

Appendix D–15: Work–related Travel Procedures (OSACH 2006)

Planning Travel

Whether travelling by car or public transit, workers are responsible for planning ahead.

- Get to know the area, particularly the safe area in the district. Plan the route and method of travel well in advance. Have insurance if travelling by car. Keep pertinent telephone numbers (e.g. destination, taxi service, hotel, rental car agency, reliable tow truck company, etc.) handy.
- Avoid driving in isolated or dangerous areas. Plan the safest route to and from the client’s home, even if it isn’t the most direct. If travelling through dangerous areas is unavoidable, travel with a companion and note nearby police stations, public telephones and other public buildings like hospitals and restaurants or stores that remain open late.
- If possible, arrive during daylight hours.
- Carry a cell phone.
- Always be aware of your surroundings.
- Wear comfortable, conservative clothing and shoes with non-skid soles. Do not wear expensive jewellery or show large amounts of money. Religious symbols should be worn discreetly. Avoid earrings or accessories that could be grasped or pulled by another person. Do not wear headphones.
- During the day, apply broad-spectrum sunscreen with a minimum 15 SPF and wear sunglasses, long sleeves, etc., to reduce UV exposure when driving.
- Keep money in an accessible pocket to eliminate searching through a purse or wallet.
- Advise your home and office when you arrive.

Travelling by Public Transit

- Walk confidently with head erect.
- Keep an up-to-date transit schedule in an easy-to-access location.
- Have the exact change ready in a pocket. Avoid opening your purse or wallet.
- If possible, travel during the day.
- Always wait at a designated transit stop. Stand with a group of people rather than alone.
- Stand away from the edge of the subway platform and use the alarms in the subway, bus, streetcar as necessary.
- Stand or sit near the driver or streetcar operator or in the Designated Waiting Area of the subway platform.
- If someone is bothering you, or if you feel threatened, let the driver know immediately.
- Move instantly if jostled – it helps to foil pickpockets.
- Always be aware of your surroundings.
- Avoid direct eye contact with other travellers and do not participate in lengthy conversations with people in the street.
- If you suspect you are being followed, try to get back on the transit system or walk directly to a store or business and call 9-1-1. In a neighbourhood, go up to the nearest lighted house and walk in or ask to be let in.
- If taking a taxi, check that the driver’s identification and photo are clearly displayed and match the driver. Sit behind the front passenger seat. State the route you prefer, sticking to the main streets. State that someone is waiting for you. If you become uneasy with the driver, request that he or she pull over and let you out.

Travelling by Car

Workers are responsible for ensuring that their cars are road-ready by servicing them regularly (we recommend every six months). They are also responsible for employing safe driving practises, such as getting snow tires in winter or using four-wheel drive in the far north.

Winter Car Survival Kit

In the trunk:

- Axe or hatchet
- Booster cables
- Cloth or paper towels
- Compass
- Emergency food pack
- Extra clothing/footwear
- Fire extinguisher
- Ice scraper and brush
- Matches, survival candle in a deep can
- Methyl hydrate (for fuel line and windshield de-icing)
- Road maps
- Sand, salt or kitty litter
- Shovel
- Tow chain
- Traction mats or “ladder”
- Warning light or road flares
- Safety vest
- Work gloves

In the car:

- Flashlight
- First-aid kit
- Survival blanket
- “Call Police” sign: durable, reflective plastic sign that hooks on the window and is visible from both directions at any time during any weather

Vehicle check-list

- Use steel-belted radial tires to reduce the chance of a flat tire and keep the tires properly inflated.
- Check windshield wiper fluid level, battery and lights.
- Keep the gas tank more than half full at all times.

