

**Kelly Gambello**  
National Hotel Coordinator  
hotel@apfa.org  
817-540-0108 ext. 8306

# SWIPER, NO SWIPING!!! SWIPER, NO SWIPING!!!

**T**hose of you with small kids will recognize this saying from Dora, The Explorer, whenever Swiper the Fox appears to take something that Dora has. Just by Dora shouting those words, Swiper the Fox is stopped in his tracks and retreats with an, "Oh man!" Unfortunately, this doesn't happen in real life.

In the past few months we've received several reports from Flight Attendants whose belongings were stolen while on layovers. Some crewmembers have had their wallets lifted and others have had their purses stolen. Petty crime is certainly on the rise due to the economic conditions throughout the world, but we must remember to remain alert at all times—whether on a layover or simply running errands at home.

When you are packing for work ask yourself, "Do I really need this on my layover?"

We've had crewmembers who have had thefts of expensive, heirloom jewelry, large amounts of money and expensive electronic equipment. **If you will not be using it on your layover, leave it home.** I would also recommend making several copies of your American Airlines ID and passport. Keep a set in your suitcase and leave a set at home. This can help should any of these items be lost or stolen while on your trip.

Upon arrival at the hotel, stay together as a crew and keep an eye out for "lingerers." These are the people who hang out in the lobbies of hotels just looking for a chance to strike. Don't leave your belongings against a pillar or wall while signing in at the front desk or crew desk and make sure all your bags are zippered shut and not easily accessible.

## If you will not be using it on your layover, leave it home.

When at a restaurant or bar, don't hang your purse from the back of your chair or place it on the floor under the table. Purse snatchers are waiting for guests to do this. Keep your items in view or "in touch" at all times. Be alert for scams involving an unknown person spilling a drink or food on your clothing. Their accomplice may be nearby preparing to steal your wallet or purse. At the end of a meal make sure to get a receipt to show that you have paid the bill. Don't simply throw cash on the table and leave. Anyone can take that money. Hand the cash to your server before leaving.

Ladies, when using a restroom, do not hang your purse from the hook if it is located anywhere near the top of the stall. A thief can simply reach over and grab it. Also, don't place it on the floor—*eeeew! who would?*—as they can just as easily reach under. When you are washing your hands, keep your purse on you and don't place it on the counter. Always pay attention to who is around you.

## When you are packing for work ask yourself, "Do I really need this on my layover?"

If any of your belongings are lost or stolen, report it immediately. For stolen items, notify a Manager or Security Officer at the hotel or restaurant/bar where the incident occurred. They will then call the local police so that you may file a police report. Make sure to do this and ask for a copy. Please make sure to fill out an AMR Report if any of the items lost or stolen pertain to your employment with American Airlines. This is the only way you can get reimbursed for those items. Notify my department, hotel@apfa.org, with specific information concerning the layover location, date, item stolen, and from where (hotel restaurant, room number, etc.)

Don't become an easy target! Please follow these steps while traveling:

- Keep your belongings close to you at all times.
- Keep valuables to a minimum.
- Don't wear expensive jewelry/watches when out.
- Use the safe in your hotel room.
- Lock up your suitcase whenever you're not in your room.
- Carry your hotel room key separate from other belongings. ↗

When you get to your hotel room, check your bags to make sure that all your belongings are where you put them. Use the safe in your room if you did bring something with you that you consider valuable. More and more hotels have gone to the large, laptop-sized safes so if you brought your laptop with you, use it. Before leaving your room, lock your suitcase, make a mental note of where everything is, and then turn on the TV so it sounds like the room is occupied.

I would like to suggest to you to have a separate credit card for use while on your layovers. Keep the credit limit low and only use this card and cash while away. This would help to protect you should your wallet or purse get stolen. In most cases, thieves are looking for cash but if you keep other major credit cards, store credit cards and gift cards in your wallet then they've hit the jackpot.

