

## **Accidents and injury**

Transportation-related injuries are the leading cause of preventable deaths among travelers. Road conditions and traffic law enforcement may be poor in some countries, and vehicles may lack adequate safety equipment. Remember:

- Whenever possible, try to find cars with seatbelts.
- Avoid using overcrowded public vehicles if possible.
- Do not hesitate to ask drivers to slow down if you feel at risk.
- Allow a day or two to acclimatize and overcome jet lag before driving.
- Avoid driving at night, when at all possible, especially in rural areas.
- If you choose to drive, remain alert and drive slowly; research in advance where to find fuel, food, or assistance.
- Make note of the nearest regional medical facility on your maps.
- Never, ever, drink and drive. Some countries have a “zero tolerance” policy with severe penalties for driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Operating motor scooters, bikes, and other such vehicles is risky at any time, especially over unfamiliar and potentially unsafe terrain. Use a good-quality helmet.

## **CRIME AVOIDANCE and SAFETY**

- Use extra caution in tourist sites, market places, elevators, crowded subways, train stations and festivals, and avoid marginal areas of cities.
- Be on the lookout for others in your group and ask them to be on the lookout for you.
- Make sure taxis and cabs are clearly marked. If you do not see the driver’s identification, ask for it. Relay (or pretend to relay) taxi and driver information to your local contacts.
- Avoid visible signs of wealth in your selection of dress or jewelry. Do not take any valuables with sentimental value or that you would consider irreplaceable.
- Be constantly attentive to surroundings and be wary of any stranger who engages you in any form of conversation or touches you in any way no matter how accidental the contact may appear to be.
- Be aware of your immediate surroundings especially when a disturbance or distraction is occurring nearby; these are used as opportunities by criminals.
- Familiarize yourself with common local scams and distraction techniques.
- Prepare your tour routes before setting out. Avoid studying your map in the street—this will be calling attention to the fact that you do not know where you are.
- If you are confronted, give up your valuables. Money and passports can be replaced; you cannot. Being treated for injuries incurred in a violent attack is not a pleasant experience, especially in a foreign country. Keep photocopies of your documents and spare cash in a separate location.
- U.S. citizens can register foreign trip and residence information with the Department of State at [travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs](http://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs). They may be able to facilitate communication and assistance in case of an emergency.