Safe-driving practices

- Always approach your car with your car keys already in hand. Hold one key between your thumb and first finger so that the key can be used to as a weapon to protect yourself. Having your keys in your hand also allows you to quickly enter your car.
- In above-ground parking lots, park in well-lit areas near the main entrance or exit to the building.
- In underground parking lots, back into the parking space so you can leave the parking lot area quickly and safely.
- Check underneath the vehicle as you approach to make sure no one is hiding there, then check the back seat before getting into your car. If you notice someone near, at or in your vehicle, go to a safe area and contact security or the police.
- Keep the car doors locked and the windows closed when parking.
- Keep the doors locked when travelling in your car.
- Always use seat belts.
- Refrain from using the cell phone while driving. Pull off the road to make a call and limit phone use to emergencies. Consider using a head set or speaker phone in the car.
- Refrain from smoking in the car. Cigarette smoke leaves a film on windows and nicotine and carbon monoxide can reduce night vision.
- Do not wear sunglasses at night: they do not reduce headlight glare.
- Switch from high beams to low during night driving when within 150 m (500 feet) of an oncoming vehicle, or approaching within 60 m (200 feet) of turns and the crest of hills on country roads.
- Develop a routine for looking ahead, from side to side and in the rear view mirror. Check mirrors every five to 10 seconds and always before stopping or changing lanes. Always check blind spots by turning your head when changing lanes.
- Move away from drivers who are driving erratically.
- In traffic queues, stop when you can still see the wheels of the car ahead. Put your foot firmly on the brake when you stop. At that distance, you can always get your car out of the queue and you have a buffer if hit from behind.
- If you suspect that you are being followed, note the car's licence number and go immediately to a police, fire or service station. Do not leave the car, but honk your horn repeatedly until someone responds. Do not go home.
- If you are driving to a client's home, avoid parking directly in front of the home. Park next door so that you can see the front and sides of the dwelling as you approach.
- Roll up the windows and lock the car.
- Don't leave personal or nursing items visible. Leave purses at home and carry identification and money in front pockets. Post a sign on the dashboard stating that no drugs or equipment are inside the car.
- Park in open areas. Avoid underground parking garages. If you must use one, park near an exit in a well-lit area. Back into the parking spot and take a few minutes to observe the surroundings. Avoid parking beside a van or other large vehicle where you could be wedged in.
- If your car breaks down, try to get it to the side of the road. Put on the emergency flashers. Do not get out of the car. Keep the doors locked and the windows closed. Use your cell phone to call for assistance. If you do not have a cell phone, place a "Call Police" sign on the windshield. If someone other than a police officer comes to the car to assist you, open the window no more than 2 cm (1 inch) to speak to them. Do not accept help from a stranger. Ask the person to call the police or a towing service.

Winter Driving Tips

- Contact the Ontario Provincial (OPP) or Ministry of Transportation to obtain current road conditions in the destination area.
- Reschedule your appointment, if necessary.

- Clear snow from the hood, roof, windows and lights.
- Slow down gradually when driving into a patch of fog. Keep low beams on and turn on the defroster to improve visibility.
- Stay a safe distance from the vehicle ahead. A safe following distance, in good conditions, is at least three seconds behind the vehicle in front. Increase the distance during bad weather and when following large vehicles that block the view of the road ahead.
- Keep to main roads.
- Wear warm clothing that does not restrict movement.
- Tune the radio to receive weather advice.

What to Do if Confronted by an Aggressive Driver

- Avoid eye contact and refrain from exchanging words or gestures and from retaliatory driving manoeuvres.
- Stay in control. Allow the driver to pass. Drop back and let them get far ahead.
- If pursued, go directly to a nearby safe area or police station.
- Use a cell phone to call for help.

Parking Lot Safety Tips

- If possible, park on the premises rather than on the street.
- Walk confidently with head up and be aware of your surroundings.
- Park as close to the building as possible, especially during the evening or night. Some employers have reserved parking spaces for evening and night shift workers. If you are parked far away, go out during the afternoon and move your car closer to the building.
- Know where emergency telephones are.
- Look around before leaving your vehicle.
- Avoid leaving valuables inside your vehicle.
- Avoid locking your purse in the trunk of your vehicle.
- Use the main entrance; avoid rear or secluded entrances.
- Put your keys in your hand before leaving the building and carry a whistle or another type of personal alarm.
- During the late evening and night hours, have security escort you to your vehicle. If they can't escort you, use the buddy system. If you must walk alone, have someone watch you from a door or window.
- If you notice someone loitering near your vehicle, do not go to your vehicle; go to a safe area and contact security or the police.
- When approaching your vehicle, check underneath from a distance to ensure no one is hiding there or behind the vehicle.
- Look inside your vehicle before getting in.
- Once inside your vehicle, lock all doors and keep all windows up.

Staying at a Hotel

- Choose a hotel in a safe neighbourhood.
- Choose a hotel with extra security measures such as doors equipped with peepholes, dead bolts and chain locks.
- Request a room without a connecting door and away from the fire exit or stairwell.
- Once in the room, close and lock all doors and windows. Keep draperies and blinds closed.

- Tell the desk attendants not to give your name or room number to anyone.
- Have all deliveries made to the front desk and not to the room.
- When you leave the room, leave the lights on and leave open the closet door, bathroom door and shower curtains. When you return, leave the room immediately if anything has changed. Go to the reception desk and request a security check of your room.
- Call the front desk to confirm the identity of anyone knocking on your door. Do not open the door for people claiming to be hotel maintenance, security, etc., without first confirming their identity.