

SAFETY AND SECURITY ADVICE FOR TOURISTS VISITING SOUTH AFRICA

October 2016



In many ways, South African cities are no different from major cities or towns in other countries, in that common sense and good personal safety practices are universal. That said, South Africa has certain unique idiosyncrasies and practices that are detailed below.

1. AT AIRPORTS

- Ensure that you are in possession of your passport, all other travel documentation, credit cards and driver's license; and that these are properly secured at all times.
- Never leave your luggage unattended or in the care of a stranger.
- Do not allow a stranger to assist with your trolley or luggage. Assistance can be obtained through the airport information desks and from properly-identified porters.
- Preferably use luggage with locking mechanisms.
- Do not give strangers any information about your accommodation and travelling details, and pay close attention to suspicious or unwarranted attention from people in the airport terminal.
- Do not accept assistance from taxi touts at the airport. Arrange airport transfers in advance through your company, hotel or a reputable airport transfer company. Taxis can be hired through the airport information desks.
- It is generally safe to use Uber in SA but please note that pick-ups are affected from airport parking areas not the terminal kerb. Obey and utilise the in-App security features while on an Uber journey and always first check that you get into the correct vehicle.
- Always load your luggage into the car's boot (trunk.)
- Be particularly aware of persons and/or vehicles appearing to follow you upon leaving the airport. This is a specific tactic of certain criminals operating at SA airports. If you notice such activity bring it to the attention of your driver immediately and call the police number 10111.

2. AT HOTELS

- Take note of all persons in the lobby or foyer when you arrive and who follows you in.
- Never leave your luggage unattended or in the care of a stranger.
- Store valuables in the personal safe in your room, or use the hotel's safekeeping service.
- Always lock your room personally using the double-lock or security latch / chain.

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- Familiarise yourself with the emergency procedures, evacuation plan and the fire / emergency escape routes from your room and the hotel, including assembly areas.
- Do not wait for your transportation out on the street, always wait inside the hotel foyer / lobby or inside the building.
- Always confirm the exact collection point to avoid any confusion.
- Never leave your room-key lying around in the hotel restaurant/bar, at the swimming pool or in the gymnasium.
- If someone knocks on your hotel room door, check who it is **before** you open the door.

3. IN THE STREET

- Do not carry large amounts of currency on your person.
- Avoid ostentatious displays of expensive jewellery, cameras and other valuables.
- Ladies are advised to carry a practical handbag with a sling around the shoulder. Your mobile phone and purse should be in the handbag, which should be latched shut.
- Try to avoid making or receiving mobile phone calls in the street. This is a distraction and can make you a target.
- Avoid dark, isolated areas at night. When out at night do not go out alone.
- It is better to explore in groups and to stick to well lit, busy, streets.
- Do not stand in a group of people while waiting to cross the road at a traffic light. It is advisable to stand back a little until the traffic light changes and the group of people moves away.
- Always walk on the street side of the pavement (sidewalk) and not near buildings or dark alleyways.
- Always be aware of what is happening around you, and avoid potentially risky areas. Your hosts or hotel can give advice if necessary.

4. IN VEHICLES

- Carry your driver's licence and any international licence that you may require in the vehicle with you.
- Always plan your route in advance. Know where you are going, and be aware of possible danger points. Avoid these if possible.
- Lock valuable items in the boot (trunk) of the vehicle.
- Keep mobile phones, laptops and other valuables and/or electronics out of sight and do not use them when driving.
- Always keep track of the vehicle's keys and any other keys that you require.
- Always fasten the safety belts.
- Be alert at traffic lights and stop signs. Leave enough space for yourself to manoeuvre if necessary. Make sure that you can see the tyres of the vehicle in front of you touching the road – that is a safe distance making evasive action possible by turning out and accelerating.
- Do not stop to look at something unusual lying in the road, it could be a trap.

- Walk round the vehicle and inspect it for any signs of tampering if it has been left or parked unattended for any length of time.
- Check for objects placed in such a way that tyres could be punctured as you drive off.
- Always have the car-keys in your hand when approaching the vehicle, and your handbag on a shoulder strap clutched tightly under your arm.

