



Spring Break Safety Tip Sheet

On the go . . .

- Take turns behind the wheel. Rotating drivers can keep everyone rested with the added bonus of taking turns deciding on the music.
- Whoever sits shotgun should stay awake to keep the driver company. Two alert drivers are always better than one.
- Make sure everyone has a valid driver's license and the vehicle registration and proof of insurance are in the car before driving off. If you are in a foreign country, know ahead of time if your license and insurance will be valid in that country.
- Take a map. These days everyone relies on their phones for navigation, but in some places, where service isn't strong, you can lose that ability. Having a map is always a nice backup plan when on a road trip. There are just plain old maps. Do a search for the city you are travelling to. There are a number of apps on Google Play and in the App Store that don't require an internet connection or GPS.
- Never leave valuables in plain view in your car. Lock items in your trunk

before reaching your destination.

- If you are in a foreign country, take some time before your trip to familiarize yourself with basic road signs and rules of the road for that country. Travel books by **Frommers** and **Lonely Planet** are great resources as are your rental car facilities.
- If you are hailing a taxi, ask ahead for a typical price. This is especially important in countries where taxis don't have meters. If there is no meter, you must negotiate the fee before you agree to the ride. The front desk of your hotel is a great resource to tell you how much a ride should cost.
- Before leaving your hotel, take a card from the front desk with the name of the hotel, phone number, and address, just in case you need help getting back. Also, put this information in your phone to be extra sure you have it.
- Calling a taxi is a better bet than hailing one. And at the airport, always use approved taxi services. Ignore people who approach you offering rides.
- All genuine taxis will have some sort of ID or badge. You can check for this before accepting a ride.
- Stay alert during any taxi, Uber, Lyft, etc. rides. Follow along on google maps or a navigation service, if you can, to ensure they are taking you the right direction.
- Keep your belongings together during a ride to ensure you don't leave anything behind.
- If you ever feel unsafe, it is completely within your rights to abandon a taxi or any other ride service at a safe stop. Leave money behind on the seat and get out of there if you don't feel safe.
- When using Uber or Lyft, you will see the driver's name, license plate number, and photo on your phone when you request the ride. Check for a match when your ride arrives to be sure you are getting in the right car.
- Never get in a car with someone you suspect is intoxicated. There is always a safer alternative.
- The often cramped conditions of a subway or metro can be an ideal place for pickpockets to strike and is definitely time to up your awareness.

- If you are going to carry a backpack, consider getting a small lock for your zipper and keep the key in your pocket. Another theft reduction is to carry your backpack on your front instead of your back in crowded areas.

In hotels . . .

- When you check in at the front desk, use discretion in saying your room number out loud for anyone in the lobby to hear. No one outside of your group of friends needs to know your exact location.
- Reserve a room that's above the 1st floor but below the 6th floor. First floor rooms are easier to break into, and rooms above the sixth floor are sometimes too high for fire ladders to reach.
- Choose awareness! Make a mental note of where the nearest fire exits and stairwells are located in case you need to evacuate.
- When you get to your room, check that all of the window and door locks are secure.
- Almost all hotels offer safes. Use them! This is a great place to store any cash or credit cards that you don't want to have on hand when you are out of the hotel and any other easy to steal items such as Ipads, Ipods, jewelry, laptops, backup ID (DL or passport).
- Close your door tightly when entering or leaving your room. Some doors have a slow release and could remain open after you leave.
- Do not place ski gear, dive gear, or anything valuable on your balcony.
- Using the Do Not Disturb sign won't prevent housekeeping from being able to enter your room, but will highly reduce the likeliness of that happening. If you are going to have housekeeping in your room, leave your valuables in the safe when you are gone.

At the ATM . . .

- Try to go the ATM in groups, but avoid getting overly complacent about

safety just because you're traveling in numbers.

- When you approach the ATM, do a full 360 degree scan, looking completely around you to see if anyone is hanging out where they shouldn't be. If someone is creeping you out, go to another ATM.
- When entering in your pin number, use your other hand or your body to cover the keypad. Just because you don't see someone watching you doesn't mean there couldn't still be a camera capturing what you type.

While drinking . . .

