

San Francisco Writers Conference Safety Tips for Attendees

We know you will enjoy all that San Francisco has to offer ... from its unsurpassed beauty to its myriad of world famous attractions and activities. Unfortunately, no city is exempt from crime. We offer suggestions to ensure that your stay here is enjoyable and safe.

San Francisco Safety Alerts

- **AlertSF** is a text-based notification system for San Francisco's residents and visitors. AlertSF will send alerts regarding emergencies disrupting vehicular/pedestrian traffic, watches and warnings for tsunamis, flooding, and Citywide post-disaster information to your registered wireless devices and email accounts.
- You will receive time-sensitive messages wherever you specify, such as your home, mobile or business phones, email address, text messages and more. You pick where, you pick how.
- AlertSF is owned and operated by the City and County of San Francisco, powered by Everbridge, Inc. For more information, visit <http://sfdem.org/public-alerts-0>.
- To sign up, see <https://member.everbridge.net/index/453003085612609#/login>.
- For information on what to do in case of an earthquake, power outage, fire, or other emergencies, please visit www.72hours.org.

San Francisco Useful Phone Numbers/ Mobile Apps

- **5-1-1** is a free phone and Web service that consolidates Bay Area transportation information into a one-stop resource. 511 provides up-to-the-minute information on traffic conditions, incidents and driving times, schedule, route and fare information for the Bay Area's public transportation services, instant carpool and vanpool referrals, bicycling information and more. It's available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. www.511.org.

Hospitals

- **Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital**
1001 Potrero Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94110
Phone: 415-206-8000
- **Saint Francis Memorial Hospital**
900 Hyde Street, San Francisco, CA 94109
Phone: 415-353-6000

General Safety Tips

- Carry your wallet in the inside front pocket of your pants or your jacket.
- Carry shoulder bags or other hand-bags under your arm, not by the handle. While sitting, keep the bag in your lap. In a restaurant, keep your purse in your lap, not over the back of the chair.
- Be alert, particularly in crowded situations. Staged distractions are a favorite ploy of pickpockets. **Avoid using your cell phone on city streets as much as possible.**
- **Upon leaving a meeting or convention, be sure to remove your attendee badge and either put it away or recycle it with a staff member before leaving the building.**

Sightseeing

- Plan your route in advance; consult maps indoors before leaving your hotel.
- Locate places on your route where you can go for help.
- Be aware of your surroundings; leave an area if it appears unsafe.
- Ask directions from service providers, hotel desk staff, telephone or power company employees, police or traffic officers. Avoid asking strangers on the street.

Homeless/Displaced Persons

Like every major city in the world, San Francisco has a homeless population. Most homeless people are harmless; however, some street people are chronic law violators who may infringe upon the rights of others. Demonstrate a combination of respect and caution around panhandlers and strangers.

If you feel inclined to financially assist someone in need, it is suggested that contributions not be given to individuals on the street, but rather to one of the many charitable organizations that address such needs. Your hotel should be able to direct you to such organizations.

Yerba Buena Community Benefits District – for increased security in and around the Moscone Center area, call YCBCD dispatch at 415-543-9223 or email: dispatch@ybcbd.org

Union Square Business Improvement District – for increased security in and around Union Square, call USBID dispatch at 415-781-4456 or e-mail: cleanandsafe@unionsquarebid.com

Hotel And Motel Security

- Watch your luggage when checking in and out of your hotel.
- Make sure no one hears your name and room number while at the front desk.
- Find out your hotel's policy on key control and the room cleaning schedules.
- Call the desk to verify the identity of room service, repair persons, etc., especially if you did not call for them. Know what the hotel identification badge looks like.
- Deposit your valuables in the hotel safe and keep an inventory of what was deposited; never leave cash or other valuables in your room.
- Lock your luggage when it is left in the room.
- Use the door viewer to identify anyone requesting entry to your room; report any suspicious activity to hotel staff.
- Return your key to the front desk when you check out; if you leave it in your room it could be copied.
- Familiarize yourself with the fire exit routes posted in your room.

