



Safety and Security Guide for Tourism Businesses

Safety and Security Guide for Tourism Businesses

Guaranteeing a safe and secure environment to enhance the hospitality experiences of our visitors.

Introduction

Seychelles offers visitors a wide choice of products and services to incite the curiosity of our visitors and enhance their experience of the local hospitality of the people and the natural beauty of the islands.

A visitor's choice for a holiday depends on many factors some of which are more important than others. However, the most pertinent one remains safety and security within the destination.

Ensuring the safety and security of any tourist destination does not only depend on one or a few organizations but the support and diligence of all stakeholders and partners working together towards this common goal.

Background

Internationally, crime is present in all countries, including tourist destinations. However, the categories and severity of the crimes differ from one country to another.

Compared to many other tourist destinations, there is a minimal crime rate or violent crime incidents in Seychelles. However, one category of crime, which is predominantly affecting the local tourism industry, is opportunist crime.

Many factors create ideal conditions for opportunist crime. For example, when tourists are on holiday, they tend to let down their guard, as they are more relaxed, less observant of their surroundings and of any possible threat.

This is when valuables or moveable properties are left either unattended or not secured or locked away. Also when doors, windows of rented cars; doors, bedroom, and bathroom windows of tourism establishments are kept unlocked, etc. If at the tourism accommodation establishment where they are staying, there are no safety and security measures as a deterrent, such as a safety lock system, well-secured safety deposit boxes, burglar bars, surveillance cameras, etc. this lack of preventive measures contributes to a situation that tempts a person to commit opportunist crimes.

Purpose

The main purpose of this guide is to provide managers and operators of tourism businesses with information and advice for them to become more vigilant and proactive in crime prevention, especially those crimes that occur on their respective properties; inside tourism establishments, on moored liveaboards at marina's, etc.

Categories of opportunist crime that may occur at tourism establishments or on liveaboards are as follows: -

Tourism Establishments

1.0 Burglary and Theft

Introduction

This category of theft can happen during the daytime or at night. In the majority of cases, burglary and theft happen during nighttime.

This affects hotels, guesthouses, and self-catering establishments as well as catering businesses i.e. restaurants, cafeterias, bars, etc.

Background

Based on experience, and available statistics, the category of establishments mostly affected are small accommodations i.e. guest houses and self-catering establishments. This is because of the lack of security measures at these establishments compared to hotels.

According to the Police, when pursuing the modus operandi of past crimes, means of access were via doors or windows kept wide open; this includes bedroom and bathroom windows, unlocked doors, or windows. Incidents also occur when the guests are inside their rooms and are fast asleep.

Means of Access

- *Perpetrators gain access to the apartments, villas, or guestrooms due to a lack of physical perimeter security as a deterrent to entering the establishments. This can often be noted at small tourism establishments i.e. small hotels, guesthouses, and self-catering establishments.*
- *As for medium or large hotels with physical security (security officers) security measures are concentrated at the entrance, which is not always effective since the hotel property covers a large perimeter, which is not being patrolled by the security officers. Often there is no physical fence around the property hence allowing easy access to criminals.*

Recommendations: -

Points for consideration by management of tourism accommodation establishments.

- *Conspicuous signage to identify the establishment especially when the Police are reacting to an emergency regarding reports of ongoing crimes.*
- *Increase lighting in the surrounding perimeter of the property. Also to trim all overgrown plants and other vegetation for the reason that when your property is well lit and clear of overgrown plants, this acts as a deterrent to potential criminal activity.*

Exterior and interior of tourism establishments

- *Install CCTV cameras and place the CCTV warning signs where they can be visible (to act as a deterrent to criminals), The cameras have the following advantages: Proactively-deter crime/reactively-identify and detect the criminal/If monitored 24/7, Dispatch a security team to intercept criminals in the act or apprehend them when they attempt to leave the scene*
- *If possible, employ a trained and equipped security guard. (The physical presence is a deterrent to would-be criminals and provides reassurance to the guest).*
- *Installation of security gates and burglar bars (e.g. trellidor, expanda, etc. at the entrance. If there are burglar bars, given the warm climate, doors, and windows can still be left open as the burglar bars would prevent unlawful access.*
- *Burglar alarms in the administration area of the establishment (the office where money is collected or stored overnight/ presence of moveable office valuables e.g. Computers/ laptops/cell phones/electronic devices/etc.)*

