

TRAVEL SAFETY ADVISORY

The following information is provided to aid in the preparation and completion of your visit to the St. Louis Metropolitan Area. Please take a moment to review the following tips and share this information with all *FIRST* team members, friends and family.

BEFORE YOU GO

1. Make two photocopies of your personal identification (driver's license, passport), airline tickets and the credit cards that you plan to bring with you. Leave one photocopy of this data at home; pack the other in a place separate from where you carry your valuables.
2. Put your name, address and telephone number inside and outside of each piece of luggage. When appropriate, use covered luggage tags to avoid casual observation of your identity or nationality. If available, also document the contact info of where you are staying in St. Louis Metropolitan Area.
3. If team bags appear similar, consider placing a unique piece of cloth or identifier on your luggage to assist with identification.
5. Leave a copy of your itinerary and the phone contact information at home in case anyone needs to contact you in an emergency.

MEDICAL

6. Bring copies of prescriptions with the generic names for the medications.
7. If a medication is unusual or contains narcotics, carry a letter from your doctor attesting to your need to take the drug.
8. If available, bring an extra prescription in case the original is lost.
9. Be certain to pack any medical alert bracelets or special circumstance tags.
10. If you wear glasses, pack an extra pair and your prescription.

VALUABLES

11. Carry the minimum amount of valuables necessary for your trip and plan for a safe place to conceal them. Leave any precious jewels or items at home. When you have to carry them on your person, you may wish to conceal them in several places rather than putting them all in one wallet or pouch.

WHEN YOU ARRIVE AT YOUR HOTEL

1. Park your vehicle in a well-lit area. Remove all valuables whenever possible. If it is necessary to leave them in the vehicle, conceal them as best you can and be certain to lock all doors.
2. Before entering your hotel room for the first time, review your surroundings.
 - Determine the closest points of exit from your room.
3. Check the lock on your door to be sure it operates properly. Make sure that the deadbolt, security chain or swing metal security locks are locked whenever you are in the room. Never prop your door open, no matter how briefly.

4. Be sure to identify visitors before opening the door of your room. If you are uncomfortable with anyone in the hallway, contact the front desk immediately and request hotel security. It is not necessary to immediately open the door to anyone claiming that they are a hotel employee. If you are the least bit suspicious, ask for their name and why they are there. Call the front desk to verify.
5. If available, lock valuables you wish to leave in your room in the room safe. Don't leave your passport or other identification behind. If the safe in your room doesn't appear to be properly working, lock valuables in the hotel safe, and get a written receipt for your items. Ask about the coverage for loss. Most hotels do not accept liability but they will for those locked in the hotel safe.
6. Place your cell phone and a spare hotel room key on your nightstand when you sleep. If there's an alarm or the electricity goes out, use your cell phone light or flashlight to navigate an unfamiliar building. If you exit your room, bring the spare hotel key with you. You may need to re-enter your hotel room if the hallway or your exit path is unsafe.
7. If there is an emergency and you can't escape: Shut off fans and air conditioners, stuff wet towels in the crack around the doors, call the fire department and let them know your location, wait at the window and signal with a flashlight or light colored cloth.
8. If you lose your key or room entry card, report it to the hotel immediately. Be certain that the access of the original card is deleted.
9. Never announce your hotel room in a public area. Be discreet in letting others know where to reach you.
10. Never leave your personal items in a common area.

MOVING AROUND THE CITY

1. Use the same common sense traveling that you would at home. Whenever possible do not travel alone. Use the buddy system. Make sure your group stays together.
2. Conceal your event credentials and avoid wearing garments with your state or team insignia when not attending a *FIRST* function.
3. Only take taxis or other transportation services clearly identified with official markings.
4. Try to seem purposeful when you move about. Even if you are lost, act as if you know where you are going. When possible, ask directions only from individuals in authority.
5. If you are confronted, don't fight back. Give up your valuables. Your personal belongings can be replaced, but you cannot.
6. Do not flash large amounts of money when paying a bill. Make sure your credit card is returned to you after each transaction.
7. If your possessions are lost or stolen, report the loss immediately to the local police. Keep a copy of the police report for insurance claims. Report the loss or theft of credit cards to the issuing company, airline tickets to the airline or travel agent, and passports to the nearest embassy or consulate. Check with Event Managers and/or *FIRST* staff to help facilitate the report.

8. Notify someone in your group/team of where you are traveling if departing for a Non-*FIRST* related activity. Contact that individual again if those plans change.

AT COMPETITION SITES

1. Locate exits. Some exits may be in the front and back of you. Be prepared to use your closest exit. In an emergency, you may not be able to use the main exit or the way that you entered.
2. Have a communications plan. Identify who should be contacted in case of emergency or if someone gets separated from your group/team.
3. Plan a meeting place. Pick a meeting place to meet up with team members. If there is an emergency, be sure to meet them there.
4. During an emergency, react immediately. If an alarm sounds, you see smoke or fire, or other unusual disturbance immediately exit the building in an orderly fashion.
5. Get out, stay out!

INTERNATIONAL TRAVELERS

1. Review all travel warnings and your Consular Information Sheet at the US Department of State website (www.state.gov.com).
2. To avoid problems when passing through customs, keep medicines in their original, labeled containers.
3. All common credit cards are widely accepted in the St. Louis Metropolitan Area and there are many ATM cash dispensing machines available. If applicable, review international fees with your credit card companies before heading to the U.S.
4. Contact your credit card company and determine how to report the loss of your card from abroad.
5. Consider the purchase of telephone calling cards. If you have one already, verify that you can use it from your overseas location(s).
6. Complete money exchanges only at authorized agencies. Attempt to use U.S. dollars to prevent bringing attention to you as a foreign traveler. Make an effort to understand the local exchange rates.
7. Call or email home to provide your family or friends with your contact numbers and location.
8. Know the telephone number to call in case of an emergency. In the United States, all levels of emergency services (police, medical, fire) can be reached by dialing **911**.
9. Keep a copy of any relevant medical documents with you at all times.
10. Learn a few phrases in the local language so you can signal your need for help, the police, or a doctor.