INTRODUCTION

A business trip can be broken down into a number of distinct phases, all of which are part of ‘the journey’.

- BEFORE YOU LEAVE.
- DURING YOUR FLIGHT.
- ON ARRIVAL AT AIRPORT.
- STAYING IN THE HOTEL.
- BEFORE TRAVELLING HOME.

There are a number of safety and security considerations you should make during each of these phases i.e. from the moment you’re told where you are going to the moment you return.
BEFORE YOU LEAVE

‘Check it out before checking in’. The more you know about the customs, climate, religion, politics and crime at your destination the easier it will be for you to get by on your own and avoid risky situations.

**Does your company have a security department?** If so use it. It should be a valuable source of information about the country you’re going to.

If you have local affiliates/branch offices, use them to gather further information and to provide assistance/liaison during your trip. Ensure you know all about them i.e. names, address, telephone numbers, working hours etc.

**You should review travel advisories published by your own government.** In addition, you might want to review the Foreign & Commonwealth Office web-site for countries/regions to avoid. The CIA and US State Department websites are also useful guides as well.

**Additionally find out about the airport at your destination:**

- Consider immigration at your destination as this can vary dramatically. Being a ‘Business’ traveller in some countries may lead to many more questions at immigration than being a ‘Tourist’ will do.
- In some cases, hold luggage will arrive in ‘arrivals hall’ before the traveller.
- If travelling with business colleagues, make sure you all have the same information when being quizzed at immigration.
- Be aware that in some countries business aides/presentations will always be rigorously checked and in some countries may well be confiscated.

Do you need any vaccinations? Contact your company health insurance company and get the recommended vaccinations.

Consider taking an emergency kit – basic first aide, a torch and whistle and a personal alarm.

**Ensure you are covered by your companies travel insurance. Do not rely on personal credit card accident cover, home insurance or personal/company private health cover as it is unlikely that these will give adequate cover. Ensure that the company policy will cover you for the following:**

- The whole time that you are away.
- Any activities that you might do – even the corporate golf game. If the cover is not to your satisfaction request extended cover.

- Health cover should be for a minimum of £1 million for Europe and £2 million worldwide. It must include cover for emergency medical treatment, hospitalisation and repatriation.
- Personal liability for injury or damage to others and their property.
- 24 hour emergency service and assistance.
- Possessions cover.

**The policy should also cover:**

- Personal accident – money paid on death or permanent disability.
- Legal expenses to help you pursue compensation for damages following personal injury.

**Check that you’ve got a valid passport and visa.**

- Remember that if you wish to travel abroad you must hold a valid passport, even for a day trip.
- Ensure your passport is valid for the duration of your trip. Some countries have an immigration requirement for a passport to remain valid for a minimum period, which is usually at least six months beyond the date of entry to the country.
- Ensure you have additional passport photos with you just in case there is a requirement for other documentation on arrival. Take a second means of photo identification with you. To this end your driving licence will suffice.

**When booking your airline:**

- If possible try to choose an airline from a country free of international or domestic armed conflicts.
- It is safer to take a direct flight. If this is not possible, try to avoid stopovers at high-risk airports.
When booking your hotel, chose one with a good safety standard:

- Check safety of Hotel:
  - Is it used by cabin-crew?
  - Is it located in a safe area such as the ‘business centre’ of the city?
  - Does it have safety deposit boxes?
  - Will your room have a safe – what type i.e. manual lock or electronic combination?
  - Does your Hotel have a security manager?
  - Is the Hotel security provided by an ‘in house’ resource or a third party subcontractor?
  - Does the Hotel have surveillance devices?
  - Go on line and review what comments have been made by those that have stayed at the Hotel
  - If in doubt ask local office/affiliate/business partner to check and/or recommend Hotel for you. Do not leave it to chance!

- Make sure you book a room on a floor that is reached by the fire escape. This should generally not be higher than the sixth floor. Equally avoid ground floor rooms or those to which access is easily gained from the outside or public areas.
- If you are a women ask for a room close to the lift so you don’t have to walk down long corridors.
- Just before departure re-confirm your Hotel accommodation is booked and confirm your airline/flight number, departure/arrival date & time.

