Travel Safety Tips

July 31, 2008
**Introduction**

The Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) is committed to providing a safe and healthful work environment for its employees and visitors. All activities and work involve some level of risk to people and property. Many activities involve low-level risks of a type and magnitude routinely encountered and accepted as requiring no special measures for mitigation. Other activities may involve increased levels of risks and require additional, appropriate measures be taken to mitigate such risks.

The success of any risk management program is dependent upon each affected person understanding, accepting and adhering to the policies and procedures of this program as well as other agency policies and programs.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this program is to enhance awareness of risk levels for employees on official travel and limit exposure of personnel and property to the lowest practical level of risk through philosophy of risk management, training of personnel, engineering controls, and establishment of policies and procedures.

This program shall use the term “hotel” when referencing hotels, motels or other lodging facilities.

**References**

The TTI Motor Vehicle Operations Program provides information regarding the use of official and personal vehicles. It provides references to rules and policies, safety and operational procedures and reservation processes.

Additional information may be obtained from hotel front desk personnel or from the hotel services directory located in the hotel room.
Hotel Safety and Security

The following are best practices for ensuring traveler safety and security at hotels:

- If possible, do not stay in rooms that open onto the street.

- Do not answer the door in a hotel room without verifying who it is. If a person claims to be an employee, call the front desk and ask if someone from the staff is supposed to have access to your room and for what purpose.

- When returning to your hotel late in the evening, use the main entrance of the hotel. Be observant and look around before exiting your vehicle or entering parking lots.

- Close the door securely whenever you are in your room and use all of the locking devices provided.

- Do not display guest room keys in public or leave them on restaurant tables, at the swimming pool or other places where they can be easily stolen.

- Do not draw attention to yourself by displaying large amounts of cash or expensive jewelry.

- Do not invite strangers to your room.

- Do not leave your guest door open while you are in the room.

- Do not use the door security latch to prop open your door.

- Place all valuables in the hotel safe deposit box.

- Do not leave valuables in your vehicle.

- Check to see that any sliding glass doors or windows and any connecting room doors are locked.

- Do not work out in the exercise room alone, especially late at night.

- If you see any suspicious activity, report your observations to the management.
Hotel Fire Safety

The following are best practices for ensuring traveler safety in the event of a fire or other building emergency:

- After checking in, locate the two exits nearest to your room. Be sure they are unlocked and unblocked.

- Count the doorways and note other features between your room and exits. That will provide you with a reference point if the corridors are smoky. Most hotels provide floor plans on the back of room doors or in the hotel services directory.

- When an alarm sounds, act, do not investigate.

- Before leaving the room, carefully feel the door with the palm of your hand. If the door or knob is warm, do not open it.

- If the door is not warm, drop to your knees and slowly open the door, but be ready to slam it should a cloud of smoke roll in.

- If the hallway is clear, head for the exit. Close the door behind you. Take the key with you so you can go back if you can't use exits.

- Do not stand upright, but crawl to keep low to the floor to avoid smoke and odorless carbon monoxide.

- Do NOT use elevators.

- Once in stairwell walk down to the ground level.

- If you encounter smoke in the exit stairwell, do not try to run through it. Turn around and walk up. Proceed to a smoke free corridor and cross the building to an alternate exit.

- If you are unable to leave your room, make every effort to notify someone that you are in your room. Notify the hotel operator or call the local fire department and identify your exact location. Signal to them by hanging a bed sheet from your window, if possible.
  - If there is smoke in your room, open the window, if possible. Also, if possible, turn on the bathroom fan to help vent smoke from your room.
o Fill the bathtub with water. Wet towels and sheets and stuff them
around the door and any vent which is allowing smoke to enter the
room. Use your ice bucket to bail water for firefighting.

- A wet towel tied around your nose and mouth will help filter out smoke. Or
make a tent over your head with a wet blanket at a slightly opened window
to get fresh air.

- Do not jump from your room, especially if you are on the third floor or
above. A fall from this height can cause serious injury. Rather, continue
to protect yourself from the fire, and signal from your window for help.

**On-the-Road Safety**

The following are best practices for ensuring traveler safety:

- Obtain instructions from the rental agency about what to do in case the
rental vehicle breaks down or you have an accident.

- Store luggage in trunk instead of the back seat.

- Learn how to use your vehicle’s headlights, hazard lights and locks before
you leave the parking lot.

- Have a road map and clear directions. If you get lost, pull over only in
well-lit, populated areas.

- Keep vehicle doors locked.

- Have keys ready so you can enter the car quickly.

- Before entering a vehicle, glance in the back seats and floors to check for
intruders.

- If bumped by another car, do not get out of the vehicle. Signal the other
driver to follow you to a police station or other place where you feel safe.

- Park in lighted areas near building entrances.
Life Safety and Emergency Response

Dial 911 for ambulance, fire and police. From a phone system that requires you to dial a “9” prefix, dial 9-911.

- Provide the 911 dispatcher with the following information:
  - Location of emergency
  - If there are any injuries, describe type of injury, if known
  - Brief description of injured person (gender, age, etc.)
  - Your name and phone number (in case you are disconnected or the dispatcher needs additional information)

- If an ambulance is not needed:
  - Render first aid, only as trained.
  - Assist with transportation of employee to their personal physician, if appropriate.

- Make injured as comfortable as possible - do NOT move injured person unless directed by the 911 dispatcher (or if injured person is in immediate danger).

- Employees, an event witness or the employee’s supervisor shall complete an Employer's First Report of Injury or Illness form to report any work injuries. Only facts, not opinions, should be stated on the form.

- Any time a safety issue arises, employees shall contact the appropriate supervisor immediately.

Additional Information

- The TTI Safety Office can assist with arrangements for personnel safety training in various areas and assist with written safety protocols.

- The TTI Safety Office shall review this program, at a minimum, on an annual basis.

- The TTI Safety Office is responsible for updating and maintaining this program with comments from the TTI Safety and Environmental Council.