



# TRAVEL TIPS

## Protecting Your Identity While On The Road

by Amy Ziff

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(NAPSA)—Recently, my credit card company alerted me that my account had been breached while I was away on vacation. Fortunately, the company advised me to cancel

the account proactively, before any damage was done. But what if they hadn't? Imagine checking into a hotel, only to find your account had been frozen.



Amy Ziff

Safeguarding your identity on the road is an important concern for travelers. If you don't, it can cost you dearly.

Every 79 seconds, a thief steals someone's identity, opens accounts in the victim's name and goes on a buying spree, according to CBSnews.com. Vacations are prime time for identity thieves because we tend to let our guard down. Their goal is to pass for you on paper and steal their way into your bank account. So if you're taking a trip, safeguard yourself.

Always keep your belongings with you. That said, don't take more than you need in the first place. Leave your Social Security card behind. Make a copy of every card in your wallet, both front and back and leave it at home. Should anything go missing, you'll need the information, fast.

If you're traveling internationally, call your credit card company to alert them if you will be spending in different patterns. It is wise

to use cash abroad when possible to prevent anyone from stealing your credit card information. Use your debit card only for withdrawing cash from the ATM, because it draws directly from your bank account. Remember to institute a daily withdrawal limit from your checking account.

Internet cafes and business lounges are handy—but don't conduct any private accounting business or access your personal information there. Those places can be havens for crafty thieves.

A few numbers to have handy in case your cards are stolen: Visa 410-581-9994; MasterCard 636-722-7111; and American Express 336-393-1111. The three credit companies to alert in case of identity theft are: Equifax 800-685-1111; Trans Union 800-888-4213; and Experian 888-397-3742.

Protect your identity no matter where you are. Rip up every credit card receipt and any carbon copies and check your credit status regularly. Make sure to purge unnecessary items from your wallet at least twice a year. Get in the mindset of protection. Take advantage of a free credit report annually by visiting: [www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com).

Being one step ahead of the thieves and remaining on the lookout for signs of foul play means you'll be better able to keep your vacation for pure relaxation.

*For more travel advice you can check out Amy Ziff's monthly column at [www.travelocity.com/atoz](http://www.travelocity.com/atoz).*