Leave your travel plans, including contact information in your office in your home country and send a copy of them to your contact/branch office at your destination. Also, you should leave a copy with your partner or next of kin. This information should be confidential and should include:

- Travel details i.e. airline/flight number/departure and arrival time.
- Accommodation details and how you’re going to get there once on the ground.
- Your entire itinerary.
- Copies of all important documentation such as:
  - Passport.
  - Credit cards.
  - Medicinal certificates.
  - Driving licence.
  - Travellers’ cheques (if still appropriate?).
  - Insurance certificates together with emergency 24 hour telephone numbers.
  - Any and all contact details/emergency numbers including British Embassies, High Commissions or Consulates.

Make a note of your credit card numbers and the numbers on your travellers’ cheques. Keep this information separate from your wallet. Take with you the telephone numbers needed to block cards/travellers cheques.

If you suffer from an illness or regularly use prescribed medicines, you should carry a certificate in English stating what illness you suffer from and the medicines you use. The certificate can be useful to show customs and can also make it easier if you become ill during the trip, always pack any medication you need in your hand baggage.

Theft prone property such as travel documents, cameras, jewellery, computers, fragile objects and important work documents should also be packed in your hand baggage. It can also be a good idea to have a spare set of clothes in your hand baggage too.

Use inconspicuous luggage. Avoid high profile brands and if possible try to disguise expensive items i.e. put your laptop in a briefcase as opposed to keeping it in what is now a universally identifiable ‘PC carrying case’.

Minimise luggage. Try to avoid luggage being put in the hold. We recommend limiting luggage and using carry on only. After all, if staying in a business oriented hotel, room service is geared to meet your needs i.e. 24 hour laundry/pressing etc.

If forced to put luggage in hold ensure it is secured by additional wrap-around straps. Note certain carriers will bind and/or wrap luggage at check-in.

When labelling your baggage:

- Label your baggage with your name (last name and first initial) but avoid address. If forced to add address use either addresses at destination or office – never home address.
- Have a slip of paper with your contact address and telephone number inside your suitcase.
- Never display your company logo on your suitcase or name tag or advertise that you are “gold/silver” traveller.
- Make sure you have a good lock for your suitcase.
Consider the clothes you intend to wear during the flight:

- Unless going straight to a business meeting, try to avoid looking like an archetypal businessperson. Do you have to wear a suit?
- Do you have to wear your Rolex or would a cheaper one suffice?

Plan your journey from the airport to the Hotel/meeting.

- If going straight to the Hotel, request the Hotel arrange for collection at airport and transport to Hotel.
- If you plan to go to a meeting straight from the airport, either obtain advice on most secure method of travel together with directions, estimated time of journey and address/telephone number of meeting place or (ideally) request transport arranged on your behalf to meet you on arrival.
- If your plan is to be met at airport on arrival ascertain (if you don’t know the person) the:
  - Name of person meeting you and the ID he/she will have.
  - Location of person meeting you – normally arrivals hall. Insist on this as opposed to waiting for transport outside arrivals hall.
  - Check location of Hotel including address and telephone number.

Obtain a city guide/map either before departure or on arrival.

Check whether your mobile phone will work in the country you are travelling to.

- If so check that your phone has international roam capability and check local networks available.
- If not, consider hiring a mobile phone at the airport (not always available worldwide) or even hiring or buying a SIMcard on arrival at destination.
- If you are a frequent traveller consider ‘international traveller services’ as provided by some network service providers.
DURING YOUR FLIGHT

Avoid excessive consumption of alcohol – it causes dehydration. Instead drink lots of water.

Avoid giving information regarding your trip to strangers however ‘safe’ they may seem or however innocent/innocuous the conversation may appear.

Consider working whilst in flight – we all have to do it just be aware that it can reveal a lot about you and your company.

Respect Cabin crew. They’re human beings and if they dislike you or you offend them, they can and they could degrade your effectiveness - both mentally and physically - by:

- Soiling your food – ‘filth to mouth’ disease.
- Lacing your drink – after effects.
- Constantly disturb you especially if you’ve requested privacy/do not disturb – sleep deprivation.

ON ARRIVAL AT HOTEL

Check in! When registering, do not give your home address or your exact title or position in your company.

Use the safety deposit box.

Check your room is as per what you asked for – if not request a change.

