Play It Safe This Year at Spring Break

Looking forward to getting away from classes and spending a week hanging out with friends on a beautiful beach? Spring Break is a part of the college experience, and it can be one of the highlights of your college career-- if you're careful. The tips you are about to read are important whether you're traveling in or out of the country, so stay alert and play it safe, no matter where you choose to soak up your rays and release your stress.

Property Safety
- Take as few valuables with you on your trip as possible.
- Always lock your hotel room door.
- Watch out for scam artists who try to rip off students.
- If your cell phone or credit cards are stolen, report this immediately to the companies so they can cancel your service.

Physical Safety
- Always stay in the proximity of at least one friend. Adhere strictly to this "buddy system" and do not leave with someone other than your buddies.
- Do not leave with strangers, even if it seems like a good idea. Always err on the side of caution and trust your instincts.
- Watch your drink very carefully! Be aware of "date rape" drugs that people may try to sneak into your drink.
- Never go to an isolated place with a stranger or someone you do not fully trust.
- Carry a cell phone with you in case of an emergency.
- Carry a cell phone and important medical information on your person in case of an emergency.

Alcohol Safety
- If you're going to drink during Spring Break, it's very important that you take precautions. Drunk college students are seen as a target, so do not underestimate the way to take these reasonable precautions.
- Binge drinking gets students into trouble the most. The safest approach is to not binge drink and to know your limit with alcohol.
- Make sure you know the signs and symptoms of alcohol poisoning.
- Do not drink and drive, ever.
- Remember, you must be 21 years old to drink alcohol.

Additional Precautions
- Always use sunscreen with at least an SPF of 15 or higher.
- Never swim alone, and avoid swimming when no lifeguard is present.
- Drink lots of water! Don't rely on alcoholic or carbonated beverages to quench your thirst.

Watch for Drowsy Driving This Spring Break

Sleepiness and driving is a dangerous combination. Most people are aware of the dangers of drinking and driving but don't realize that drowsy driving can be just as fatal. Like alcohol, sleepiness slows reaction time, decreases awareness, impairs judgment and increases your risk of crashing. Falling asleep at the wheel is known as the "silent killer" because it is under reported as the cause of fatal traffic crashes. There is no accurate test to determine the level of sleepiness like there is to determine for DWI offenses.

A typical crash related to sleepi-
ness has one or more of the following characteristics:
- Crash is likely to be serious
- A single vehicle leaves the road
- The crash occurs on a high speed road like a highway
- The driver does not attempt to avoid a crash
- The driver is alone in the vehicle

To avoid a drowsy driving accident, follow these tips:
- Get adequate sleep; about 7-9 hours a night
- Schedule proper breaks; about every 2 hours
- Avoid alcohol and sedating medi-

Caffeine -- does it help?
Caffeine promotes short-term alertness. It takes about 30 minutes for caffeine to begin working so the best thing to do is pull over for a coffee or other caffeinated beverage, take a break and then get back on the road. The equivalent of 2 cups of coffee can increase alertness for several hours.

Simply put, a tired driver is a dangerous driver. Just like driving drunk or drugged, drowsy driving causes you to make mistakes behind the wheel — mistakes that can injure or kill the driver, passengers or total strangers.

References: DPS Website, edmonds.com, drowsydriving.org
Secure It Keep It Campaign Begins for Spring 2011

The UTSA Police Department presents again the “Secure It, Keep It” program, an anti-theft awareness campaign. The purpose of the campaign is to decrease theft on campus by creating awareness among students, faculty and staff to secure their belongings and avoid potential theft.

The UTSA Police Department, according to a study done by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University in New York, provides a detailed look at substance abuse among America’s college students based on surveys, interviews and other research.

“I think we have, by almost any standard, a serious public health problem on the college campuses. And it’s deteriorating,” said Joseph Califano, who heads the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse. The report found that 49 percent of full-time college students ages 18 to 22 binge drink (consuming five or more drinks at a time), or abuse prescription drugs such as painkillers or illegal drugs like cocaine and marijuana. That translates to 3.8 million students. In 2005, 23 percent of them met the medical criteria for substance abuse or dependence, it said.

But the proportion who binge drink frequently, defined as three or more times over two weeks, rose by 16 percent from 1993 to 2005. Drinking 10 or more times per month rose 25 percent, and drinking three or more times per month rose 26 percent. Substance abuse has contributed to alcohol-related deaths and injuries, and sexual assaults against female students, the report said. The report was based on results of a nationally representative telephone survey of 2,000 students along with other data.

From 1993 to 2005, the proportion of students who abuse prescription painkillers such as Percocet, Vicodin and OxyContin rose more than 300 percent to 3.1 percent (about 240,000 students), the report said. Abuse of prescription stimulants like Ritalin and Adderall doubled to 2.9 percent (225,000 students).

During the same period, daily marijuana use more than doubled to 4 percent (310,000 students). Overall use of other illegal drugs such as cocaine and heroin rose by half to 8.2 percent (636,000 students).

“Basically the proportion of college students who drink and binge drink has stayed constant. But what’s troubling is the tremendous increase in the intensity of their drinking and drug use and the egressiveness of it,” Califano said.

Employee Kudos: Guard Ken Bowen has been noted several times for his excellent customer service while on patrol at the Downtown Campus. He received a compliment from a visitor to DTC that he was very polite and wished her a good afternoon with a smile. Thank you for your courtesy and professionalism! Way to go!

