

Tournament Hotel Safety Tips

In preparation for attending an event which requires lodging, here are necessary steps to conduct in advance of finalizing team reservations.

Section I: Prior to Arrival at the Hotel

What type of hotel should I consider?

- Is this a well established (preferably franchised) hotel?
- Is hotel provided with sprinklers (check the ceilings and look for sprinkler heads)?
- Does the hotel use electronic card-keys for guest rooms in lieu of metal keys?
- Is the pool equipped with lifeguards or warning signs and/or life saving equipment? Is pool area fenced?
- Are cameras provided at all entrances to building?
- Is the exterior (especially parking lot) provided with adequate lighting with minimal dark areas or other hiding spaces?
- Are all entrances locked and required to have electric card-key access to gain entrance?
- What is behind the rear of the hotel (i.e. woods, field, commercial area, limited access highway)?
- Does hotel post proper evacuation routes in the event of an emergency?

What should I know about hotel security?

Some hotels may be hesitant to give out specific details concerning their security precautions, fearing that information could be used to compromise their security. Still, if you are concerned about the hotel's security, doing research and investigating the issues below will help to evaluate your choice of hotel.

- Is the hotel located in an area with a high crime rate?
- Does it have a 24-hour staff?
- Does it have a security staff on site?
- Are security cameras utilized?
- Is the parking lot lighted, under camera surveillance, manned or gated?
- Do the room doors have peepholes, chains, flip locks and/or deadbolt locks?

- Does the hotel have interior or exterior corridors?
 - How are the hotel's corridors secured?
- Does the hotel use electronic card-keys?
- Does the hotel have a safe available either at the main desk or in each room for your use?
 - What are the limits on the safe's use?
 - What are their policies if something is missing from their safe?

Why is a hotel's safety and security even more important to me when I travel outside the United States?

Because in addition to all the safety concerns you have in the United States, many hotels outside the United States would not begin to pass building and safety standards applied to hotels within the United States. With foreign hotels, you'll want to check to see if they have fire alarms, sprinkler systems and emergency exits. For convenience, you'll also want to see what type of bathrooms they have available. You might have to share a common restroom.

Section II: Upon Arrival at the Hotel

Why should I take players on a hotel tour when we first arrive at the hotel?

- It will help them feel more comfortable in their new surroundings.
- It's a good opportunity to introduce them to the people at the front desk who could help them if they have a problem. Let them know the people will change, but someone behind the desk can help them if they need it.
- To help them to not get lost and make sure they know their way back to your room.
- So you can show them the fire exits, stairs and fire extinguishers.
- You can explain the pool area safety rules to them.
- Confirm hotel security measures and systems are in place and operational.

How can I make the room safer for children?

- Ask the hotel to remove any questionable movie advertising from the room and block those movies from the room.
- Be the first to look through any brochures or coupon books that are left in the hotel room since some accept adult advertising.
- Make sure windows and balconies are always locked.
- Evaluate the railing on the balconies. Would it be easy for a child to climb over, could their head become stuck between the rails?
- 1st floor rooms where doors and windows face the outside should be avoided. Hotels with interior hallways tend to be generally safer.
- Parents need to inform their children of the hotel's name and address and emphasize to them never to go places alone. Many major chain hotels have several locations along the same street in tourist areas. Place a "I'm staying at..." in their pocket.
 - Many hotels can provide printed cards or postcards that you could use for this purpose.
- Teach them how to stay safe if you have to leave them in the room alone – Never open door to the room unless the person is absolutely known.

What should I do if I have to leave a child alone in the room?

- If you leave a child in the room by themselves, tell them to always keep the door closed and locked.
- Tell them they shouldn't identify themselves as being alone in the room.
- They should ask the name and the purpose of the person knocking on the door.
- Teach them how to call the front desk to verify the identity of anyone knocking at the door before they open it.
- If the person is not a hotel employee and is dropping off something unexpected for someone in the party, tell the child to have them drop it off at the front desk. This could merely be a ploy to get the door open.

- If the person is trying to deliver something and says they must have a signature, tell the child to instruct them to deliver the item to the front desk. Have them tell the person that they are calling the front desk now to authorize the delivery. Again, this could merely be a ploy to get the door open.

What will a child need to carry with them if they are traveling alone?

- A valid ticket, identification and any other paperwork the airline requires.
- Written contact names, phone numbers and address at home.
- Written contact names, phone number and address at their destination.
- Complete written itineraries with flight numbers, flight times and gate information, if available.
- Include information on whom, when and where they are meeting at their destination.
- Some cash.
- A calling card or instructions on how to call collect.
- On plane entertainment.

Section III: A Coach's Guide to Supervision

- When traveling overnight, children should be paired up with other children of same gender and similar age. Chaperones should be in separate nearby rooms.
- Every activity sponsored by your soccer club should utilize a "buddy system". Each player should be assigned a buddy. No player should go anywhere (public bathrooms, hotel lobby areas or other locations) without his/her buddy.
- There should be a minimum of 1 adult chaperone for every 8 players with a minimum of 2 adult chaperones always present.
- Respond promptly to any accusations of sexual or physical abuse to local authorities for immediate investigation.