

## HOTEL SAFTY GUIDELINES

### Start with the hotel itself.

Is it well established? The brochure recommends franchised hotels that give you corporate standards. Questions to ask or consider:

- Are there fire sprinklers? Be sure to check for sprinkler heads in the room.
- Does the hotel use of cards instead of keys?
  - Note: The advantages of magnetic “card” keys are many. The combination to the room is changed with every guest – and can be changed should you lose your “key.” Additionally, they are not imprinted with a room number. Metal keys can be copied and there is usually a “master” key used by housekeeping, etc. While there have been widely distributed emails cautioning that magnetic keys can contain personal information such as your name, credit card number, etc., investigation shows that while this **is possible**, it is highly unlikely and not a practice of any hotel queried. Err on the safe side and destroy or take your magnetic key with you when you leave.
- If a key is lost and it is a magnetic card, make sure you have the front desk personnel re-key the room with a new combination.
- If there is a pool does it have a lifeguard? If there is not a lifeguard does it have appropriate warning signs and life saving equipment? Does a fence secure the pool area?
- Are there cameras provided at all entrances to the building?
- Is the exterior – especially the parking lot – well lit with minimal hiding spaces?
- Are all entrances locked and require card or key access to gain entrance? If the lobby area is unlocked are there hotel personnel in attendance?
- Are proper evacuation routes posted in case of an emergency?

### Know about hotel security.

Note: The hotel may be reluctant to release information fearing it will compromise their security. If you are concerned after talking to them investigate the issues below to help evaluate your hotel choice.

- Is the hotel located in an area with a high crime rate?
- Do they have 24-hour staff?
- Is there security staff on-site? 24 hours?
- How many security cameras are on-site?
- Is the parking lot lighted, under camera surveillance, gated or manned?
- Do doors have peepholes, chains, flip locks and/or deadbolt locks?
- Does the hotel have interior or exterior corridors? How are they secured?
- Does the hotel have electronic keys? They’re safer as the combination is usually changed automatically with every new guest.
- Is there a hotel safe for your valuables? Are there limits on the safe’s use? What is the policy if something is missing from their safe?

## Coaches' Guide to Supervision

- Every activity sponsored by our soccer club should utilize a “buddy system.” Each player should be assigned a buddy. No player should go anywhere – a public bathroom, the lobby, to a hotel breakfast – without his or her buddy.
- It is further recommended that players travel in groups of 4 – 5 players and one chaperon.
- Children should be paired with teammates of the same gender and similar age.
- Chaperones should be in separate nearby rooms.
- There should be a minimum of 1 adult chaperone for every 8 players with a minimum of 2 adult chaperones always present.
- The ratio of adults to children should reflect the age of the children. Ask yourself: If an evacuation of the hotel in case of fire or an emergency is necessary, could the responsible adults safely evacuate all players.
- **Under no circumstances let players use stairways** unless they are open stairways in clear sight such as stairways between event rooms on a mezzanine and the lobby or exterior stairways to second floor rooms at motel-type establishments. Interior stairways are usually not monitored and are often little more than fire-escape exits. They offer a place where a child can be quickly grabbed and pulled through a doorway.
- Check doors to make sure they are closed and locked when players are in the room – not left ajar or open.
- Respond promptly to any accusations of physical or sexual abuse to local authorities for immediate investigation.

## Tips for Parents

- Don't let children (or yourself) prop the door open so friends or family can go in and out without a key.
- Don't let children go to breakfast, the lobby, recreational facilities, etc. alone; they should be accompanied by an adult at all times.
- Use the “Do Not Disturb” sign – especially when you are out of the room. It gives the impression someone is still “at home.”
- **Under no circumstances let children use stairways** unless they are open stairways in clear sight such as stairways between event rooms on a mezzanine and the lobby or exterior stairways to second floor rooms at motel-type establishments. Interior stairways are usually not monitored and are often little more than fire-escape exits. They offer a place where a child can be quickly grabbed and pulled through a doorway.
- Don't make your room number public. If you want to give it to other team members, write it down and give it to them. Don't shout it out.

## Take Your Children/Team on a Hotel Tour

- This will help the youth to feel more comfortable but it also gives you a chance for important safety lessons:
  - Introduce your children/team to the people at the front desk. Explain they can help if there is a problem. Tell them that the people will change, but someone will be there if they need help.
  - Show them the fire exits, stairs and fire extinguishers.
  - Show them any recreational rooms and the pool. Explain the rules of the hotel and the rules of safely using these facilities to them.

- Make sure they can find their way back to the room.

### **Make the Room Safe for Children**

- Ask the hotel to remove any questionable movie advertising room your room or the players' rooms and block those movies to the rooms.
- Be first to look through any brochures or coupon books that are left in your hotel room since they may contain adult advertising.
- Make sure windows and balconies are locked.
- Evaluate balcony railings. Would it be easy for a child to climb over them? Could they get their head stuck between the rails? If balconies pose a problem, ask for a first floor room.
- Make sure the child/team members know the hotel's name and address. If needed provide them with a post card or printed card with the name and address or put an "I'm staying at..." note in their pocket.
- If a child is carrying a cell phone, consider programming it with the chaperon's cell number or with the hotel number.

### **Leaving a Child Alone in a Room**

- Whether this is a team function or children are staying with parents, limit time alone in rooms without supervision.
- If you are leaving a child in a room, make sure they know to keep the door shut and locked.
- Tell them they shouldn't identify themselves as being alone in the room.
- Make sure they know not to answer the door. They should ask for the name of the person and the reason. Tell them to verify the identity of anyone knocking with by calling the front desk.
- If a person is dropping off something and is not a hotel employee, have them leave it at the front desk. If they say they need a signature, tell them to have the front desk sign.

### **If a Child is Traveling Alone, They Should Carry:**

- A valid ticket, identification and any other paperwork the airline requires.
- Written contact names, phone numbers and address at home
- Written contact names, phone numbers and address at their destination.
- Complete written itineraries with flight numbers, flight time and, if available, gate information.
- Include information on who will meet them, when and where when they arrive at their destination.
- Some cash.
- A calling card; *make sure they know how to use it!*
- Games, etc. for on plane and waiting entertainment.

If traveling outside the United States, be even more careful checking fire alarms, sprinkler systems and emergency exits since building and safety standards may not exist or be enforced. For convenience, ask about bathrooms – you may have to share.