

10 Travel Security Tips

Traveling the world whether for business or leisure can be and should be an amazing experience. Sadly though, not all destinations are equal when it comes to personal safety and security.

The targeting of travellers for criminal purposes has grown significantly over the years. Certain countries are synonymous with certain crimes against travellers be it for business or leisure. A country like South Africa for example has seen a dramatic rise in armed robbery attacks on foreigners visiting our shores. These attacks are largely carried out on the roads between airports and hotels.

Criminal syndicates are fully aware that foreigners to the country are both easy targets and generally are carrying foreign currency which when converted in local currency provides a decent pay vs risk scenario.

Furthermore, visitors to the country are not able to remain here while criminal investigations and court cases unfold. Therefore, severely decreasing the risk element for criminals who specialise in targeting foreigners.

Lastly, foreigners are not able to carry weapons, in particular firearms, therefore, making themselves easy targets, especially when facing attackers who are well armed and notoriously trigger happy.

Below are our 10 Travel Security Tips for Travellers to South Africa:

Travel Security Tip 1

- Prior to your trip consider making contact with D&K Management Consultants, who can provide you with vital in country travel information. In addition to this take the time to research your area of travel and information pertaining to your accommodation venues.

Pay particular attention to Political climate, news reports on crime and areas to avoid.

Travel Security Tip 2

- When arriving in South Africa you will be met by a abundance of independent taxi and shuttle service people waiting right outside the arrivals terminal. Most of these are legitimate transporters, but certainly not all. It is strongly advised that you make airport to accommodation arrangements prior to arrival.

South Africa and in particular Johannesburg has a pandemic of crimes targeting travellers who arrive at the airport unprepared. Have your drivers contact details on hand and avoid being coerced into taking another transport option.

It is better to “dress down” than to exit the terminal in designer clothing or suits. The airport terminal is the first point of target identification by criminal gangs plotting attacks on their victims.

Travel Security Tip 3

- Your choice of accommodation is critical to your overall well-being during your stay. And just like most other countries in the world there are safe and wonderful hotels and lodges, but there are also those that you should avoid.

Seeking advice from our travel security advice consultants will save you a lot of time and possibly even unwanted outcomes. Our teams specialize in the safety and protection of our clients and know the hotels and temporary accommodation offerings better than most. A quick call or email asking our office for advice is a sure way to know that what you are booking into is what you want.

It is important to understand that even the top hotels are targeted by criminals and although attacks on people are incredibly few and far between in house theft and credit card fraud can occur. It is advisable that valuables are kept to a minimum and if not, are always locked in your room safe.

Travel Security Tip 4

- A good tactic for security conscious travellers is to check into a room and then, later complain politely about something and request a new room. That way the bell hops who escorted you to your room and may have observed your luggage and tell signs of foreign currency will not know about your room swap.

Try at all times to keep your house keeping attendants from knowing you are not a local guest. The vast majority of internal thefts are targeted to international travellers. Never tip in a foreign currency, it only attracts attention.

Travel Security Tip 5

- There has been many reported cases of credit card fraud and identity theft as a result of hotel guests providing too much accurate personal information when completing check in forms. 90% of this information is for the hotels own marketing and business use. Try where possible to supply fictitious information that does not reveal too much about you. Our close protection personnel do this all the time and have never fallen victim to any scam or fraud.
- We are often asked which is the safest floor to stay on in a hotel?
Overall, the consensus amongst the top VIP Protection teams and Bodyguards globally is that the 6th or 7th floor (lower middle) is best. Furthermore, the room you choose when taking your security into consideration should be on the sides of the hotel furthest from the lobby and main reception areas.

Avoid rooms that are near lifts and definitely do not opt for the top two floors.

Ground floor rooms are the easiest to penetrate especially if they have balconies. Try to forego aesthetics for overall safety.

- A useful tactic that is especially important for female travellers is to keep a rubber or wooden door wedge in your luggage. At night when going to bed place the wedge under your door from the inside. This simple yet very effective hack will prevent anybody with a duplicate key or access card being able to open your room without you being alerted.

- Many foreign businessmen come to South Africa for meetings with potential business partners or new clients. Unfortunately, there has been a dramatic increase in syndicate organized scams. These scam artists are incredibly convincing and lure foreigners to the country under the false impression of a great new business opportunity.

They arrange meetings at the victim's hotel room and then once the door is closed proceed to attack and rob them. In more serious cases these syndicates will convince their victim to accompany them to a second meeting or site visit. Once the victim enters their vehicle the kidnap and ransom kicks into play.

It is non-negotiable that if you are traveling to South Africa or any African country to meet with individuals that are not bonafide clients or may seem a little bit suspicious that you engage our Due Diligence services prior to traveling. Should you opt to travel anyway we cannot stress the importance of contacting us to arrange and accompany you to all meetings. Great sounding business deals and other scams are so well put together that being lured into a potentially deadly situation often gets ignored. Contact D&K Management Consultants, for your own safety!

Travel Security Tip 6

- It is a daunting scenario driving in most foreign countries but doing so in a country with unacceptably high rates of traffic accidents and road related incidents, we advise rather making use of our chauffeur driver services.

Take the hassle away of driving in unfamiliar areas or navigating yourself through high-risk areas. Rather have an experienced security driver transport you. Our security drivers are all trained Close Protection Officers and are trained in the skills of defensive and anti-hijack driving. Furthermore, our security drivers know the areas and know where to go and where to avoid.