- Do us all a favor, especially yourself, and party smart. Be responsible.
- Decide before you go out what your limits should be. When you are sober and making clear-headed decisions is the best time to consider what you feel your personal boundaries should be. Do I want to drink tonight? If so, how much? Do I want to have sex tonight? If so, do I have protection? Deciding up front will make it easier for you later to make choices that you will be happy with after the party is over.
- If you do decide to drink, know the liquor laws of wherever you'll be vacationing.
- Always keep an eye on your drink. If you go the bathroom, take your drink with you! Date rape drugs can be put into any drink, including non-alcoholic drinks. It is also important to remember that while drugs being slipped into drinks is something you should be aware of and guard against, alcohol itself is the most common date rape drug. In a 2007 study by the National Institute of Health, it was reported that 89% of female undergrad sexual assault survivors reported drinking before their assault. No survivor is to blame for their assault, but the links between alcohol and victimization are staggering and cannot be ignored.
- Do not drink from open beverage sources like punch bowls, pitchers or tubs.
- If you or one of your friends sees or feels the signs of predatory drugs: extreme wooziness, confusion, difficulty standing, or slurred speech, get to a safe place immediately and if the symptoms are severe, go to

a hospital.

- Drinking and driving is always a dangerous situation and illegal, so avoid this by having your safe mode of transportation home planned before you go out. Having a designated driver before the night starts can be great for driving and for keeping an eye out for everyone as well.
- Avoid binge drinking. NIAAA (the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism) defines binge drinking as a pattern of drinking that brings blood alcohol concentration (BAC) levels to 0.08 g/dL. This typically occurs after 4 drinks for women and 5 drinks for men—in about 2 hours. Binge drinking can lead to irreversible consequences.
- Pace yourself if you choose to drink. If you are new to drinking or have very limited experience, a party setting away from home isn't the best place to start figuring out your limits. Remember in pacing that while you can feel the effects of alcohol in as little as 10 minutes, sometimes it can take longer so, go slow, and see how you feel before ordering a second drink.
- Don't try to match friends drink for drink. The way alcohol affects your body will be different than everyone else based on how often you drink, what kind of alcohol, your weight, and how much you ate.
- Eat before drinking. Drinking on an empty stomach can cause alcohol to affect you much quicker and can make you sick and those bowls of snack mix aren't much substance to go on.
- Be aware that some types of alcohol have stronger and faster effects, i.e., one beer is not going to have the same impact as one Long Island Tea. A standard drink in terms of consumption is 12 ounces of beer, but only 5 ounces of wine, or 1.5 ounces of hard liquor.
- Some of the most common side effects of alcohol usage are: reduced inhibition, slurred speech, motor impairment, confusion, and memory and concentration difficulties. In other words, you aren't going to be at your most aware when drinking which can put you in the position of being targeted by criminals. Is this fair? No. Is it your fault? Never. However, if a mugger is looking for someone to steal a purse from and they have to choose between someone who is obviously intoxicated and someone who is not, the choice is simple. This applies to all forms of crime, including sexual assault.
- For this reason, when drinking, is even more important to follow the

golden rule of partying safe: **Come with your friends. Leave with your friends.** We need to look out for each other and if you see someone not in your group in a potentially bad situation, look out for them too. Being an active bystander is the best way we can work together to end violence of all kinds.

In the water . . .

- Drinking + sun can equal a bad sunburn and an even worse hangover. Sun can maximize the effects of alcohol so keep this in mind when you party poolside or at the beach.
- Take it slow and stay hydrated by drinking lots of water. If you start feeling faint or light headed, get shade and water immediately.
- Use waterproof sunscreen at least SPF 30 and reapply often. Pay extra special attention to ears, nose, face, feet, and shoulders.
- Avoid sun exposure during the hours when UV rays are the most intense (between 10 am and 4 pm) and remember you can burn even when it's cloudy.
- Jumping into the ocean without a lifeguard is putting yourself at risk. Always swim with a buddy. Even the most experienced swimmer can get caught in an undertow. If you are caught in a rip current, don't bother swimming against it. Instead, swim parallel to shore until the rip passes.
- Know the flag system for water safety:
 - Red Flag: Stay out of the water because of strong undertow and riptides.
 - Yellow Flag: Use CAUTION in the water. There are some undertow and riptides possible.
 - Blue Flag: Calm water. Swim safely.
- Drinking in the hot tub might sound like a good idea, since pretty much every MTV video makes it look glamorous. But lo and behold, MTV is not an educational resource. (shocker!) Alcohol can dilate blood vessels and lower blood pressure to dangerous levels. The effects of

alcohol are felt sooner and stronger in a hot tub. It can lead to unconsciousness and drowning.

- In any natural body of water, be aware that you can't always tell how deep the water is. Don't dive if you don't know for sure how deep the water is. Diving in too shallow of waters can lead to serious accidents.

