closest exit and see how it opens and if it locks behind you. Also locate the second closest exit and do the same
- Locate fire equipment and the alarms located in the hallways
- On the nightstand should be: your mobile phone charging (carry extra long charging cables for this purpose) and your room key. If you have to escape quickly, you can grab them both at the same time and evacuate your room.
- Have a cover and slippers, flip flops or easy to don shoes close to the bed so you can get dressed quickly
- If you have a smoke hood, whistle and flashlight - bring them with you
- Never use the elevators in a fire, only emergency exits
- If for any reason, you cannot escape via the emergency exit - return to your room. THIS IS WHY YOU MUST TAKE YOUR KEY WITH YOU! Otherwise, you will be locked out of your room
- Once you have returned to your room - Immediately call the front desk or operator and notify them you are trapped in your room. If no answer call the local emergency number and notify authorities
- If you have duct tape - tape the door jam (all sides to prevent smoke from entering). Also cover all air vents and the adjoining door
- Fill the bathtub with water
- Once fire rescue has arrived, go outside onto the balcony and wave for help. If windows, press a white or light colored towel or clothing against the window and slide back and forth so they can see you are in the room
- Use your smoke hood, if necessary. The majority of filter type hoods provide 20-30 minutes of filtered air

Additional Safety & Security Tips

ELEVATOR SAFETY

- Regardless if you are alone in the elevator or not, always try to position yourself near or in front of the elevator control panel and locate the alarm button
- In the unlikely event you are attacked, push on as many floor buttons as possible and the alarm
- Never stand at the back of the elevator. If a victim of crime, you are trapped as your only direction to escape is now blocked
- Stand with your back against the sidewall
- Maintain situational awareness and observe all of the passengers in elevator
- If someone boards the elevator at the same time, allow them to select their floor first. If they hesitate and your instincts 'kick in' – exit immediately!
- If at anytime, someone suspicious boards the elevator, always err on the side of caution and exit as soon as possible
- If you are feeling 'trapped,' start talking to yourself OUT LOUD or do anything that appears to be 'un-normal.' Criminals target human predictability and you acting out of the norm is not being predictable! I'm sure you'll agree it's better if a stranger thinks you are a little crazy versus than being a target of crime. This technique works, I know a few people how have used it!