



Recent news items told of the arrest of a group of employees at Los Angeles airport for thefts from baggage. Some of the accused are Homeland Security (TSA) security guards.

Unfortunately, this kind of crime continues to happen at airports throughout the world. How does a senior traveler avoid such problems? Here are some tips that can help prevent the thefts.

*Travel lighter.* Checked bags are the ones most stolen or pilfered. Cutting back on clothing may be difficult for those who like to dress up on cruises. However, many savvy seniors today travel with just one wheeled carry-on each and a knapsack. *Keep eyes on your property.*

When approaching security with a companion, let one person go ahead through the electronic doorway to meet the bags as they roll down the chute. That way they are being watched constantly. Never leave your bag unattended while in an airport hallway, restroom, garage, restaurant or store.

*Pack smart.* Know where each item is. If called aside by security for individual inspection, keep the bag in sight at all times. While the bag is open, see when any items are lifted out.

*Take minimum amount of valuables.* Costume jewelry can be just as attractive as the real deal, but not as painful if stolen. Dishonest airport employees are adept at quickly slipping out small jewelry items.

When picking up checked luggage, take time to inspect it. If anything is missing, report it immediately at airport security or local police and call your insurance broker with the information.

*Carry as little cash as possible.* Travelers checks that can only be redeemed by you are accepted virtually everywhere in banks, hotels, casinos and restaurants. Cash machines are also widely available.

There's no way to totally prevent airport loss or pilfering of baggage. However, with sensible

precautions, it's less likely to happen to you.