

Southern Pines Police Department

Safety Tips

Traveling

It's a fact that almost all types of personal and household crime are the highest when we travel. When people spend more time away from home on vacation or are involved in outdoor activities. Avoid becoming part of this statistic by following these suggestions to protect your home, property, and family while you're relaxing and having fun! While you travel, carry a minimum amount of cash; use travelers checks and credit cards. Keep a record of the check numbers and credit card numbers in a separate safe place. This will help you to keep a better record of your expenses too! Keep careful tabs on your travelers checks, since they're as good as cash. Carry them in an inside pocket, not protruding from a jacket or bag. If driving, plan your trip to include using main roads, plenty of rest stops along the way, and brand name hotels/motels. Prepare the vehicle, have it checked over by your favorite mechanic to include checking the tires, brakes, and other safety equipment. How about a cellular phone or CB to call for help when and if needed? Remember that it is not a good idea for the driver of a vehicle to use a handheld mobile phone device while driving. In some states and municipalities it is even against the law. Here are a few other tips to use while traveling to help ensure a safe and enjoyable vacation:

- NEVER PICK UP HITCHHIKERS!!!!
- Always lock your car when parked.
- Never leave anything in the open view.
- Don't advertise what you have, you may lose it.
- Don't leave anything in the glove box such as vehicle registrations, insurance ID cards, or other valuables.
- If you stop overnight, chose your parking spot carefully. Review the Safety Tip on Hotel-Motel Safety.
- Remove all bags and other valuables from the vehicle and take them inside with you.
- Carry a flashlight, blanket, first aid kit, and other safety equipment and avoid traveling during the nighttime hours if you can.
- Remember to always have photo identification with you. If possible, your children should also have some kind of identification as well.

When sightseeing, keep these things in mind:

- Learn about your surroundings.
- Ask at the hotel/motel desk about any trouble spots you should avoid.
- Select sightseeing companies and guides carefully – get references!
- Make sure your children know the name, address, and phone number of the hotel you are staying at.
- Avoid advertising that you are a tourist by the way you dress, talk, and act.
- Don't "flash" sums of cash.

Travel outside the United States:

- If traveling outside the USA, a passport or, in some cases, an original birth certificate with a raised seal, may be required.
- Check with the customs organization for the country you are traveling to learn the latest rules.
- You can also check the US Department of State website at <http://www.state.gov> for regulations, tips and travel advisories.
- Keep a photocopy of your identification, credit cards, travelers checks and any other important documents in a safe place separate from your wallet or purse, just in case of theft or lost.
- Be careful of what documents you carry.
- Carry only one major credit card and leave the others at home in a secured location. Identity theft is at an all time high and many thieves take advantage of unsuspecting travelers to steal an identity.

- If traveling in unfamiliar locations, don't read the map in public view. This signals to criminals that you are a tourist and may give them an opportunity to victimize you.

What about restroom safety? Yes, we need to consider this as well. If out in public and the need for the restroom arises and you have your purse or shopping bags with you what should you do? First, never place items on the hooks on the back of the stall door. These items can be quickly grabbed over the top. Pick a stall against a wall to enable you to place your purse or shopping bags behind you and against the wall. This will provide a better level of protection for your valuables. Always accompany minor children into public restrooms and be watchful for their safety.

Vacation and travel can be fun and exciting. Don't let a crime, injury or other unpleasant event ruin it. Be aware of your surroundings and contact the local police if you feel unsafe or see something that makes you suspicious.

For more information or a presentation on this topic, contact the Community Services Coordinator at (910) 692-2732.