# Pre-travel security checklist

This checklist covers what a family, a principal or an executive does before a trip to leave the house secure, keep documents and devices in hand, and keep the itinerary among the people who need it. Most items take a few minutes and cost nothing. Start about a week before departure, tick what applies, strike out what does not, and give the first section to whoever is looking after the house. The sections follow the trip itself — home, documents and money, devices, the journey, arrival, social media — and end with what visitors to the UK need before they fly. Print it, or share the PDF with the household and staff.

## Before you leave home

- ☐ Set the alarm, and check who receives its alerts while you are away.
- ☐ Leave a key with one trusted person nearby who can reach the house quickly.
- ☐ Pause deliveries and newspapers, or send parcels to a collection point.
- ☐ Put lamps on timers in the rooms that are lit on an ordinary evening.
- ☐ Brief staff on who is expected at the door and what callers are told.
- ☐ Tell only those who need the dates: family, staff, the neighbour with the key.

- [ ] Keep dates and destinations out of out-of-office replies to people outside the business.
- [ ] Lock car keys and spare keys away from doors, windows and letterboxes.
- [ ] Ask someone to clear the post and put the bins out on the usual days.

Timers and a neighbour with a key suit most absences. Where the absence is public — a fixture list, a tour, a premiere — cover for the house while you are away puts an SIA-licensed officer there for that window. The records that give an address away are in how to keep your home address private.

## Documents and money

- [ ] Check each passport's expiry date against the entry requirements of every country on the route.
- [ ] Read the FCDO travel advice for each country, transit stops included.
- [ ] Sign up for the FCDO's email updates for each country you will visit.
- [ ] Photograph passports, visas and prescriptions, and keep the copies where you can reach them offline.
- [ ] Take two payment cards and carry them in separate places.
- [ ] Save each card issuer's number for reporting a lost or stolen card.
- [ ] Check the travel insurance covers every traveller, the whole trip and any planned activities.
- [ ] Leave the full itinerary and hotel details with one person at home.

## Phones, laptops and tablets

- [ ] Install the latest software updates on every device before you leave.
- [ ] Back up phones and laptops, and check the backup can be restored.
- [ ] Set a passcode on every device, the children's included.

- [ ] Turn on each device’s find-my service, and practise locating it from another device.
- [ ] Switch on two-step verification for email, banking and cloud accounts.
- [ ] Take only the devices the trip needs, and lock the rest away at home.
- [ ] Treat public and hotel wi-fi with caution; use mobile data for banking and email.
- [ ] Turn off automatic joining of open wi-fi networks on every device.

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## The journey

- [ ] Use luggage tags with a name and mobile number, never a home address.
- [ ] Keep passports, phones, keys and medicines in hand luggage.
- [ ] Book cars through a firm you know, and get the driver’s name beforehand.
- [ ] Ask for an arrivals board that shows a reference, not your full name.
- [ ] Let the driver say whom they are collecting before you give your name.
- [ ] Keep bags in sight at the kerb, at check-in and at security.
- [ ] Leave the watch that draws attention at home, or keep it under a cuff.
- [ ] Share live location with one person at home for the travel day only.

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## Arrival and the hotel

- [ ] Ask reception to write the room number down rather than say it aloud.
- [ ] Give the room number only to people you have arranged to see.
- [ ] Check the door lock, the latch and any connecting door on arrival.
- [ ] Find the two nearest fire exits and count the doors to each.

- [ ] Put passports and valuables in the room safe, or ask for the hotel's main safe.
- [ ] Ring the front desk yourself before acting on any call claiming to be reception.
- [ ] Carry the hotel's card so a driver can be shown the address.
- [ ] Save the local emergency number and your country's nearest embassy or consulate.
- [ ] Agree a meeting point and a check-in time with everyone travelling.

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## Social media while you are away

- [ ] Post photographs once you are home, not while you are away.
- [ ] Turn off location tagging in the camera and in each app.
- [ ] Ask family, friends and staff not to post or tag you until you are back.
- [ ] Check the background of every photograph: hotel name, room number, car registration.
- [ ] Pause live location sharing with anyone who does not need it.
- [ ] Agree with the children what stays off their accounts until the family is home.
- [ ] Check who can see stories and posts, and tighten the settings for the trip.

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## For visitors coming to the UK

Visitors from Europe, the USA, Australia, Canada and certain other countries usually need an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) rather than a visa. British and Irish passport holders do not, nor do people with permission to live, work or study in the UK.

- [ ] Check on gov.uk whether each traveller needs an ETA or a visa.

- ☐ Apply for every traveller, babies included, on the passport each will travel on.
- ☐ Allow up to three working days for a decision.
- ☐ Apply on gov.uk or the UK ETA app; other websites may charge more.
- ☐ Get an ETA for a connection that passes through UK border control.
- ☐ Save 999 and 112: both reach the UK's emergency services.
- ☐ Expect UK protection to be unarmed: private armed protection is unlawful in Great Britain.
- ☐ Arrange any UK protection before you fly, with one person accountable for the visit.
- ☐ Read how an engagement begins, and how confidentiality is handled, before the first call.
- ☐ Check any officer's SIA licence before the first day: how to check it on the register.

## Common questions

### What if a British passport is lost or stolen abroad?

### How long does a UK ETA last?

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Written by the founder, First Class Executive Security

30+ YEARS IN THE SECURITY INDUSTRY, 20+ IN CLOSE PROTECTION

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