- *It is recommended that each apartment or room have a safe. If not possible, a centralized safe should be available for the safekeeping of your guest's valuables including important travel documents such as passports.*
- *All room safes should be discretely placed and physically bolted to concrete walls.*
- *Employees should also be briefed on safety and security measures at the establishment. For example, if a staff member is approached by a person claiming to be a guest and to open the door of the apartment or room, the staff should first verify if that person is indeed a guest staying at the establishment.*
- *A logbook should be kept to record details of any unusual person coming to the establishment during the day for any purpose. They should be asked for their identification card and contact details which should be recorded. If they fail to produce this information, they should not be authorized entry onto the grounds of the establishment or to enter inside the establishment.*

1.1 Inside theft

Background

Even though it is a rare occurrence, inside theft does occur whereby tourism establishment employees are involved. Common valuables stolen by employees are cash, wallets, jewelry, cell phones, watches, etc.

Recommendations: -

To dissuade employees of any temptation to steal guests' valuables, consider the following: -

- *Before employing a staff owners/managers of tourism establishments should as much as possible obtain a security clearance from the Police of the staff member*
- *Advise guests to keep and lock all valuables in the safe provided for that purpose.*
- *As much as possible, management of tourism establishments should conduct a security check of their employees when they are changing shifts or leaving the establishment to go to their respective homes.*
- *If any staff are suspected of being implicated in theft or any other criminal offense at the establishment, liaise with the Police to have that staff do a polygraph test (lie detection)*

1.2 Fishing of valuable objects.

Background

Fishing, as the name entails, is when a long stick/pole with a hook attached to the end, is used to remove visible valuables from the room through an open space e.g. open window; doors; bedroom, and bathroom windows, without the criminal gaining physical access to the apartment or room.

It occurs when valuable objects are kept in places inside the apartments or rooms in such a way that, they are visible from the outside.

Therefore, to prevent this type of criminal activity please consider the following: -

- *Management of tourism establishments should be alerted; if they see long poles on their property, especially if neither they nor their employees have brought these to the establishment.*
- *They should also be alerted if they see any stranger carrying such poles even if they argue that it is for harvesting fruits from trees*
- *Instruct your employees to report any suspicious activity in the surrounding area of your establishment or on the property itself.*

2.0 Theft onboard liveboard (Catamaran, Yachts, etc.)

Background

This category of theft occurs when criminals observe routine activities of the visitors and crew onboard these vessels. They note the mooring movements, the time that visitors or crew leave the boat to go onshore and the time they normally return if the windows or doors of these vessels are kept open, etc., and the time when the lights are off. Based on their observations, they find the right moment to go onboard to steal.

Recommendations: -

To dissuade criminal acts onboard live boards please consider the following; -

- *Advise visitors or crew to stay alert when mooring the vessels*
- *Advise them to moor the boat where there is adequate lighting whereby movements of people going on board or off the vessel are visible*

- *Lock all cabin doors and windows when going onshore*
- *Do not leave any valuable objects or cash unattended on board the vessel*
- *If possible, have available a portable safe, either the Aqua Vault or Flex safe for your guests onboard the vessel, so that when they are going ashore, they can bring their valuables with them.*
- *Provide your clients with a list of emergency numbers including that of the Police which is **999/133 / 112***

3.0 Stealing from persons

Background

This category of theft can happen anywhere, especially where valuables, such as jewelry, watches, wallets, etc. are exposed either on the person himself or inside an unzipped handbag. This felony could take place at any location such as at a restaurant, inside a shop, at the bus terminal or bus stop, when talking on the phone or when taking pictures, etc.

