

TIPS ON TRIPS

Avoiding Student Travel Scams

(NAPSA)—Before diving into a student travel package, it might be wise to follow this bit of expert advice: Look before you leap. Statistics show that students are often targeted by less than scrupulous travel promoters. As a result, a number of young people lose money or have trips that do not live up to their expectations.

“Many student travel offers are misleading,” says Kathryn W. Sudeikis, CTC, of the American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA). “Promoters may sell packages that do not include confirmed hotel space or flights, and sometimes even when accommodations and flights are confirmed, the quality may be misrepresented.”

Fortunately, there are ways student travelers can avoid being taken for a ride. ASTA offers these tips:

- **Get It In Writing**—Before paying for a trip, students should request that they receive all details in writing, including total cost, restrictions where applicable, cancellation penalties, and the exact names of the airlines and hotels included in the package.

- **Get Proof**—If a charter flight is involved, students should check the operator’s registration with the U.S. DOT’s Special Authorities Division at 202-366-1037. They will need their dates of travel, the name of the carrier and the charter operator’s name, address and



Don't Get Burned—A little homework can help student travelers avoid scams.

public charter number.

- **Get Smart**—Students should never give any credit card information over the phone to a company or person with whom they are unfamiliar. Also, students should never give such information to anyone who has solicited them without checking references and knowing with whom they are speaking.

- **Get Verified**—To make sure your travel goes according to plan and to be certain you're not getting taken for a ride, visit an ASTA travel agent. Students interested in verifying a firm's membership with ASTA can send an e-mail to the group at consumeraffairs@astahq.com.

For more information and tips, visit www.TravelSense.org.