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2016

Traveling in Retirement

One of the top retirement goals for many is travel. As many as 1.5 million so called "snowbirds" travel to the Southern United States during the winter. With summer just around the corner, thoughts turn to travel within our borders, too. The Canada Safety Council states that a few simple precautions can help ensure a safe, healthy and enjoyable trip any time of the year.

If driving, travel during daylight hours and avoid rush hour traffic. Older drivers have more collisions per kilometer driven, so make sure you are ready for the driving task. Medications can affect driving skills. Consult your doctor or pharmacist before taking any medication if you will be driving.

Impaired driving is a major cause of fatalities and injuries on North American highways. The consequences can follow you, your loved ones and your victims for life. Never, never, never drink and drive!

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) recommends these precautions:

- Use freeways rather than surface streets that might pass through high-crime neighborhoods.
- Know where you are going before you leave.
- Leave space between your vehicle and other cars at traffic signals and stop signs.
- Keep doors locked and windows up.
- Park in well lit areas.
- Keep cell phone battery charged. When renting a vehicle, make sure it does not sport a rental sticker; rental firms often use special identification on their cars.

Tourists can be easy targets because they often carry valuables. Make yourself a less attractive target by:

- Dressing modestly.
- Not wearing flashy jewelry.
- Keeping your camera concealed.
- Knowing where you are going and walk confidently.
- Traveling with others. Groups are a less attractive target for crooks.

Wear sunscreen - According to the Canadian Dermatology Association, over 60,000 Canadians develop skin cancer each year. The good news is that skin cancer is almost totally preventable:

- Schedule outdoor physical activities when UV rays are at their weakest - before 11:00 a.m. and after 4:00 p.m., especially between the months of April and October.
- Remember, skin doesn't have to feel hot to burn, so don't be fooled by cloudy or overcast weather.
- Water, snow, sand and concrete can reflect and increase the sun's burning rays.

Want help planning for your retirement?

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