



## Plan a Safe Holiday Road Trip

Holidays are a wonderful opportunity to spend time with family and friends. However, for many of us, travel is required to make this possible. To ensure a safe trip, it's important to take some special precautions:

### Preparing Your Home

- Make arrangements to stop delivery of mail and newspapers or ask a neighbor to collect them each day.
- Set several household lights on timers so they automatically turn on and off at appropriate times.
- Leave shades and blinds in their regular positions.
- Make plans to have grass mowed or snow shoveled.
- Make sure door, window locks, and home alarm (if you have one) are in working order. Set them before you leave.
- Keep your normal answering machine message-don't use a message that indicates you're gone.

### Traveling By Car

- Before your trip, clean headlights, taillights, signal lights, and windows. Have your vehicle properly serviced by a mechanic. Be sure to check the battery, brakes, tires, belts, hoses, exhaust system and fluid levels.
- Pack an emergency kit, including items such as a jack, spare tire, jumper cables, flashlight, flares and reflective triangles, engine fluids, first aid kit, etc.
- Get specific directions to your destination. Stick to main roads and don't attempt to take shortcuts. Share your itinerary and intended route with someone.
- Buckle up. Always wear your safety belt and properly restrain children in approved age and size appropriate safety seats.
- When driving, take frequent breaks for snacks and exercise. Share the driving if possible. Stop and rest if you get tired.
- When you're away from the car, don't leave anything in sight. Place your bags, maps, and travel guides in the trunk or glove box.

### Hotel Safety

- When making travel arrangements, look for accommodations with rooms that open into an interior hallway and electronic key cards that are reprogrammed for each new guest.
- Make sure rooms have deadbolt locks and a peephole, as well as a chain or latch on the doors. Securely close and lock the door whenever you're in the room and again when you leave. Also lock all windows and doors, including connecting doors between rooms.
- Locate the emergency exit and perform an evacuation drill with all family members. Show your children how to operate the hotel phone to call the front desk or 911 in case of an emergency.
- Never open your door without first looking through the peephole to verify the visitor. If a person claims to be an employee, call the front desk and ask if someone from his or her staff is supposed to have access to your room and for what purpose. Report all suspicious activity to management.
- Place all valuables in the hotel safe. When traveling, bring only the money and credit cards that you need. Leave copies of the front and back of credit cards and any other important documents you're carrying with a friend or close relative-if they're lost or stolen you'll have access to information you need.



- When returning to the hotel in the evening, use the main entrance and park your car in a well-lighted area away from trucks, vans, dumpsters, or wooded areas.

### **Children**

- Keep track of your children at all times. Make sure they know not to accept rides or favors from strangers.
- Make sure children know where you're staying (name, address, phone number, etc.) and instruct them on what they should do if they get lost or separated. Keep a recent, clear picture of your child with you for identification if necessary.

For additional information:

National Safety Council-Driving topic page, <http://www.nsc.org/issues/drivsafe.htm>

National Crime Prevention Council, <http://www.ncpc.org>

American Hotel & Lodging Association (AH&LA), <http://www.ahma.com>

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