

Mumbai Attacks Encourage Risk Management by Business Travel Managers

Business travel managers are taking action to mitigate risks to business travelers following the recent terrorist attacks in Mumbai. These actions include new questions for hotel partners and guidelines for business travelers.

Are Your Hotel Partners Prepared for Increased Security Standards?

Business traveler managers will be raising the bar of expectation when it comes to hotels meeting higher security standards. Their hotel agreements will soon include questions such as:

Recommendations from ACTE as to Questions to Ask Hotel Partners

- Have blueprints or detailed floor charts of the hotel been provided to security officials, police officials, and firefighters? (This is standard procedure in places like New York, but not in other countries.)
- Is there a secondary communications system, other than the telephone, to inform guests of a problem – such as a fire or compromised security?
- Are hotel security and other staff trained to efficiently evacuate the building in the event of a fire or terrorist attack?
- What can the staff do to minimize the impact of an attack or emergency situation?
- What surveillance systems are available to authorities to assist them in assessing the situation and providing the appropriate response?

Not every hotel will be in a position to make these changes immediately, but new standards will have to be developed and implemented to meet potential greater levels of risk.

Have You Communicated Travel Guidelines to Your Business Travelers?

Business travel managers can better prepare business travelers by communicating guidelines and information to address increased security concerns.

12 Basic Guidelines for Business Travelers

- 1.** Ask for a complete briefing on the corporate international assistance and traveler evacuation plan. These are specifically drafted to deal with outbreaks of disease, war, urban strife, and fire.
- 2.** Check with your corporate security department before taking a trip into an unfamiliar area. If you have any doubts, request a briefing.
- 3.** Check for U.S. State Department advisories before traveling and familiarize yourself with your corporate "situation" plan before you travel.
- 4.** If travelling to a destination that has seen recent strife, call your Embassy when you arrive at your destination to check in.
- 5.** Make copies of your travel documents and leave copies at your office and at home. Also carry a copy of your travel documents -- keep in a safe place in case documents are stolen or lost.
- 6.** Load all appropriate telephone numbers (i.e. U.S. consulate, U.S. embassy, your corporate travel department, your corporate security department, and hotel telephone numbers) into your cell phone before you travel.
- 7.** Avoid crowds and minimize your exposure to public places.
- 8.** Learn about local customs before you travel so you do not offend individuals on the street or attract undue attention to yourself.
- 9.** Do not walk around with travel documents or maps exposed.
- 10.** Do not wear expensive jewelry, such as wrist watches or rings, which may mark you as a potential target.
- 11.** Do not deviate from your planned agenda without letting at least two sources in your office or at home know where you are going and why. You may also want to tell the hotel where you are going.
- 12.** If you are on a tour, don't wander away (although sometimes entire groups have been targeted).

ACTE's Recommendations to Travelers

What the Well-Prepared Business Traveler Carries

- A Blackberry-type device or cell phone capable of sending and receiving international e-mail.
- A reliable flashlight for when the power goes off. Flashlights can also be used to signal authorities. Using cell phones for this purpose may run down batteries and limit your only means of communication.
- A personal water purification device (the size of a marker and under four ounces), in the event you have to rely on local water for an indefinite period of time.
- A shortwave portable radio (not much larger than a pack of cigarettes and under four ounces) can supply news for days on two "AA" batteries, and will pick up transmissions from the U.S., Europe, and Asia.
- Make sure that before you travel you check to see if your batteries still work and don't forget your kit at home.