

# Safety & Security Tips and Tools for Visitors

Seattle is one of the nation's safest big cities, statistically, but like in all cities, visitors are advised to observe some basic safety procedures, adhere to local laws and report crime to appropriate officials.

## Common Sense Safety Tips



### When out and about

- Remove your conference badge; don't draw attention to yourself and the fact that you're a tourist.
- Safety in numbers: Grab a friend or colleague while exploring the city.
- Walk in well-lit areas; Use main streets and avoid shortcuts through alleys.
- If alone after dark, use a ride service such as Lyft, Uber or a cab.
- Be conscious of your belongings. Keep personal/valuable items in your hotel safe or close at hand.
- Keep the address and phone number of where you're staying in your phone in case you find yourself turned around.
- Be aware of your surroundings. Keep your eyes up and not on your phone.
- Pay attention to your instincts; if something doesn't feel right, you can always walk into a business/hotel for help.
- If you are in a drinking establishment, don't leave your drink unattended.
- Walk with purpose and project an assertive and business-like image. Criminals will be discouraged if you do not appear vulnerable or easily intimidated.
- Do not carry large amounts of cash. Use traveler's checks or debit/credit cards. Keep a record of traveler's checks numbers, credit card numbers, photocopy of passport and other valuable documents separate from originals.
- Be careful and alert when cashing traveler's checks, or using a cash machine. Never let someone see how much money you have in your wallet, or where you keep your money.
- Don't wear expensive jewelry and watches when out sightseeing. If you must wear it, wear it inside your clothing.
- Pickpockets are often attracted to crowded places. They often work in teams of two or three; one may create a distraction while the other one lifts your wallet. Be aware of someone who bumps, shoves or gets too close.
- Learn to carry your purse or wallet safely. Purses should be closed, held in front of your body, with your arm across it. Wallets should be carried in a front pants pocket or in an interior jacket pocket.

# Common Sense Safety Tips

## At your hotel

- Prior to arriving, book hotel reservations using only first and middle initial and last name, particularly women traveling alone.
- Keep your currency and credit cards in multiple places. Keep some cash and an extra credit card in a safe place in your belongings or in a room safe. This way if for some reason you become separated from it, you aren't stranded.
- Keep room numbers private. Don't sign bar or restaurant checks with your room number. Keep track of room keys. If a key is lost, ask for a different room, or ask for the locks to be changed.
- Use all locks on hotel door, particularly the double lock. Always lock the door when leaving.
- When returning to your room, make sure that you have your room key out and ready.
- Never automatically open your door when a knock is heard. Know your visitor's identity prior to admittance. Use your peephole, if available, or talk through the locked door. If someone claims they are from maintenance, security or a hotel employee, phone the front desk to make sure the visitor is legitimate.
- Put valuables in a signed and sealed envelope and leave it in the room safe.
- Be alert for suspicious persons in the hotel hallways. Report them to the manager.
- Locate fire exits, elevators and the nearest phone. Plan the best way to get out of the building in an emergency.
- Label all pieces of luggage with your name, address, and phone number, both inside and outside. For the outside label be sure to use a tag that closes, so the information can't be read by a passerby.

## Seattle Police Department (SPD) SAFE PLACE Program:

While Seattle is generally one of the safest and most progressive cities in the United States, crimes and discrimination related to the City's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning (LGBTQ) residents and visitors unfortunately still occur. SPD is committed to the safety of all LGBTQ residents and visitors.

Seattle Police Department SAFE PLACE signage (shown below) is being displayed by local supporting community members, businesses, schools and organizations that work closely with the Seattle Police Department in an effort to reduce all crimes and bullying.

Note: ALL Starbucks downtown locations are designated SAFE PLACES.



More Info: [SPDSAFEPLACE.com](http://SPDSAFEPLACE.com)  
SAFE PLACE locations are easily identified by the following decal on business entry doors.

## Public Demonstrations, Marches and Traffic Obstructions



Like many big cities, Seattle has its share of public protest and demonstrations, some involving hundreds of people. Some are officially permitted by the city, some are not. In the event of any such demonstrations or marches, here are some recommended resources for monitoring the status of events and traffic flow.

### Seattle Police Department

[@SeattlePD](#) tweets updates throughout the day. For information about traffic impacts, the [spdblotter.seattle.gov](http://spdblotter.seattle.gov) blog offers more detailed information

### The Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT)

will monitor traffic and provide advisories to the public via [Twitter](#) at [@seattledot](#).

For King County transportation updates, follow King County Metro on [Twitter](#) at [@KCMetroBus](#)

For regional public transportation updates, follow Community Transit on [Twitter](#) at [@MyCommTrans](#) or Sound Transit on [Twitter](#) at [@SoundTransit](#).

## Downtown Seattle Street Scene



### Panhandlers

Aggressive panhandling is illegal in Seattle. If someone obstructs or intimidates you and aggressively begs for money, you do not have to give them money, and you can report this offense to the police department.

Please do not encourage or reward panhandling.

As an alternative, consider making a bigger, positive impact by donating to a local organization that works to help connect homeless individuals with resources and jobs. A few suggestions below (all of which receive donations via their web pages):

[Millionaire Club - millionaireclub.org](http://millionaireclub.org)

[United Way of King County - uwkc.org](http://uwkc.org)

[Union Gospel Mission - ugm.org](http://ugm.org)

### Give Safe App

Download this app on your smart phone to donate to the homeless population through a beacon in your area. Donations can include anything from bus fare to food and haircuts.

### Real Change

From time to time you will see vendors on street corners selling a newspaper called Real Change, a publication written by low-income and homeless people. New issues come out every Wednesday morning. Purchasing a copy supports those in need. Donations can also be made at [realchangenews.org](http://realchangenews.org)

## Washington State's Recreational Marijuana Laws



The law states it is illegal to smoke or open a package containing marijuana or a marijuana product, such as edibles, in public. "Public" includes, but is not limited to, parks, museums, sidewalks, businesses, residential areas, federal and public lands and waterways.

The possession of marijuana is a federal offense. This means that marijuana purchased in Washington State must be consumed within the state's boundaries. It is illegal to take it across state borders or into another country.

Smoking marijuana in bars or restaurants is also illegal. Washington State prohibits smoking of any kind in all indoor places.

## Local Resources for Immediate Needs



**Call 9-1-1 in an emergency!**

Note that it is hard for the police to track your location if you are using a cell phone, so do your best to identify where you are (street name intersection or nearby business).

## Seattle Police Department Precincts



The Downtown Seattle and Capitol Hill neighborhoods have 24-hour staffed lobbies:

### **Seattle Police Department West Precinct (Downtown Seattle)**

810 Virginia St, cross street of 8th Ave  
Phone: (206) 625-5011

### **Seattle Police Department East Precinct (Capitol Hill)**

1519 12th Ave, cross street of E. Pine St  
Phone: (206) 684-4300

## Medical Resources



### **Harborview Medical Center**

Harborview is the only Trauma I care facility in a four-state region and is located in Downtown Seattle.

325 Ninth Avenue  
Seattle, WA 98104  
(206) 731-3000