Equally be suspicious of room upgrades if you have no previous relationship or affiliation with the Hotel or Hotel group.

On going into your room for the first time, knock on the door before opening it with your assigned key – there have been numerous cases where the desk clerk has made a mistake and given you a room that is already occupied. If someone else is in the room it could be a dangerous encounter as well as embarrassing.

Once in the room conduct a quick check for security:

- Windows that open and sliding glass doors should have functioning locks and ideally secondary locking pins.
- If the room has a door to the adjoining room, ensure it is locked from your side.
- Check to see the main room door will self-close and latch securely and that there is a deadbolt or additional locking device on it.
- Report all faulty locks.
- Familiarise yourself with all emergency drills and procedures.

Inform home office/local affiliate/business partner of your arrival, room number and telephone number.

On arrival at airport

- Stick to the plan – do not fall for hard sell cheap taxis etc.
- Whilst waiting for transport, keep all luggage with you at all times and stay in lit areas amongst other people – do not allow yourself to get isolated. Check location of fire exits etc. Avoid standing next to unattended luggage or by lockers, stalls or telephone booths out of trading hours.
- Check ID of person meeting you and if the person meeting you is not as expected, confirm with Hotel/office/person who arranged for collection.

During trip to hotel/meeting

- Before setting off, talk to the driver to sound him out.
- If asked ‘have you been to’ just say yes! Never admit to being new in town.
- Avoid falling asleep during trip.
- Stay alert.
STAYING IN THE HOTEL

Keep the door to your room locked at all times and use all secondary locking devices.

Upon leaving the room leave a light/TV on put out ‘do not disturb’ sign. Try to leave the impression that the room is occupied or sow the seed of doubt to any potential criminal.

Report any suspicious individuals, or activity to the Hotel management.

Contact the front desk immediately if your Hotel room door appears ajar or appears to have been forced; do not enter the room on your own. Also if you lose your Hotel room key.

Keep your keys hidden until you approach your room and then have them to hand for a quick entrance. Always lock the door as soon as you are in your room. Then immediately apply any secondary locks.

Use the peephole to identify any callers. Don’t open the door if you’re not expecting a caller and if you don’t recognise the caller notify the Hotel reception immediately.

It is also perfectly reasonable to request employee identification from all maintenance or service engineers.

Don’t accept delivery of items or services you did not request. We suggest all deliveries including messages be left at the Hotel reception.

Don’t give your room number to strangers and when socialising do not reveal the name of your Hotel.

Do not discuss specific plans or your itinerary in public.

Make a note of colleagues’ room number and extension number. If possible try to get rooms close to each other – safety in numbers.

When travelling in the lift stand close to the floor panel to allow you to press floor buttons and get off as soon as possible if threatened. Equally press buttons for two or three approaching floors to allow you to get off before your floor if needs be.

Remember that pressing the emergency stop button could leave you trapped inside the lift waiting for assistance. Keep home office/local affiliate/business partner informed of any variations to your itinerary.

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Try to ensure that Hotel staff know who you are and when leaving the Hotel let them know where you’re going and how long for.

Check times that Maids will ‘make up’ your room and following this check that:

- Your valuables are secure both before and after.
- Nothing suspicious is left in your room after it’s been ’made up’.

Never leave confidential information lying around the room and therefore not secure. Remember Hotel theft is not uncommon even in business Hotels.

Never discard business documents in your room wastebasket. If possible take them to the Hotel business centre for shredding. If not keep them with you until they can be securely destroyed.

Familiarise yourself with routes to and from Hotel from likely places you intend to visit. Use local affiliate/office for detailed information.

Where’s the nearest Police Station? Find out.
Where are the areas to be avoided? Find out.

If you do not speak the local language, ask someone trustworthy to write important details (in the local language) on a piece of paper for you i.e.:

- Could you take me to the Sheraton Towers Hotel at 69 Scotts Road’
- ‘Could you take me to a Police Station’

If you have a local office, and you are staying for more than a week, consider registering with the doctor/dentist that the local staff use in case of emergency. Obviously make sure you know the address/telephone number and get the name of the doctors/dentists in the practice.
 BEFORE TRAVELLING HOME

Pack as before – don’t lower your awareness or forget safety considerations. Equally pack only what you need for the return journey.

Check that any locally bought medicines are legal at home.

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