SAPS Tourist Safety Tips

Dear Visitor

As a guest in South Africa, your enjoyment and well-being are of the utmost importance to us. We want your visit to be special, we want you to leave with lovely memories and we hope you will return over and over again.

As in other countries, there are a few universal safety precautions you should keep in mind in South Africa to ensure that your stay is as pleasant and safe as possible.

AT THE AIRPORT

• Make sure your bags and luggage have locks and name tags.
• Watch out for staged mishaps, like someone bumping into you or spilling a drink. This could be a ploy to divert your attention and steal your bag or passport.
• Do not allow people to tamper with your bags.
• When seeking directions, proceed to marked information counters only.

AT THE HOTEL, GUESTHOUSE OR OTHER ACCOMMODATION

• Report any suspicious, unattended luggage or parcels to the personnel at reception.
• Never leave your luggage unattended unless it is locked away in your room.
• Store valuables in the safety deposit box.
• Keep your room locked.
• If someone knocks, check who it is before opening the door. Contact reception if you have any reason for concern.
• Hand your keys in whenever you leave.
• Make sure that luggage is only given to the bell staff and a receipt is issued for stored luggage.

ON THE STREET

• Avoid an ostentatious display of expensive jewellery, cameras, mobile phones and other valuables.
• Keep your handbag with you and do not leave it unattended.
• Keep your mobile phone with you and do not leave it unattended.
• Do not carry large sums of money with you.
• Exchange your currency at a bank or at the hotel – never exchange it on the street.
• Carry your wallet in an inside pocket – never in the rear pocket of your trousers.
• Credit card transactions must be processed in your presence.
• At night, stay away from dark, isolated areas.
• It is always better to explore in groups and to stick to well-lit, busy streets.
• Plan your route beforehand and, as far as possible, do not ask directions from strangers.
• A police officer or traffic officer will be happy to direct you if you get lost.
• Should you want to call a taxi, your hotel or nearest tourism information office can recommend a reliable service.

IN YOUR VEHICLE

• Plan your route in advance.
• Keep the doors locked and wind the windows up at all times.
• Do not leave your mobile phone or other valuables where they are visible from outside the vehicle.
• Lock valuable items in the boot (trunk) before your departure.
• At night, park in well-lit areas.
• Never pick up strangers or hitchhikers.
• Do not hitchhike.
• If in doubt about the safety of an area, phone a police station for advice and help.
• Make sure you have the number of the vehicle rental company at hand in case you get stranded. Also make use of tourist information offices available in most towns.

INFORMAL BUSINESS DEALS

• Do not become a victim of advance fee fraud, known as “419 letter scams”. When considering whether or not to enter into a business transaction with foreigners who reside in South Africa, check the credentials of the persons or business and establish whether the business exists and whether it is legitimate.
• It is strongly advised that you consult the Commercial Branch of the South African Police Service about any enquiries regarding transactions purportedly originating from South African government agencies or financial institutions.

Procedure to be followed when you wish to blacklist your stolen mobile phone

Inform your network provider of your loss:
Cell C: 140 from Cell C numbers or 084 -140 from other cellphone networks.
MTN: 173 (pre-paid) or 808 (contract) from MTN numbers or 083 -1073 from a land line or other cellphone networks.
Vodacom: 111 from a Vodacom number or 082-111 from a landline.

You will receive a reference number to prove that your cellphone has been blacklisted. Report the loss of your cellphone to your nearest police station by providing the reference number of your black-listed cellphone.

The police will register a case

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

- South African Police Service
  - Emergency Number...........10111
  - Crime Line (report criminal activity anonymously)...........32211
  - Mobile phone emergency number
  - Netcare (ambulance services).................112
  - Netcare (ambulance services).................999
  - ER 24 (ambulance services).................082 911
  - Commercial Branch, SA Police Service..........012 393 2473
YOU CAN IDENTIFY A MEMBER OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE SERVICE (SAPS) IN THE FOLLOWING WAY:

Members must carry an identification card stating the member's name, rank, service number and photograph.

If in uniform, the member will wear a name badge with the police star on the badge, as well as rank insignia.

You have the right to request members in civilian clothes and members in uniform to identify themselves with their identification cards.