Recommendations: -

Consider advising your guests/clients of the following; -

- *Unless necessary, leave all valuables in the safe at the tourism establishment. Bring only what is needed.*
- *Do not carry a large sum of money on their person*
- *Do not wear flashy expensive-looking jewelry as it could tempt a person/criminal to steal*

- *Avoid going to isolated, dark, or secluded areas alone. If it is necessary to do so, always go with other people.*
- *Be wary of persons trying to trick clients by asking for the time or directions (it could be a distraction for them to steal their belongings).*
- *Avoid asking a stranger to take photographs with your camera or iPhone*
- *Keep the iPhone/cell phone in a secure place on their person where it is not visible.*
- *Ladies' handbags should be well zipped up and held tight*
- *They should ensure that their bags are kept closed and, on their person, when they are travelling in public buses.*
- *When using public toilets, make sure that all their valuables are kept in their bag which should be kept closed and the bag kept in their possession at all times.*

4.0 Car break-in and Theft

Background

The above mostly happens along the beach when hired cars are parked at any location where visitors find an open space, leaving the cars open and unattended with visitors' valuables therein. This is a clear example of opportunistic crime waiting to happen. Similarly, visitors will also leave all their valuables exposed in the car for all to see. Such a situation will tempt the perpetrator to break the car windows to have access to the valuables inside the car.

Recommendations: -

Management of tourism establishments and Car hirer operators should consider advising their clients of the following: -

- *Not to park hired cars in remote or secluded areas where there is camouflage in the form of bushes and another natural concealment that perpetrators can use to hide and wait for the right opportunity to steal.*
- *Do not leave valuables visible in the hired car*
- *Close all doors and windows and if an alarm is available, it should be activated.*
- *During night time park hired cars in areas where there is enough illumination*
- *Car keys should not be kept in the ignition but should be with the client at all times*

5.0 Beach Theft

Background

Beach theft is the most common opportunist crime in Seychelles as the islands are surrounded by extraordinary beaches which are one of the major tourist attractions. Visitors and Seychellois alike love to take a dip in the sea or relax on the beach. In the majority of cases, visitors would normally take their iPhones, cell phones, with them as they need their cell phones/iPhone for communication as well as a for entertainment as they can listen to music, take selfies, take pictures of the natural beauty of the islands, browse the social media network to get the latest updates, etc. All these are done whilst they are relaxing on the beach. They would also take their purse or wallet containing cash or credit cards with them to buy daily provisions

Most of the time the perpetrators are hiding somewhere in the bushes or behind huge granite boulders observing all their movements and waiting for the right opportunity to steal. The minute the visitors leave their personal belongings unattended, this is when they will strike.

Recommendation: -

Management of tourism establishments and liveboards should consider advising their clients of the following; -

- *Advise your clients not to take all their valuables, especially passports with them to the beach. Keep all valuables including passports locked in the safe at your establishments or the administrative office of the establishments/liveboards.*
- *If there is a necessity to take valuables such as a purse or wallet with them when going to the beach, they should avoid taking all their cash or credit cards with them and keep what is not needed for the day in the room safe or the safe at the administrative office.*
- *Advise your clients not to go to the beach alone, but rather to be always accompanied by two or more persons who can keep an eye on their bags/valuables while they are swimming/snorkeling.*
- *Do not leave valuables in a backpack, unattended. Backpacks are common in Seychelles and it would not raise suspicion if someone is travelling with a stolen one.*
- *Have your clients purchase a small waterproof pouch where they can place their wallet/cell phone/car keys and carry it on their person (attached to the wrist) while they swim. These can be purchased at souvenir shops or other shops.*

- *Alternatively, if possible, buy a portable safe (e.g. Aqua vault or flex safe) which could be rented out to your clients whereby they leave a deposit for the portable safe for them to keep their valuables while on the beach which they can return once they are back at their establishment or the administrative office of liveaboards.*

6.0 Obtaining money by false pretenses

Background

The above is another emerging crime happening mostly on the beaches, especially on Praslin. Visitors are offered fictitious boat excursions including big game fishing by individuals touting on beaches.

They also tend to ask the tourists when they are leaving the country as they would target those that are leaving shortly (e.g. departing the next day) as it is presumed that they will be leaving the country and would not bother to go to the Police to report the incident or to initiate a case as they will not be in the country to attend court proceedings.

Most of the time, the proposed price for these fictitious leisure activities are far cheaper than those being offered by licensed boat or diving operators to attract tourists. Unfortunately, a lot of tourists fall into this trap only later to find out that they have been swindled.