Let's talk about sex . . .

- First, don't believe the hype about our hook-up culture. Not everyone is hooking up. Choices to have sex or not to have sex are extremely personal and shouldn't be influenced by anyone's mandates but your own.
- Know what consent is and respect it for all forms of intimacy. At Girls Fight Back, we define consent as giving permission for something to happen and that permission must be given freely and is never coerced. Consent must be given verbally. Silence NEVER equals consent. Consent can never be implied or assumed regardless of any previous history of sexual contact. No matter what a person verbalizes, consent can never be given when a person is severely intoxicated or impaired or at any point in the encounter after the person has said NO. Really, I think we should raise the bar a bit, consent should be ENTHUSIASTIC and that applies to all kinds of contact. If it's not a HELL YES, it's a definite no.
- Talk about it. In order to obtain consent, you have to have a verbal exchange regarding the sexual encounter before it takes place. Sound awkward? It shouldn't be. If you are uncomfortable talking about sex with someone, you shouldn't be having sex with them in the first place. But, consent, can be obtained as part of foreplay, "Do you want to have sex with me tonight?" can be a huge turn-on and some form of that question should be incorporated into all sexual encounters.
- Decide before even head out for a party or on a trip, what you want your personal boundaries to be in regards to intimacy. Then set your boundaries early and reinforce them often. If you meet someone and decide to get cozy, but don't to have sex, be up front with them. You can say something like, "I really want to make out with you, but that's

as far as things are going to go. Cool?” Don’t ever let anyone talk you into doing something you’re uncomfortable with.

- If you do choose to have sex, make sure it’s protected. Stock up on protection before you leave home so you never find yourself in a compromised situation. While other methods of birth control may avoid accidental pregnancies, condoms are the best way to prevent STD’s. Always carry two in case one breaks. The responsibility for having safe sex is equal for men and women. Anyone who plans on engaging in sex should have protection.
- Don’t abuse alcohol or drugs if you think things might get physical. Alcohol and drugs interfere with decision making which can lead to the lowering of inhibitions and forgetting to use protection. And, for many biochemical reasons, too much alcohol actually makes sex less enjoyable for both men and women.

Leaving the country . . .

- If you’re leaving the country you’ll need a passport. You might also need a Visa depending on your destination. You can check that [here](#). These are not quick and easy documents to attain, so file your application at least 6 months before going on a trip abroad.
- Safety has a lot to do with what you pack when traveling abroad. Don’t bring flashy valuables like expensive jewelry or watches.
- Do your homework beforehand about your destination, keeping in mind you are subject to the laws of the country you visit. You should also check [here](#) for any travel warnings or travel alerts by the US government.
- Do not carry large quantities of cash. These days ATM’s are everywhere so you can replenish if you need to. If you do have mostly cash, always keep part of your cash in your hotel safe and the rest of it in two locations on your person. That way if you are mugged or robbed, you won’t lose everything.
- Take at least two credit cards or debit cards with you. Keep one on your person and one in the hotel safe. Make photocopies of the front and

back of all cards and keep in your safe and/or leave this with someone at home. If your card is stolen or lost, this will make canceling the card much easier.

- You will want to have ID on you when you are on the go in a foreign country, but you will want a back up ID also left in your safe at your hotel. If you do lose your main ID, you can use your back up ID to assist you when getting it replaced by the US Embassy.
- Be aware of local scam artists. The best way to avoid scams is to know some common ones ahead of time. These two sites have many of the common scams listed: **Wikitravel** and **Lonely Planet**. Once you know these scams are happening, you are likely to see them from a mile away before you fall for one.
- Always inform others of your travel plans including hotel and contact information while you are away. Give someone back at home a copy of your passport as well just in case yours is lost or stolen. This will help you if you have to get a replacement passport from the US Embassy.
- If you are mugged or robbed, remember that the only thing irreplaceable is you.
- Keep your camera hidden until you are ready to use it.
- Avoid viewing maps in wide-open spaces.
- Do not take shortcuts. Stay on well-traveled streets.
- Check your phone before you leave the US to be sure that you are enabled to use it overseas in case of emergency.
- Learn the customs before you go and a few common phrases if you are headed to a destination where the primary language is foreign to you. Knowing how to say: “Hello,” “Thank you,” “Please,” “How Much,” “Where is” . . . will go a long way to making your experience a positive one.

Know your local equivalent to 911. Who do you call in an emergency?