

## **Hotel Security**

Throughout your probationary year you will most certainly travel to many new places, sometimes living out of a suitcase for weeks on end. Whether you are in a hotel in downtown Cincinnati, Morbach, or Taipei your security is important. Unfortunately, this is a topic that is frequently taken for granted. Consequently, we wanted to take a moment and discuss hotel security and safety issues.

Fortunately, the chances of arriving at a company designated hotel and it not meeting CBA security and safety standards are slim. The majority of our hotels have been used by the company before, and often for many years. These events are more common following a one-time charter or an unplanned overnight due to a maintenance or crew rest issue. However, should you have any concerns upon arriving communicate with your other crew members first and if alone contact the Hotel and Travel desk through your PCD and/or your Travel and Hotel Committee ([hotels@iap2750.org](mailto:hotels@iap2750.org))

If you notice your pattern does not have a hotel published call the hotel desk to ask which hotel they intend to use. Look up the hotel online and communicate any concerns you may have. If possible, communicate these issues in the days before arrival rather than upon arrival. Should you arrive and your hotel is still not booked 30 minutes after block-in, not compliant, or if the room is not ready 30 minutes after arrival, utilize your contractual remedy for this. In such cases contact the Travel Department, and if you still do not have access to your room within 45 minutes of contacting the travel department you may utilize your company card to obtain a hotel room and transportation as required. [CBA 5.D.4] Please file an FCR and contact your Travel and Hotel Committee in these cases.

## **Threat Categories**

For hotel stays we identify threats into three categories:

1. Calamities such as fires, power loss, earthquakes, and severe weather events
2. Theft, burglary, or robbery
3. Terrorist attacks and hostage situations

## **Calamities**

Some of the more common nuisances we will experience are relatively benign issues, like a power failure or a false fire alarm. However, experiencing something more severe like an earthquake or a typhoon is most certainly not uncommon. Here are some tips to be better prepared for such an event:

- Identify emergency exits
- Locate emergency equipment

- Hotels in Asia generally provide smoke hoods or masks in the room as well as a fire extinguisher
- Keep a flashlight by your bedside
- Keep your PCD and your personal cellphone charged and nearby
- Keep a set of clothes and a pair of shoes close by where you can find them in the dark.
  - In the event of hazards such as broken glass or rubble, shoes will help protect your feet as you navigate the hazard
- Have an ID available

### **Theft or other criminal activity**

We can identify three groups of possible perpetrators:

1. Outsiders that gain access to the hotel
2. Hotel guests
3. Hotel staff

Some hotels, by design, offer better security than others. Be aware of these by asking yourself some questions such as:

- Do hotel access doors lock at a particular time?
- Are room keys required to use the elevator?
- Are security cameras installed in hallways and elevators?

Furthermore, there are things we can actively do as crewmembers to actively enhance our security such as using deadbolts, identifying who may be knocking on our door before opening, and being slightly more alert in the event of an unexpected knock on the door. Should you leave your room consider leaving the TV on, so the room appears occupied during your absence (however please be courteous of neighbors with its volume). When you use the "Do not Disturb" sign turn it to the local language if possible, this will avoid identifying you as a wealthier foreign target.

Do not share your hotel information with strangers. A very common scam involves finding your name and your hotel. They can use this information to find you and/or your room number, their sidekick may still be talking to you while your room is found. These kinds of scams happen all around the world, you are not immune from this flying domestically. YouTube has several videos from consumer organization discussing common tourist scams.

### **Terrorist and hostage situations**

While this is undoubtedly the most unpleasant to discuss we have to accept the fact that we are targets, either individually or by virtue of being an American company, or by our customers and their relevance on the world scale. In the same vein, it is not a secret that Atlas flies military

contracts and our flights and tail numbers are easily tracked; even a simple google search could return information on many Atlas flights.

Attacks directed at a hotel are not a novelty either. Between 1970 and 2016 a total of 160 hotel attacks have occurred. In the last 15 years there have been 30 attacks in the Middle East and Africa and another 29 in Asia. Recent examples are the 2008 Mumbai attacks and in 2015 six Russians working for Volga-Dnepr were among the 19 killed during a hotel attack at a Radisson Blu in Mali, Western Africa in November 2015. Europe has not any hotel attack in the last 15 years, but France, Spain, and the United Kingdom have all had attacks on public transportation.

While it is unlikely Atlas or its pilot group will be the victim of a targeted attack, we make a very good target of opportunity being an American company. In some cases, an organization is targeting Americans or foreigners regardless of if they are military or not, and sometimes just as a retaliatory tactic.

If you are overnight at what the State Department considers a higher risk location consider doing the following:

- Exercise all normal hotel precautions as discussed earlier
- Consider a lower floor in the hotel
  - A ground attack will reach you sooner, but it will also leave you with more escape option
- Consider asking for a different floor if all booked rooms are on the same floor, aka the "American" floor. Some hotels have a habit of doing this as it is easier for the Reservation department.
- Consider asking for a room away from the front side of the hotel in case of a vehicle IED attack
- Consider only using the privacy sign during daylight hours when the and not during regular sleeping hours as this will flag your room as occupied.
- During your stay do not wear any clothing that will easily identify you as an American
  - No sports team names, logos, universities, or other big American brands
- Do not wear clothing that looks military related, like camo
- Avoid wearing clothing that could identify you as a flight crewmember
- Do not wear gun club or gun manufacturer apparel

In short, the goal is to be "the grey person" in the room, or otherwise not to standout. Any time you leave the room carry ID on you and a small flashlight, even if you just go down for breakfast. Many attacks start by cutting the power as this is very disorienting and it disables security cameras and elevators. You will need some form of ID for responding Military or Police forces or for trying to make your way to the US Consulate or Embassy, a government issued ID is recommended (State driver's license or passport)

Always treat any travel and hotel information as privileged information, keep it restricted to family and close friends as there is nobody else that needs to know this information. Your limo driver doesn't need to know the duration or reason for your travel. You can keep conversation short and vague by answering probing questions with general answers such as:

Q. What kind of work are you in?

A. Transportation

Q. Where are you going today?

A. Europe.

Q. Where in Europe, anywhere nice?

A. I'm not sure, my schedule will probably change by the time I get to the airport anyway.

We can not assume that people we just met have are low risk individuals, regardless of where we are. You simply have no idea who this information will be shared with once you are dropped off, and they most certainly don't need to know we may be flying troops to a location of interest.

And finally, be cognizant of what your social media footprint broadcasts about you while you are on a trip:

- Check your privacy setting to see who can read your posts and updates.
  - Consider changing the settings to "Friends Only".
- Do not telegraph travel plans or schedule
- Carefully consider what you post or tag on social media during your trip
- Consider only writing restaurant or hotel reviews on Yelp or TripAdvisor during domestic trips and refrain on International trips.

The above is by no means an all-inclusive list, but topics that can help point you in the right direction. Continue to further educate yourself on traveler safety and security using online sources, and contact the Security Committee with questions or concerns at [security@iap2750.org](mailto:security@iap2750.org).