



Arroyo Grande Police Department

MEDIA RELEASE

Contact person: Commander John W. Hough

Telephone: 805/473-5126

Date: June 8, 2010

VACATION SAFETY TIPS- PART 2

OK. You've made your house as secure as you possibly can. You've packed your bags and it's time to hit the road. What can you do to make your trip safer for you and your family?

Never carry large amounts of cash. If you must carry large sums of cash, do not display the money openly. Use traveler's checks or credit cards whenever possible and keep a record of the traveler's check and credit card numbers in a secure and separate location. Keep the contact telephone numbers for your travelers' check and credit card companies readily available in case either the checks or the credit cards are lost or stolen.

If you're driving, plan your route carefully. Make sure your car is serviced and in good operating condition before you travel. Travel on main roads. Use maps. Travel and tour with confidence. Use well-lighted, well-traveled streets at all times. Don't take "shortcuts."

Although it may sound uncaring, do not stop to offer help to a stranded motorist. Instead, use a telephone to advise the local police. If your car breaks down, raise the hood, attach a white cloth to the radio antenna, and turn on your flashers. If someone other than the police stops to offer "help," stay in your locked car and through a slightly opened window, ask the person to call the police. Better yet, if possible carry a cellular telephone and be certain that it is working properly. If you must abandon your car, keep everyone together.

If you suspect someone is following you in your car, drive to the nearest open service station, restaurant, or business and contact the local law enforcement agency. If you think it is unsafe to get out of your car, sound your car horn or flash your car headlights to get someone's attention.

Be aware of your surroundings. Never advertise your plans to strangers, including travel routes and the amount of cash you are carrying. Don't advertise that you are a tourist by leaving maps and guidebooks in easily visible locations in your car. Don't display expensive jewelry, cameras, bags, and other items that might draw attention. Conceal valuables from sight, preferably locked in the car trunk. If you stop overnight, remove luggage and other valuables from your car. Try to park your car in well-lighted motel or hotel parking areas near entrances to the building. Always lock your car when leaving it even for a short time and immediately after entering it. Look around before entering a parking lot or a garage. Check the backseat of your car before you enter it if you have been away from the car even for a short time.

Ensuring Quality of Life

200 North Halcyon Road, Arroyo Grande, CA 93420 • Phone (805) 473-5100 • FAX (805) 473-2198
Website: www.agpd.org

Even if your hotel or motel is a five-star resort, there are basic safety tips you should follow. Don't leave your luggage unattended when checking in. If you can't go to your room immediately, check your luggage with the staff. If the front desk clerk mentions your room number loudly, ask for a new room. Don't enter your room if the door is ajar. If you are a woman traveling alone, consider asking for a staff escort to the room.

Determine the most direct route to and from your room, to the fire escapes and elevators. Know the best way to get out of the building in an emergency. Determine a back-up way to get out of the building in an emergency in case the most direct route is unavailable. Use all the locking devices on the doors and windows in your room. Do not open the door without knowing who is there. Use the door viewer to identify anyone requesting entry. If you are in doubt if the person at your door is a hotel or motel employee, call the front desk and verify who they are and why they are at your room.

Unpack and place your belongings in the closet and dresser, arranging them so you will know immediately if something is missing. Check your belongings daily. Never leave valuables in your room. Place extra cash, expensive jewelry, or other valuables in the hotel or motel safe. Always keep cash, credit cards, and car keys with you. Consider locking your suitcases while they are in your room so they cannot be used to carry your property out of your room. Report any lost or stolen items to the management and the local police as soon as possible.

Be observant as you walk the corridors to and from your hotel or motel room or in the parking lot. Report any suspicious activity to the management or the police. Never sit in your room with your door propped open. Don't leave the door open for any length of time, even if you are just walking to the ice machine. If someone is loitering in the corridor near your room, do not enter the room. Go directly to the front desk and report a complete description of the individual.

When you are sightseeing, remember that tourists make tempting targets of opportunity for criminals. Tourists can be lost or distracted, weighed down with bags and souvenirs, carrying cameras and tickets. Try to blend in with the crowd. Avoid advertising that you are a tourist by the way you dress.

Be aware of your surroundings. Ask the hotel or motel management about any problem areas you should try to avoid. Ask the management for directions on how to get to the sights you want to see. Looking lost (stopping and looking at addresses and staring at street signs) make you look like an easy target for crime. If you get lost, find an open business and ask for directions. Stick to well-lighted main streets and public areas.

Select sightseeing and tour companies, guides, and drivers carefully by inquiring with the hotel or motel management for reputable services. Stick together as a family and keep an eye on your children at all times. Be certain your children know not to accept rides or favors from strangers. Make sure everyone knows the name, address, and telephone number of your hotel or motel. Teach your children what to do if they get lost or separated. That might mean agreeing on a meeting place and time, just in case. If your older children go their separate ways, be sure they understand the importance of keeping track of time and checking in promptly at pre-arranged times and locations.

Have fun. Don't get too sunburned. We want to see you again in September.

The information in this article was gathered from the Los Angeles Police Department website and the Crime and Violence Prevention Center of the California Attorney General's Office.