

## Hotel Safety A Critical Factor For Travelers

Nearly 94% of travelers surveyed say that they consider hotel safety to be an important factor when making their lodging selections during trip planning, the study also showed that only about 1 out of 5 (22%) actually investigate a facility's level of safety... [www.safeplace.com/index\\_2002\\_revised.shtml](http://www.safeplace.com/index_2002_revised.shtml)

I heard a hotel manager for Marriott presented a fascinating program on hotel safety for travelers. Among other things he provided a lot of tips about guest security. Major hotel chains send their managers and staff to hotel safety conferences on a regular basis. Regardless of property type, it is important to be sure that your hotel considers your safety to be as important as you do.

### Here are some sample questions to ask when booking a hotel stay:

1. Has your hotel been reviewed by an independent third-party company for security and safety features?
2. Are criminal background checks and drug tests performed on every employee?
3. Is the building protected throughout with an automatic fire sprinkler systems and smoke detectors?
4. Is every guestroom door equipped with keycard entry and deadbolt locks?
5. Does each guestroom door have a view port (one way .peep-hole.)?
6. Is there a well-trained security staff on site 24 hours a day?
7. Does the hotel have a safe where I can store my valuables?
8. Does the hotel require proof of identification of all guests?
9. Is access to guest room floors restricted to resident guests with valid electronic key cards only?
10. How many incidents of burglary and other crimes are there each year at the hotel?

### Be a safe traveler

- a. Leave a travel itinerary with someone at home, a relative or trusted friend.
- b. Avoid ground floor and other rooms easily accessible from the outside of the building.
- c. Locate fire exits; be able to recognize the fire alarm signal, and plan your actions in event of a hotel fire, such as counting the number of doors from your room to the fire exit stairwell.
- d. Make it a habit to pack and place a small flashlight on your nightstand in case of a power outage.
- e. When you leave your hotel room for the day or evening leave the television on. From outside the room it sounds like the room is occupied.
- f. Place the "Do Not Disturb" sign on your door. The sign gives the impression you are in the room when you are not. Call housekeeping for maid service - instruct them to leave the sign on the door. Do not use the "clean the room" sign.
- g. Never prop your hotel room door open. Only open your door to individuals known to you. An unexpected visit from "hotel staff" should be verified with the front desk before opening your door.
- h. Before boarding an elevator, observe all passengers. When returning to your room, board last and/or be last to select your floor button. Always position yourself near the elevator control panel. If threatened, press the alarm button and as many floor buttons as possible.
- i. Ensure that adjoining room doors lock via deadbolt accessible only from inside your room.
- j. Be observant to unusual or questionable people or activities
- k. Make sure the front desk clerk does not shout out your room number when checking in.
- l. Hotel staff should know and point out emergency exits. *I think this is a great idea and we can help spread the practice by specifically asking each hotel staff person about emergency exits so they will get in the habit.*
- m. Carry your key with you.
- n. Do not give your credit card number over your hotel phone. If someone claiming to be from the front desk calls you because of a question with your bill, they should ask you to drop by in person to present any credit card information. Do not offer to provide it over the phone.
- o. Don't dump your wallet, keys, etc. in a big pile on a table. Leave important items, clothes and shoes where you can get to them in the dark in case you need to make a quick exit.