

Living Overseas

Security Orientation

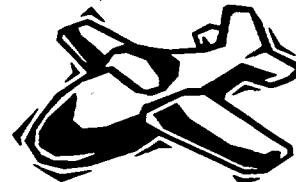
Canada

When living in Canada, we tend unconsciously to adopt behaviour that will help protect us from harm. We know our social environment and have confidence in the protective services available to us. When residing in another country, however, we must consciously learn about the environment and develop the daily habits that will ensure our personal safety.

Living and working in another country can be an enriching and enjoyable experience. Although it may not always be possible to duplicate the sense of security enjoyed at home, the opportunity to live in another culture does not have to be marred by insecurity and anxiety. People who prepare for the differences they may find in a new country, who take basic precautions to ensure their safety and who develop daily habits appropriate to the level of risk will benefit from greater security and confidence.

The following reminders provide a brief orientation to living securely overseas. Each country or city is different: the nature and level of risk varies and may well depend on political or social events. These core principles will undoubtedly need to be adapted to your specific circumstances, but they will help you think about and prepare the security measures appropriate to your situation.

The personnel of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, in missions abroad and at Headquarters in Ottawa, are glad to provide advice to Canadians living overseas. They will be pleased to provide information on the particular circumstances in your host country to help you and your family adopt personal safety habits appropriate for the country where you will be residing.



Inside :

Some tips to help
Canadian families adapt
to living overseas with
greater security
and confidence

Dept. of Foreign Affairs
Min. des Affaires étrangères

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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;

alarms are effective only when they are set; fire exits can be used only when they are not blocked. Local household employees can help families adjust to a strange country and provide additional security by their presence. Verify their references thoroughly. Children, household staff and baby-sitters should know the basic security procedures. Do not open a door without first knowing who is on the other side. Request identification from maintenance and utility company personnel. Do not accept unexpected parcels or unknown mail. Be discreet when discussing personal matters in public places. Avoid public conversations about work. Do not disclose personal information over the telephone. Keep travel plans, appointment books and other personal documents in a secure place. Passports and original birth certificates are attractive to thieves; keep them locked in a secure place and carry photocopies for identification and replacement purposes.

6. Avoid potentially dangerous situations.

The enjoyment of discovering a new country and a different culture does not need to be curtailed if you consciously avoid placing yourself in vulnerable situations.

Plan ahead to avoid getting lost. Know the routes you will travel; keep your vehicle in good repair and always have half a tank of gas. Stay away from dangerous areas or civil disturbances. Use open, well-lit routes and parking spaces. Keep car doors locked and windows rolled up. Avoid travelling alone. Watch for possible traps — if someone seems to need help, don't stop; call the appropriate authorities from a safe place. Follow your instincts. If you are uncomfortable with certain situations, avoid them.

What if a burglar is in your home?

- ▼ Do not enter. Go to neighbour's and call police..
- ▼ Do not corner or try to apprehend the burglar.
- ▼ If you are in bed, feign sleep and call police after the burglar has left.

7. Stay alert.

Being aware of what is going on around you will help you detect unusual events or occurrences. Thieves are less likely to assault you if they see that you are alert and confident.

Know your neighbourhood and learn to recognize unusual people or behaviour. Assess your surroundings before leaving the house or office. Watch for signs of being followed or assessed as a possible target for crime. If you suspect surveillance, avoid confrontation; report it immediately to your company's security officer or local authorities.

8. Stay informed, and inform others.

Keeping up to date about local conditions and political events that may affect your security will enable you to plan appropriate security precautions.

The security of all is enhanced by sharing information. Report unusual occurrences, such as surveillance or anonymous phone calls, to your company's security officer. Maintain contact with colleagues, members of friendly embassies and local residents.

Are you ready?

- ▼ Change for public phone ?
- ▼ Phone numbers handy ?
- ▼ Phrases in local language ?
- ▼ Money ?
- ▼ Where to get help ?
- ▼ What to do if... ?

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9. Plan, rehearse, continually reassess your security procedures and be prepared to respond.

Effective personal safety depends on you — on how well you plan, how automatic your family's daily security habits are and how you are prepared to respond quickly. The ability to respond quickly and effectively to threats to your safety depends on knowing in advance what you would do, and on having the necessary aids available quickly.

Involve your family members in planning security procedures. Rehearse procedures for securing the home, for answering the door or telephone, or for fire evacuation; doing so could reveal oversights in your plan. Be vigilant in identifying and reporting circumstances which may require you to enhance your security measures. Discuss possible scenarios and responses with your family. Know who to contact and have emergency phone numbers handy. Identify a place of refuge for emergencies. Make sure all family members keep one another informed on their whereabouts. Do not allow your preschool children to wander from the house or play in unprotected areas. Caution teenagers against blind dates or meeting anyone they do not know. In some countries children should be escorted to and from school. Warn school authorities that under no circumstances are your children to be picked up by persons other than family members or specifically authorized people. Have family documents in order and money accessible so that you can respond quickly in emergency situations. Know your company's emergency preparedness plan.

Resources

The Consular Operations and Emergency Services Division (JPO) of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade can provide information on conditions and events in countries around the world. Call 1-800-267-6788, or 944-6788 in the National Capital region.

The booklet *Bon Voyage, But...* (subtitled *Tips for Canadians travelling abroad*), along with information on obtaining a list of Canadian Embassies and Consulates, is available from the Infocentre Division of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, which is located in the Lester B. Pearson Building, 125 Sussex Drive, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0G2. Their

10. Be aware of drugs and the law.

Being involved with drugs, whether knowingly or otherwise, can lead to serious legal consequences in both a host country and Canada — not to mention having a possible adverse impact on your career.

Drug use and trafficking are prohibited in all countries, even though drugs are readily available and openly used in some places. Most countries impose heavy fines and long prison sentences for possession and trafficking. In some countries, possession of even small amounts of drugs carries the death penalty. Never transport any parcel that isn't yours across a border — not even an envelope. Choose your travelling companions wisely. Never cross a border with a hitchhiker or as a hitchhiker. Though you may not be carrying anything illegal, your companions could be.

When thinking about security, consider...

- ▼ How to ASSESS threat
- ▼ How to PROTECT from threat
- ▼ How to DETECT attempts
- ▼ How to REACT to attempts

**Remember,
practice makes perfect.
Good security is based primarily
on knowing your environment,
applying common sense,
and integrating the principles and habits
of good security into daily life**

Information Hotline telephone number is 1-800-267-8376, or 944-4000 in the National Capital Region.

The Regional Security Division (ISR) of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade is available for consultation on an as-required basis. Call (613) 992-6697

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