



Consumer Alert

Travel Safely

Fall is a popular time of year for travel. As you spend time carefully planning your fall itinerary, take actions before you leave to safeguard your home and personal property.

- Make a travel checklist to help plan what you need to do to prepare for your trip, such as cancelling newspapers and having mail held at the post office.
- Register with a home-watch service if your local law enforcement agency provides one, and leave your key and contact information with a trusted person.
- Don't make your absence widely known, especially on social networking sites. Criminals troll these sites to get information they can use to steal identities or burglarize homes.
- Take only the electronic technology devices (phones, laptops, tablets, or e-readers) that you absolutely need and password-protect them. Back up your devices before traveling.
- For foreign travel, check the US Department of State website for travel advisories and required documentation. Search the Center for Disease Control (CDC) website for health alerts and required vaccinations.

It is also important to take deliberate actions to protect personal items while traveling.

- Account for important papers, medications, and other valuables during your trip.
- Consider using TSA-approved luggage locks for checked baggage.
- Limit the number of credit cards you carry. If traveling overseas, consider ordering a chip-and-PIN card from your bank. This technology, used throughout Europe and other countries is more secure than the magnetic strip system used in the U.S. (Note that American banks are in the process of changing over to chip-and-PIN technology).
- Keep cash, credit cards, passports and other identification in a security wallet under your clothing around your neck or waist while traveling.
- Passports and cards with radio-frequency identification (RFID), notated by a Wi-Fi symbol, should be kept in a protective cover to prevent the signal from being picked up by a device carried by someone intent on stealing your information.
- Do not use shared or public computers for confidential personal transactions.
- Use your hotel room safe for personal valuables. Do not leave electronic devices or other valuables unattended in a hotel room, cruise cabin or public area.
- Finally, stay focused on your surroundings, and the people around you to avoid scams designed to distract you from pick-pockets, muggers and other thieves.