

Be Safe

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Worldwide Central Travel



Informational Shorts on Travelling Safe

Hotel Common Sense - Check In Scam

You've finally arrived at your travel destination and are checking into your hotel.

Most travellers have some level of jet lag when they arrive at their destination, even if there is only a one-hour time difference. Jet lag can be a combination of the time change, the weather, your excitement, and the stress of getting to the hotel - then checking into your room and trying to re-establish a comfort level at the new destination.

Time to let your guard down? Absolutely not!

The Call from the Front Desk

Here's the scenario. You check into your hotel room. After a few minutes the phone rings and a man or woman explains that your credit card did not process properly and asks if you would mind reading your card number over the phone, as well as the expiry date and security code? You do this. Unbeknownst to you, charges immediately start appearing on your credit card, and from all around the country.

What happened? A scam artist watched as you checked in and either heard your room number when it was presented to you by the front desk, or followed you in the elevator. S/he let a few minutes pass so you would be in the middle of unpacking or changing clothes or showering, and then called you from a house phone, pretending to be the front desk. In your jet lag (or because you just checked in and you felt the request was reasonable) you did as the called asked, and relayed your credit card information over the phone. The scam artist then thanked you and communicated this information to as many scam-colleagues as possible. (Remember that these days, many people will call their credit card company to inform them of their travel plans. Therefore no "red flags" would go up at the credit card office if out-of-country charges started to appear on the card).

What should you have done? Most hotels do not ask for credit card information over the phone. They would want the actual card to process, in order to obtain immediate approval by the credit card company. Therefore, they may call you and ask that you return to the front desk, hopefully at your convenience. Likewise, a hotel would never send someone to your room, unannounced to retrieve credit card information, and just in case you were thinking of this, it is not a good idea to ask the hotel to send a bellboy to the room to get your credit card. It would be similar to handing a blank cheque to someone.

The Lesson?

No matter how tired or jet lagged or disoriented you feel when you check in, try to remember what we call "hotel common sense" and don't give out your credit card or personal information to "just anyone" who asks for it.

We are delighted to partner with Steve Gillick (President of Talking Travel / www.talkingtravel.ca) who has been in the travel industry for over 30-years and is a well-respected speaker and travel educator. These are designed to give you information about travel scams and how scam artists work. The goal is to be aware and informed. Still, there is no guarantee that, despite all precautions, you can completely avoid scam artists. We hope you enjoy these and that you travel safe.

