

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Safety, security concerns unlikely to deter overseas travelers, UStiA survey shows

Security concerns influence choice of international destinations

Even 8 years after the 9/11 tragedy, 73% of Americans say that concern over safety and security will not deter them from traveling overseas. However, nearly 60% say safety and security issues would influence their choice of international destination, according to results of a newly-released survey commissioned by the U.S. Travel Insurance Association.

The survey – which asked participants to rank their major traveling concerns -- found that some 67% of those polled said they are moderately to highly concerned over terrorism when traveling internationally, with 58% ranking terrorism as their first or second most serious worry. Those issues ranked statistically higher among survey participants aged 45–64.

Quality of Law Enforcement ranks second

Quality of law enforcement was second only to terrorism as a concern for Americans traveling internationally, cited by 65% of respondents; fear of muggings was a concern for 61% of participants and kidnappings and abductions on foreign soil were cited as a major concern by 40% of those surveyed.

Health and assistance are other concerns

More than half of those in the survey (56%) said health concerns would influence their destination planning. “To illustrate, travelers concerned about the H1N1 virus outbreak in Mexico last spring cancelled vacation plans en masse, greatly affecting tourism to that country,” says UStiA President Mike Ambrose.

“Survey respondents ranked emergency assistance in situations such as the Swine Flu and others as important to them,” adds Ambrose. “Eighty percent of people said access to 24-hour emergency assistance was important to very important, especially women and those between the ages of 45-64. The survey also revealed that women were more likely than men to be concerned about health and the entire spectrum of security and safety issues.

“In health and other crises, whether it be an H1N1 outbreak or unexpected events that may affect someone’s safety and security, travel insurance and assistance companies help travelers in a variety of ways. These services can include accessing local medical

treatment, helping travelers locate transportation should they need to return home because of a quarantine situation or other emergency circumstance, and reimbursing for cancelled vacations because of illness,” says Ambrose.

Travel Insurance and Assistance

Nearly half of those surveyed (49%) indicated they would purchase travel insurance; only 18% said they probably would not.

“Many people may not fully realize the many benefits of travel insurance. Travel assistance is an important part of most comprehensive travel insurance policies, providing around-the-clock services in emergency and other situations. In addition to medical issues, a 24/7 assistance hotline offers help with other problems, from legal issues, to getting prescriptions refilled, finding lost luggage, accessing translation services or rerouting travel itineraries away from affected destinations,” says Ambrose.

Comprehensive travel insurance also provides people with the peace of mind of knowing they have financial coverage in case their vacation is cancelled or interrupted because of illness or other reasons such as natural disasters. And, should they become ill while traveling, travel insurance covers necessary medical payments and provides medical evacuation if needed,” adds Ambrose.

USTiA initiated the survey to assess travel concerns of Americans who are considering going abroad this year. The survey, conducted in May, 2009 by Synovate eNation on behalf of USTiA, has a margin of error of plus or minus 3%.

About USTiA

USTiA membership is estimated to represent more than 90% of the travel insurance market in the U.S. The association promotes fairness, integrity and a commitment to excellence in the travel insurance industry. Its mission is to educate the public on the value of travel insurance while maintaining high industry standards. The USTiA is a non-profit association of insurance carriers and allied businesses involved in the development, administration and marketing of travel insurance and assistance. For more information on USTiA and travel insurance, please visit www.ustia.org

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