

Personal Security Expert Offers Advice Holiday Travelers Can Follow to Reduce Their Risk of Falling Prey to Crime

(BOSTON, Mass. - Nov. 22, 2005 - The SafetyMinute) Reports say this holiday season air travel will increase and auto travel will remain at the high levels seen last year. In anticipation, a major passenger flight service has released a number of tips to help people minimize the delays and other hassles that terrorist screenings demand. A nationally televised expert on security offers additional tips for travelers to avoid falling prey to predators and other criminals.

“Criminals love it when we’re distracted,” said Robert Siciliano, an expert in personal security and identity theft. “They’re best able to steal from us, or assault us, when we’re off guard, and travelers are often most likely to be so. Luckily, we can implement simple measures to reduce our risks.”

Siciliano delivers presentations to Fortune 500 companies across the nation and is author of “The Safety Minute: 01.” He encourages people to follow a number of tips to make their holiday travel as safe as possible:

- **Understanding the fundamentals:** Body language is 55 percent of communication. Strive to appear in control of yourself and your plans. Be alert to your surroundings. At all times, know what is going on 50 feet to 100 feet around the perimeter of your body. Voice tone and pitch equal 35 percent of communication. The way you communicate physically and verbally can determine whether a predator deems you a good target, so be confident and succinct.
- **Airport awareness:** Airports are havens for criminals. Pay full attention to your belongings when airport security screens you. Fully cooperate with security personnel and be patient. Beware of strangers who are distracting or watching you.
- **Preventing abductions:** Returning to a parked car, scan the area around it and watch for suspicious activity. Vans are telltale signs of foul play waiting to happen. Abductors and rapist will open the side door and pull their victims inside.
- **Pickpockets and thieves:** Do not fight over material items. Carry currency in small amounts and denominations. Keep it in an easily accessible pocket. If someone tries to rob you, throw the “chump change” several feet away. This will distract the robber and give you time to escape. Cash, credit cards, jewelry, and passports are all targets. Use hideaway belts and travelers checks.
- **Telephone basics:** Protect your calling card number. Be wary of everyone around you as you enter this number. In airports, thieves could be videotaping a “going away” couple right behind you as you punch in your digits. The person standing at the phone next to you could be relaying your number to an accomplice.

- **Rental cars and transportation:** Hide rental agreements, dead giveaways that you are traveling. Keep these off the dash. Don't store valuables in the trunk, as many rental cars use a universal key to unlock everything. If you lose the ignition key, you may very well lose everything. Should you find yourself in a minor accident, stop only in a well-lit area. Carjackers provoke such "accidents" just to get travelers to stop. Do not stop on a deserted, dark street.
- **Staying at the hotel:** Be suspicious of a call from the hotel desk just after check-in. The person on the other end of the phone may request verification of your credit card number "because the imprint was unreadable." In reality, a thief may have watched you enter the hotel room and called from the guest phone in the lobby.

"On your way to visit family, make regular calls to loved ones and let them know where you are," Siciliano concluded. "This ensures that they'll have the most accurate idea possible of your whereabouts should a predator get the best of you."

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Robert Siciliano provides consumer education solutions to Fortune 500 companies and their clients and leads personal safety and security seminars nationwide. He has been featured on CNN, MSNBC, Fox News, "The Suze Orman Show," "ABC News with Sam Donaldson," "The Montel Williams Show," "Maury Povich," "Sally Jesse Raphael" and "The Howard Stern Show."

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