Travel Security Tip 7

- When hiring a motor vehicle in South Africa it is strongly advised that you take into consideration the make of vehicle you are hiring. The hijacking and theft of motor vehicles have a specific trend.

The vast majority of stolen vehicles are stolen to order for parts. As a result, we are able to identify high risk motor vehicles that are of higher interest to criminals than certain other vehicles. Below is a list that shows motor vehicles that are more likely to be stolen and or hijacked than others. We advise against hiring any of the vehicles on this list if at all possible.

Stats Supplied by South African Police Services

Toyota
Volkswagen
Nissan
Ford
Hyundai

Isuzu
Mercedes Benz
BMW
Chevrolet
Kia

According to the crime statistics provided by the South African Police Services, sedans and hatchbacks are still the most popular targets for criminals.

Followed by pickup trucks (bakkies), large trucks and micro-buses.

Travel Security Tip 7

- At D&K Management Consultants, we see it as our duty keep people well informed when it comes to matters of personal security and safety. Although many in the travel and tourism industry may take a different stand on the sharing of information such as crime statistics, we see this as naive and counterproductive.

Every person traveling to South Africa should do so knowing full well what risks they may face, and in knowing these risks be afforded the opportunity to mitigate and manage them.

Below is the latest crime statistics as released by the South African Police Services for the period 2019/20.

Please note that these are the official figures as publicly made available and circulated by various local media houses.

Travel Security Tip 8

- ATM machines are high risk!

Like almost every country, anywhere where cash is dispensed is considered a high risk. In South Africa though we seem to have higher incidents of card swopping and card cloning than most European or American cities.

Many of our ATM machines are found in random places and usually with large crowds of people loitering around.

If you find yourself in the need of cash and are looking for an ATM machine try to use only those outside of banks or within your hotel.

Always pay special attention to the card slot as scammers place mini card readers or cameras here to capture your pin code and card details.

We all know that covering the slot of the ATM with a hand is a no brainer, however there are a couple of other things to do that will help protect you from card fraud or cloning.

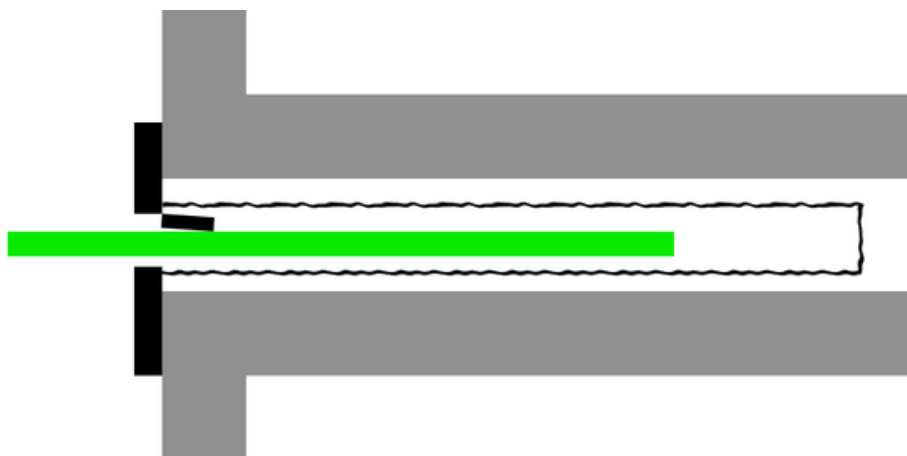
Always pull and push the card reader or slot before presenting your card. If it's loose or has any other indication of tampering DON'T present your card. Walk away!

If the ATM “swallows” your card, try running your fingers along the slit of the card reader. If you feel anything protruding pull it hard. A common card scam used by credit card thieves is the use of the “Lebanese Loop”

This is a plastic sleeve that criminals insert into the card reader preventing it from reading your card. When the victim walks away to go report the card as swallowed by the machine, the card scammer will quickly remove the sleeve and your card.



Fake pin code reader



Lebanese Loop

Travel Security Tip 9

- The theft of items from suitcases is always a concern for travellers. In many of these theft cases the victims do not even realize that their suitcases have been opened and items removed before being resealed.

The most common method used by luggage thieves is the simple pen through the zip hack. Even with locks on the zip pullers, your zip line is easily accessible with a normal pen.

Once the criminal has stolen whatever he can the zip is simply pulled back and the suitcase is resealed.



Travel Security Tip 10

- When visiting South Africa, it is important that you have certain emergency telephone numbers at hand should you need them. Remember each country has its own unique numbers for reporting crime or any other emergencies.

Below you will find a list of very important numbers to keep during your stay.

National Numbers:

10111 police (crime only)

10177 Emergency

112 Emergency (mobile use only)

086 1000 234 Vehicle breakdown

Useful contact numbers to keep while in South Africa:

Kyle Condon - Owner D&K Management Consultants - 0828205363 (mobile) - 0118240334 (office)

Lee-Anne Du Plooy - Bodyguard liaison administrator and Security drivers - 0118240334 (office)

Pierre Gildenhuis - Head of Criminal investigations – 0848569068 - 0118240334
Jurgens Bekker Attorneys – 0832949995 – 0116225472/45