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Tips for Secure Travel

As social and business obligations increase during the holiday season, usual safety precautions are sometimes forgotten. AIG Private Client Group wants this to be a safe holiday season for all, so please remind your clients, co-workers, family and friends of the importance of taking proper precautions during this busy time of year. The Steele Foundation, a preeminent risk management company, has the following recommendations which are designed to help lower your overall exposure to travel risks.

- All **travel arrangements and the actual itinerary** are should be treated as **"confidential"** information.
- Ensure that your main contact in your destination and someone at home are kept **aware of your whereabouts and schedule**.
- Discourage local company executives from openly meeting you at your hotel. Go to their offices.
- Carry your **photo identification** and the **name of a person to contact** with you at all times in the event of serious illness or other emergency.
- Keep **photocopies of your passport, visa, airline or other tickets** and a list of your traveler's checks with you in a separate location from the originals and leave copies with someone at home. Be sure to **safeguard your passport** at all other times, as its loss along with visas can cause you delays and problems.
- Leave things like **unnecessary credit cards** and **expensive jewelry** at home. Use a **money belt** or **concealed pouch** for your passport, cash and other valuables.

AIRLINE TRAVEL

- If traveling via airplane, **minimize the time spent in open access areas of the airport** and proceed quickly to the departure gate. Have your picture identification ready to show attendants at security checks.
- During the flight, **avoid discussing your life history and the nature of your business**.
- Whenever possible, **have a local contact meet you at the airport** and take you to your hotel. **Ask who is going to pick you up**, and get a physical description of this person. The person picking you up at the airport must not use signs with your name; **he should use a prearranged signal**.

HOTEL TRAVEL

- You are at your highest risk while outside your hotel. **Vary the times you leave each day** so that you **do not establish a pattern**. If your hotel has more than one entrance, make use of each on a random basis.
- At check-in, be sure to **keep a hand on your briefcase and laptop computer**; again, don't become distracted.
- **Ask for a room between the third and sixth floors**. Rooms above the seventh floor can be difficult to evacuate in the event of a fire or other emergency. Lower floors may not be secure.
- **Identify the fire exits on your floor**. Carry a small flashlight to aid in evacuation or to use if the power goes out.
- **Inspect the locks on your room** to make sure they work properly. Make sure the room door has a wide-angle viewer, which you can use to identify anyone at the door.
- **Call the hotel lobby** to verify the identity of anyone claiming to be from the hotel staff.
- **Do not leave valuables** - cash, jewelry, business documents, etc. - in your room; use the hotel safe.
- When you exit your room, **leave a light and the television on**; make sure the volume of the television is loud enough to be heard through the door. Place the "Do Not Disturb" sign on the outside of the door.
- **Keep your key** rather than turning it in at the desk.
- **Note the people on the street** each time you leave and be alert to unwanted attention. If you

believe that you are being followed, **report your observations** to your local contact. Don't feel that such reports will be taken as a sign of weakness. Quite to the contrary, **vigilance and prompt reporting of suspicious activities** will help ensure your personal safety. Under no circumstances should you confront suspected surveillants. If you feel that you are being followed, **go into the first available restaurant, store or public building and ask that someone call the police.** Stay there until the police arrive.

TRAVELING BY TAXI

- If you need a taxi to reach a destination, do not hail a taxi in the street - You **select the taxi:** never let taxi drivers select you. Ask the hotel or your local contact to call a taxi for you. Before you get in the taxi, clarify with the driver **how the fare will be determined, and agree on a price.**
- If you must take a cab, **choose one that is marked and has a meter**, if possible, or negotiate the price before you load your bags into the cab and depart the terminal. Be sure you select your cab; don't let the cab select you.

ARROUND TOWN

- **Do not let strangers stop you** - all scams start this way. Simply shake your head "no" and keep walking. Do not hesitate to pull away abruptly from them or force them away with your hand.
- **Try to avoid being jostled** and, if you are, pull away quickly. Purse-snatchers and pickpockets often work in teams with split-second precision.
- If you believe that you are being victimized **do not overreact**, but call attention to what is happening in a **firm voice. If you are confronted by someone brandishing a weapon, however, surrender your cash immediately.**
- Be wary of **persons representing themselves as police or other local officials.** It is not uncommon in some countries for foreigners to become victims of harassment, mistreatment and extortion by law enforcement and other officials. **You should try to get the officer's name, badge number, and patrol car number to pursue a complaint if you are a victim of this type of crime.**
- If you go to bars or clubs, **protect your drinks.** Many travelers have been victimized by knockout drugs.
- If you are being picked up by a **company driver**, find out his name beforehand, **what he looks like**, and the **type of car** he will be driving. Insist on a prearranged pickup time. Do not accept a ride with a substitute driver until you have verified this change over the phone with your point of contact. If you are going by taxi, ask the hotel to call one for you.