Hotel Security Essay, Research Paper

Hotel Security

In the Hotel

Whether traveling on business or pleasure it may become necessary to stay overnight in a hotel or motel. It is important to give some thought about security, and what hotel or motel you select, and what room you are willing to accept. The cost of the hotel room is not always the best predictor of how safe the room or property will be. There are a few security rules that should apply to any hotel room you rent.

Always request a room on an upper floor, if possible. Ground floor rooms are more vulnerable to crime problems because of access and ease of escape. In a high-rise building, rooms above the fifth floor are usually safer than those below, again because of accessibility and ease of escape. Also, rooms not across from the fire stairs are safer from room invaders because they use them to escape. Criminals do not want to be trapped on an upper floor inside a high-rise hotel. High-rise buildings usually have fewer access points and is easier for the hotel staff to monitor who passes through the lobby after hours.

Hotel or motel rooms should be equipped with a wood or metal door for best protection. Room doors should have a deadbolt lock with a one-inch throw bolt. If the lock appears worn or there are pry marks around the lock area, get another room or move to another hotel. The knob-lock should be hotel-style where you can push a button on the inside knob and block out all keys. This feature is designed to prevent a former guest or housekeeper from entering the room once you are safely inside. Hotels with electronic card access has the advantage of being able to disable former keycards issued to previous guests. The room door should have a wide-angle peephole so you can view who is at the door before opening.

Do not open your door to someone who knocks unannounced. Some criminals will pretend to be a bellman, room service, maintenance, or even hotel security to gain admittance to your room. Always call the front desk to confirm their status with the hotel and only open the door if you requested the service. Do not rely on door chains or swing bars to secure the doors while you partially open the door to speak someone. These are often unreliable security devices. Teach your children not to open the door to any hotel room without knowing the person on the other side and without your permission.

Make sure all windows and sliding doors are secured, if they are accessible from the ground. It is a good idea to pull on all windows and glass doors to test if they are secure. Beware of balconies where someone can climb from one to another and enter through an open window or sliding door. If the windows or sliding doors are not securable, ask for another room or find another hotel. If your room has an adjoining door to an adjacent room, check it to see that it is secured with a deadbolt lock. If it is questionable, ask for another room.

If you are a woman traveling alone or with small children, take advantage of car valet service, if available to avoid the parking lot. After checking-in ask the bellman or desk clerk to escort you to your room. After unlocking the room, quickly inspect the closets, under the bed, and bathroom including behind the shower curtain before the bellman leaves. Tip the bellman for his efforts.

Put the Do Not Disturb sign on the doorknob even when you are away, this deters room burglars. Turn on the TV or radio just loud enough to hear through the door to give the appearance that the room is occupied. Leave one light on inside the room if you will return after dark. This helps you see upon re-entry and gives the room the appearance of occupancy from the outside. Always go through the room inspection routine ever time you re-enter.

When you find a suitable hotel that meets your standards and will cater to your needs try to stick with it or with the same hotel chain. Don’t be afraid to complain to management to get the safe room you deserve.

Around The Hotel

Most first class international hotels have spent a lot of to ensure your safety and security. Fire safety equipment, CCTVs, and security patrols are often part of the hotel’s security plan. Regardless of the level of security provided by the hotel, you need to become familiar with certain aspects of the security profile of the hotel.

Change the time and route in which you leave and return to the hotel. Be alert for people watching your movements. If hotel security locks certain access points after dark, plan to use the main entrance when return to the hotel. Speak with the bellman, concierge and front desk regarding safe areas around the city in which to jog, dine or sightsee. Ask about local customs and which taxi companies to use or avoid. Do not take valuables to the spa or work out room.

Be cautious when entering rest rooms in the hotel. Sometimes, unauthorized people use these facilities to deal drugs or prostitution and theft. Female travelers should place purses on the hangers on the inside of the bathroom doors, because there have been many stolen purses off the floor of the stalls.

Areas around public telephones are often used by criminals to try pickpocket activity or theft. You should keep briefcases and purses in view or “in touch” while using phones. Make sure you guard your telephone credit card numbers, because, criminals wait for callers to announce credit card numbers on public phones and then sell the numbers.

Purse snatchers and briefcase thieves are known to work hotel bars and restaurants waiting for guests to leave these things on chairs or under tables only to find them missing as they are leaving. Keep items in view or “in touch”. Be alert to scams involving an unknown person spilling a drink or food on your clothing. An accomplice may be preparing to steal your wallet, briefcase or purse.

The pool or beach area is a good area for thieves to take advantage of guests enjoying recreation.

Prostitutes take advantage of travelers around the world through in many ways, use of “knock out” drugs, and theft from the victim’s room.

The Hotel and Casino Security Association was admitted to full membership of SASFED in the latter part of 1993 under the title – The Hotel Security Association. The title was then changed to the Hotel and Casino Security Association at the end of 1995 to accommodate the changing nature of the industry with legislation allowing casinos to operate in South Africa.

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The H.C.S.A. is made up of security, loss control and risk managers with senior management from the hospitality industry who meets on a bi-monthly basis in order to exchange views and discuss topics of interest and concern. From time to time experts with relevant fields are invited to make presentations to the H.C.S.A.