Recommendation: -

Management of tourism establishments should consider advising their clients of the following: -

- *Ensure that you have a list of licensed boat charters, diving operators, or tour guides that you can propose to your clients and sensitize them to the fictitious activities that they may encounter whilst on beaches.*
- *Advise them to avoid casual conversation with suspicious individuals and never to disclose their date of departure and where they are staying.*
- *Warn them not to accept any tours or charters offered by suspicious individuals on beaches or at restaurants.*

7.0 Robbery

Background

A robbery is an act of stealing, accompanied by violence/ force. Even though this category of crime is quite rare in Seychelles, a few cases have however been reported.

Recommendation

Management of tourism businesses need to consider advising their clients of the following: -

- *Avoid isolated dark areas*
- *Not to open their bedroom/apartment door to strangers. To find out who the person is before opening the door. In case of doubt, call the management of the establishment for assistance.*
- *Not to give rides to strangers.*
- *Avoid displaying valuable jewelry or valuables.*
- *If possible, provide the Police with a description of the person.*

8.0 Harassment/Intimidation to get tourists to purchase fruits or coconuts some of which may have been illegally sourced.

This occurs when tourists are approached and coerced to purchase goods i.e. fruits, coconuts, etc. Often those selling coconuts have a big knife or machete in their hands which they claim is for cutting open the coconuts, but these are also used to intimidate the tourists.

Recommendation:

Management of tourism establishments should consider advising their clients of the following: -

- *Advise your clients to avoid being on their own at isolated or secluded beaches or locations.*
- *To ensure that they keep their wallet or purse well-hidden so as not to arouse the attention of the perpetrators.*

- Advise them to refuse to purchase any fruits or coconuts as most of the time they are unhygienic and could lead to viral gastroenteritis.
- Advise them that if the seller insists, to tell him that they are going to the car or hotel to get money and leave the area and not to come back. If close to the establishment where they are staying, the incident should be reported to the management or security officer.
- Advise your clients to note the description of the seller so that when reporting the incident, they would be able to describe him.

9.0 Indecent Acts/Exposure

Indecent acts or exposure happen worldwide including in Seychelles. Indecent acts cover a variety of acts done in public places. In Seychelles, it is common on beaches and is intended to offend and normally would be accompanied by sexual act and unlawful exposure of certain private body parts. Females are predominantly the target.

Recommendation: -

Management of tourism establishments should consider advising their clients of the following: -

- To be wary of their surroundings and any strangers in the vicinity
- If they feel unsafe, leave the area immediately.
- To ensure that they do not fall asleep on beaches with earphones in their ears as this will make them easy targets for perpetrators of this crime.
- Not to go on isolated/secluded beaches alone, always be accompanied by a friend or a member of their family.

THE EFFECTS OF CRIME AFFECTING TOURISTS ON THE SEYCHELLES' ECONOMY.

The proceeds from tourism benefit all socio-economic sectors and not only those within the tourism sector. Every organization and business have a stake in ensuring that tourists visiting Seychelles fully enjoy their holiday and whilst doing so spend maximum time on all leisure activities they have decided to indulge in. Each second or minute a tourist wastes at any Police Station because he has been the victim of a crime is being reduced from the time, he has planned for enjoying his holiday which prevents him from spending money in the country. This has a direct adverse impact on the overall tourism expenditure and economy of Seychelles.

ADVICE TO MANAGEMENT OF TOURISM BUSINESSES.

- *Management of tourism establishments should not embellish the number of crime-related incidents happening in the industry based on one or two isolated crimes that have happened. In doing so, it gives the impression that there is a crime waiting to happen in every corner of Seychelles. This situation will affect the reputation of Seychelles as a tourist destination and also its safety label.*
- *The Police Department is the authority where crimes or other related incidents are reported and not the social media network which is viewed worldwide. Whichever negative item is posted thereon, will eventually hurt the image of Seychelles as a tourist destination. Potential holidaymakers intending to come to Seychelles will then consider other destinations.*
- *Work together with other tourism establishments and other businesses in your area. Create safety and security alert groups and communicate information on any suspicious incident in your respective area.*
- *Report to the Police any suspicious incidents noted in the area where your establishments or businesses are located*



Prepared by the Seychelles Tourism Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and
Tourism in collaboration with the Seychelles Police Department, Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Email: info@police.gov.sc | tourism.gov.sc