5. AT SHOPPING MALLS

- Avoid wearing expensive jewellery and carrying cameras or other valuables if possible.
- Avoid carrying large sums of cash. Use credit cards or debit cards wherever possible.
- Do not allow shop assistants and waiters or waitresses to take your card away to process a transaction. Insist that they process it in front of you, or accompany them.
- Ladies are advised to carry a practical handbag with a sling around the shoulder, and the handbag secured under the arm.
- Avoid going to the ladies' rest room (toilets) alone.
- Always be aware of your surroundings
- Do not open your purse / wallet and handle your cash in public places.

6. AT ATMS OR BANKS

- Only use ATMs or banks that are situated in safe areas like shopping or banking malls. Avoid ATMs in the street.
- Do not enter a bank or use an ATM if there is any suspicious activity or suspicious persons loitering in the vicinity. Never accept 'assistance' from a stranger at an ATM.
- Cancel any ATM transaction and leave immediately if anything suspicious occurs.
- Never allow anybody except bank staff to assist you with problems.
- Do not disclose your PIN to anyone, including bank staff.
- Do not carry bags or parcels when entering / approaching the bank/ATM if possible.
- Never leave the bank / ATM until your money has been secured into your purse / wallet or handbag / pocket. Be vigilant as you leave the ATM.
- Always ask somebody to accompany you to the bank / ATM, especially at night. This person should try to be as inconspicuous as possible and keep a sharp lookout.
- Do not enter your PIN before the ATM prompts you to do so.
- Do not enter your PIN if your card seems to be stuck, or if there is any resistance when you put it into the ATM slot. Cancel the transaction and report the matter to the bank immediately.
- **Always** shield the keypad with your hand or body when entering your PIN.
- Ensure that you get your own card back after completing the transaction.

7. SAFETY AND SECURITY IN GENERAL

- Make photocopies and keep digital photos on your smartphone of all important documents, such as passports, visas, and credit cards.

- Keep separate records of all important numbers e.g. passport, credit card, emergency contacts etc.
- Carry the copies of important travel documents with you instead of the real documents, keep those locked away, but note that you must carry your licence when driving in SA.
- Programme important and emergency numbers into your mobile or smartphone.
- Report the loss of your passport to your country's embassy, consulate or High Commission first, and then to the police. Make sure the police give you a case (reference) number.
- Do not carry all of your cash and credit cards with you, take only what you need plus a bit extra and leave the rest in the safe at your hotel.
- Use every possible opportunity to recharge your mobile phone battery.

8. WHAT TO DO IN THE CASE OF AN EMERGENCY

At a Mall

- Scream and shout for attention.
- Obtain witness' names and details.
- Report the matter to the mall's security office.
- Contact NSA immediately.
- Report the matter to the police.
- Obtain a criminal case number from the police.
- Ask for the police officers' name and the telephone number of the police station.

If Involved in a Motor Vehicle Accident

- Your actions will depend on the state of any injuries sustained.
- Remain in the vehicle if possible.
- Do not leave the scene of an accident or move your vehicle until instructed to do so by the police, or if anyone has been killed or seriously injured.
- Do not admit liability under any circumstances.
- Do not make **any** statement to the police, except for giving them your personal particulars. Statements can always be given at a later stage.
- Do not get involved in any verbal abuse or accusations.
- Obtain the personal details of any witnesses.
- Ask for the name and contact number of police or traffic officer who attended the scene of the accident.
- Inform the car hire company (if applicable) of the accident as stipulated in their documents.
- Ask a friend to accompany any injured person to hospital if possible, and ask all others to remain at the scene of the accident.
- Ask a friend or colleague to take the injured person's belongings, such as wristwatches, jewellery, handbags, purses / wallets etc. for safekeeping. Hand these over to the police and obtain a receipt as soon as possible.

- Report the accident to a police station within 24hours. NSA will assist with this.

Important Contact Information

NSA Global Security Consultants : +27 11 462-7540

Emergency Medical Response: 082-911

South African Police Service (Nationally): 10111