

SAFETY, HEALTH, AND SECURITY

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COMMITTEE



Flight Attendant Safety 101

Flight Attendants are all about safety. We live and breathe it all day long.... on the aircraft, in the terminal and to and from work. But what about YOUR safety? How often do you think about your surroundings? What about a plan in case of an emergency? Do you notice people around you? Have you ever stood in line for coffee and not noticed a friend right behind you? Time to sharpen those observational skills! Here's a quick outline of things YOU can do to ensure your safety while on duty. You take care of passengers all day, remember to take care of you.

- **On the aircraft.** We are required to wear a name bar. Take off your Company id and place it in the same pocket (on you or your luggage) EVERY time. The public doesn't need to see your picture or know your last name. Don't forget to do your post-flight inspection. This ensures that no passengers or items are left behind. Check the lav. Lower vent flaps (if on EMB175) and crosscheck your partner's doors. If you forget, write an CSAP report.

- **Off the aircraft.** We are instantly recognized in the airport. The cute outfits we wear ensure we can answer all questions regarding any airline and flight! Be aware of those watching you in the terminal. Be aware of your surroundings while waiting for the hotel van, especially if you are traveling solo. Ask the driver to confirm who they are picking up and where they are going. Ask for a business card with the hotel info.

- **At the hotel.** If you are signing in at the front desk, keep the room info to yourself. If room numbers are shared out loud and you fear someone has overheard, ask for a different room assignment. Ask the hotel to provide an escort to your room and wait while you check it. Ladies, don't enter an elevator with a stranger. Confidently state, "I'll take the next one, thanks". We've all seen the videos of women being assaulted in elevators, don't be an easy target. Remember your self-defense training. Don't stare at your phone all the way down the hall. If there's another guest in the hallway that appears interested in your room assignment, walk to the end of the hall, turn around and go back to the front desk and request an escort. There is some debate about whether to leave your door open or closed while you do your security check. Personally, I leave my bag in the doorway until I've checked the room. Look behind the drapes, under the bed and in the bathroom. Please don't assume that it's clear. Many gentlemen pilots and fellow flight attendants will wait while you check your room. I always make sure my flying partner is safe. Take a business card from the front desk. Place one by the phone in your room. Make sure the phone is working! If you need call for help, the information will be right there. Maybe ask the front desk the location of the nearest police or fire station... even the closest urgent care center. Review the escape plan in case of fire or security incident. Consider NOT using the "occupied" sign on your door. It only advertises that the room is occupied. Make sure the locks on your door work properly! If not, get a new room. I also put a hanger on the door handle and open the closet door so it's in front of the room door. If anyone tries to enter, at least I'll have a few moments notice. Use all the locks!!

I am amazed at how many reports I get about housekeeping etc. trying to enter a room. This is annoying, I know, but if you have the locks in place, they won't catch you in your underwear! When you leave for a workout or lunch, take a business card with you. Don't answer the door without ensuring who is knocking! Call the front desk if the person claims to be an employee. Facebook and Instagram are fabulous ways of keeping in touch with friends and family. They are also great ways for criminals to track you.

DO NOT post hotel names on social media. Checking in at a certain airport is ok. Please don't broadcast exactly where you are. This also tells criminals that you aren't home.... making you a prime target for robbery.

- **Outside the US.** If you're traveling out of the US, make note of the US Embassy and where it is. Maybe write down some key phrases in Spanish or French and keep them in your IPM. For example, "I need the police", or "I need medical attention", or "where is the US Embassy?". This is also an ideal place to carry the hotel information.

- **Out and about.** Please don't share our profession with strangers. Tell them you're a crop duster! Or a taxidermist. Make it a game.... who can come up with the best job. If I can spot a crew from across a restaurant, so can the public. Keep your phone charged and with you. Make note of the emergency numbers for DFW and ORD and MIA inflight offices. Crew Scheduling would normally be the first point of contact in any security or safety situation but remember they do close overnight.

A few more things to think about... Bed bugs are everywhere. There is no avoiding them, and the best hotels and buildings have battled them. Check your room before climbing into bed. Pull the sheets all the way down. Look closely at the mattress seams. If you see dark spots, it might be bugs. Look behind the headboard, they like to congregate in dark sheltered places. The bugs cannot climb slick surfaces, so use the metal luggage rack provided in your room. Place a large trash bag under your bag if you lay it on the bed or floor. You can also place it in the bathtub. Do your research. Check out bedbugcentral.com or bed bug registry. Our hotels are all vetted prior to signing contracts to ensure they have appropriate procedures in place to battle these bugs. If you think you've come across these little varmints, report it IMMEDIATELY to the front desk. Catch it if you can.

Note the date time and person to whom you reported it. I need a CREWCARE report CSAP so the room can be treated as soon as possible. Most people aren't affected by bed bug bites. If you are more sensitive to allergens, you might see swelling and itching. Seek medical attention if necessary. We are safety professionals. We are first responders.