

1. Assess your security needs.

The more you know about the country where you will be residing, the better equipped you will be to adopt habits for that particular environment.

Prepare mentally for different living conditions, customs and values. Assess how these may affect your family's safety precautions. What are the threats to your security? How attractive a "target" will you be? How do thieves generally operate? What are the local capabilities to respond in an emergency? Use informal sources of information — friends, colleagues and other people who can offer specific information and advice to help you adjust to life in a new country.

2. Know and respect the customs and laws of the host country.

Frustrating or alarming confrontations can sometimes occur simply because the visitor was not aware of local customs and laws. Learn ahead of time what gestures or behaviour are appropriate to that culture. Avoid those which may offend. Learn as much of the local language as you can. Be courteous — many difficult situations can be resolved through courtesy and patience. Remember, you are expected to respect the laws of the host country, including religious or social laws that may seem unusual to a Canadian.

Information sources

- ▼ Protocol section, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Ottawa.
- ▼ Mission Security Officer at local Canadian embassy.
- ▼ Cultural associations in Canada.
- ▼ Libraries.
- ▼ Friends, colleagues, others living in that country.

3. Keep a low profile.

A relatively wealthy foreigner, unfamiliar with the ways of the host country, can appear to be an attractive or easy target for crime.

Blend in with your environment. Behave like a resident. Drive a car typical for the area. Avoid wearing expensive jewellery in public. Avoid predictable daily patterns which can make a surveillant's task simple — vary the times and routes for going to work or school, and avoid routine.

4. Choose a secure place to live in.

The area you choose to live in and the security features of your home can dissuade criminals and give you greater confidence in your safety.

Choose a neighbourhood that is well maintained, well lit, and away from traffic and dark places which offer thieves a place to hide. Select a home close to emergency services. Live close to colleagues and friends, who can offer support and refuge if necessary. Choose a home with controlled access, such as an apartment building with secure entrances or a single dwelling with a fence and solid gates. Do not live on floors above the reach of local firefighting equipment. Do not live in main floor apartments, which are more vulnerable to break-in.

5. Keep your home secure.

Potential burglars will usually assess the risks and will be deterred by well-maintained security. A home with all the necessary physical deterrents may still be entered easily if household members are not cautious about allowing people access. Information about the family, vacation plans, school hours, valuable belongings or work is highly useful to criminals or terrorists seeking an opportunity.

Periodically review your home security. Keep any security equipment in good working order, and make sure all household members know how to use it. Remember, the usefulness of most security features depends on how they are used: locks are effective only when access to keys is well controlled;