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TRAVEL, FAMILY, PERSONAL, KIDS & TEENS

John Walsh: Protect Your Family While Traveling During The Holidays



by John Walsh

As you can imagine, I do a lot of traveling, and I'm constantly in and out of airports and hotel rooms. Since more people travel during the Thanksgiving period than at any other time, I know a lot of you will be heading out to see relatives and take some well-deserved time off over the coming weeks. So, I thought it would be a great time to share some travel-related safety tips I've come across. Whether we're constantly on the go, or only travel during the holidays, we all want to get through security check points quickly and sleep easy in hotels knowing that we, and our kids, are safe. Here are a few things to think about as you get ready to go:

Security people at the airport can—and will—open your checked luggage if necessary to make sure everything's safe. If you want to keep your checked bags locked, make sure to get a lock that can be opened by a Transportation Safety Administration (TSA) universal master key. You can find these at airports and luggage stores. The package will say whether a TSA key can open the lock. If the security officers feel there's a need to check out your bag, and they can't use their master key to open the lock ... well, that's what they've got bolt cutters for.

If you're staying at a hotel, especially if you've got your kids with you, here are some tips courtesy of Safer Child, a nonprofit group run by concerned parents who want to share information about keeping kids safe and healthy. Most of them are just plain common sense:

- Don't let your children play anywhere out of your sight.
- Check out the room. Make sure the window, balconies and door locks are secure.
- Don't let you children answer the door and don't answer the door yourself without verifying who is there. Hotel staff will wear uniforms. If you have any question call the front desk to verify an unexpected visit.
- Don't leave valuables in your room. Use the hotel safe deposit box.
- Use the main entrance for coming and going, and if you see suspicious activity in the parking lot, don't hesitate to report it to the management.

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