Shopping Alerts

- Stores do not have to make refunds. Each store may set its own refund or exchange policies. Check them out before making purchases.
- When buying with a credit card -- stores cannot charge you an extra fee.
- When buying with cash -- stores may offer you a cash discount.
- A non-refundable 8.75% state sales tax must be paid on every item unless you have the merchant ship the product outside of California. This tax will not be refunded at the airport upon departure.

Before You Buy....

Compare prices and quality. Merchants may sell products for any price they want.

- Request written refund or exchange policy.
- Get warranties or guarantees in writing.
- Inquire about electrical compatibility for use in other countries.

Before Leaving the Store....

- Get an itemized receipt, and check for accuracy.
- Inspect packages thoroughly for correct contents.
- Beware of additional credit card fees.

Should you have questions or problems regarding a business transaction in San Francisco, contact:

[The Better Business Bureau, Inc.](#)

1000 Broadway
Suite 625
Oakland, CA 94607
Phone: 510-844-2000

[San Francisco District Attorney's Consumer Protection Unit](#)

732 Brannan Street
San Francisco, CA 94103
415-551-9595
(Complaint lines open Monday through Friday, between 9 am - 4 pm)

Vehicle Safety

- Do not advertise that you are a visitor. Place maps, travel brochures and valuables out of sight in the glove compartment or trunk. Never leave wallets, credit cards, checkbooks and/or purses in the vehicle.
- If your car is bumped, do not stop. Drive to the nearest public area and call 415-553-0123 to report the incident to the police.
- Park in well-lighted, busy areas.
- When parking the vehicle for the night, remove all luggage and other valuables and bring them to your room.

Property Lost In A Taxi

Write down or remember the number, color and company name of the taxi you left your property in. The police department has a list of all cab companies.

Call the police at 415-553-0123 if the cab has pulled away with your possessions inside. Do not call 9-1-1.

Credit Card Loss

Keep a separate list of your credit cards and their numbers. Notify the police at once if your credit cards have been lost or stolen, by calling 415-553-0123.

If credit cards are not reported missing, they can be used. Don't be lulled into not reporting the loss by someone who calls and asks where to mail your credit cards to.

Parking & Traffic Tips

The best advice to those visiting San Francisco by automobile: park it! Rely on your feet and Muni. If you must drive, remember: cable cars and pedestrians always have the right of way.

Curbing Wheels

There's only one way to rest easy with your car parked on San Francisco's roller coaster hills - curb your wheels. Turn the tires toward the street when facing uphill, and towards the curb when facing downhill, to effectively use the curb as a block. Even the best brakes sometimes give in to our famous grades. Thus, this is the law in San Francisco, and citations can be issued if you do not follow this practice.

Curb Colors

- Red - No stopping or parking anytime.
- Yellow - Half hour limit loading vehicles with commercial plates only.
- Yellow & Black - Half hour loading limit for trucks with commercial plates only.
- Green, Yellow and Black - Taxi zone.
- Blue - Reserved for vehicles marked with a California issued disabled placard or plate.
- Green - 10-minute limit for all vehicles.
- White - Passenger loading, with only a five minute limit, effective during the adjacent business' hours of operation.

ADA Accessibility and Resources

For information on ADA and disabled access code resources, please visit: <http://www.sfgov2.org/index.aspx?page=4451>

Contacting Emergency Services

In an emergency call **9-1-1**. An emergency exists when there is a life-threatening police matter, a medical emergency or fire, or a person who has fallen and is unable to get up. 9-1-1 will get you police, fire and medical services. To reach Victim Services, call 415-553-9044.

If it is not an emergency call:

Police at 415-553-0123 Fire Department at 415-861-8000

Prepared in cooperation with the [San Francisco Police Department](#), [San Francisco District Attorney's Consumer Protection Unit](#) and [The Better Business Bureau, Inc.](#)