Officer Piepho’s Crime Prevention Tip of the Month

Spring Break…..Have Fun, but stay safe!

Going on a trip to the beach, mountains or just staying home to relax here are a few safety tips to keep you and your property safe! PROPERTY: Take as few valuables as possible, always lock your hotel room and if your wallet or cell phone get stolen cancel the service as soon as possible. PERSONAL: Use the buddy system, watch your drink, never leave with strangers and carry your cell phone and identification in case of an emergency. ALCOHOL: If you choose to drink do so responsibly, Don’t binge drink, Use a designated driver or alternative transportation and remember alcohol increases your chances of becoming a victim of crime especially women and sexual assault. Safety Starts With You!
Welcome to our newest employee:

Officer Bobby Lane joins the UTSA Police Department after a distinguished career at the El Paso Police Department. He spent over twenty years with El Paso PD and retired as a lieutenant. Officer Lane brings a great deal of experience in emergency management and tactical operations to UTSA.

Welcome to UTSA Police Department!

Safety Highlights Donovan Agans (Director of BCEM)

Fire Drills—Sooner or Later . . . One Will Be for Real
To create and sustain a culture of preparedness, UTSA performs annual unannounced fire drills in campus buildings with fire alarm systems. The requirement and regularity for fire drills have made some in our community think they are no big deal. They tend to continue their routine regardless of the evacuation and blaring alarms around them. The overwhelming thought is, “It’s only a drill.”

Well, in some occasions, yes it is. But there are times when something goes wrong in a kitchen or a lab or in electrical wiring and everything gets set afame. In 2008 Our Lady of the Lake University had a fire in its Main Building. The fire affected more than 65,000 square feet of classrooms, labs, and offices. Fortunately no lives were lost as all building occupants quickly and effectively evacuated the building. However, if an individual chooses to ignore the earliest warnings chances of passing on could be great depending on where the fire started and how close the individual is to an exit. The time to react in a real emergency is short. Seconds do count.

A fire drill is an important thing. It may not feel like it when it interrupts your workday, but it is. They help ensure familiarity with exit routes and can build confidence in a person’s ability to respond promptly and safely if an actual fire occurs. Drills familiarize building occupants with the sound of the fire alarm. They are also training opportunities for emergency response units such as our Floor Captain Safety Liaisons, Police, and Facilities. They serve as important tests of alarm systems and fire reporting procedures. Most importantly fire drills save lives! It is a brief interruption in your life ... better brief than permanent.

Fire drills may seem like a bother and an unnecessary interruption to the important tasks at hand, however there is overwhelming evidence proving their significance in creating a greater level of awareness. Fire drills are a practice opportunity and practice makes perfect. Because sooner or later... One will be for real.

RAINn’s Top 10 Spring Break Tips:
1. Get to know your surroundings before you go out and learn a well-lit route back to your hotel or rental property.
2. Always carry emergency cash and keep phone numbers for local cab companies handy.
3. Form a buddy system with close friends and agree on a secret “butt in” signal for uncomfortable situations.
4. Trust your instincts. If you feel unsafe, go with your gut.
5. Avoid being alone or isolated with someone you don’t know or trust.
6. Don’t accept drinks from people you don’t know or trust.
7. Never leave your drink unattended, and if you do lose sight of it, get a new one.
8. Always watch your drink being prepared.
9. Try to buy drinks in bottles, which are harder to tamper with than cups or glasses.
10. Avoid putting music headphones in both ears so that you can be more aware of your surroundings, especially if you are walking alone.

Detective Time by Sgt. Thomas Calucci (Supervisor, Criminal Investigations)

Many of us have been victims of theft or know someone who has been a victim. At times it may be difficult to locate stolen items if there are no witnesses, surveillance video or traceable evidence. So how can you make it easier for Detectives investigating your theft case? Here are a few tips to help with the recovery or identification of your personal property that has been stolen.

First, record information that will help identify your property. Keep it filed in a safe and easily accessible location so you can provide it to the Detectives if you file a theft report. You should consider photographing your property and writing down its serial number, brand name and model on the back of the photograph. This will alleviate some stress when the Detective asks you to provide a description of the stolen item. It will also allow the Detective to quickly research various pawn shops if in case it was pawned.

If you have credit or debit cards, have the number and card type saved and stored somewhere accessible upon request of the Officer taking the report. Call and cancel your stolen credit card and immediately request for a statement or information pertaining to any non authorized charges, such as location, date, times and purchase amounts. This will help expedite the investigation process and allow us to possibly obtain surveillance video, if available, from locations where the card was used.

Secondly you should etch your driver’s license number to the back of your property near the serial number. Example: (TX11112222). This will make it easier to identify if it is recovered or pawned. A pawn shop should not accept any property that belongs to a third party without proof of ownership. If you do not have the capability of etching your driver’s license to your property, the UTSA Police Department Crime Prevention Section provides this service free of charge. Please take advantage of this program.

And the third tip involves one of the most popular stolen items on campus, but the hardest to recover. I am talking about your school books. Books are difficult to locate because there is nothing that uniquely identifies them as belonging to you. Therefore, you should write your name or something that identifies you as the owner of the book somewhere inside the book itself, even under a specific page. This will allow Detectives to look at books that have recently been resold to bookstores and identify yours.
The UTSAPD wishes all faculty, staff and students a safe spring break!
Texas Department of Public Safety Repeats Warning to Avoid Travel to Mexico

In years past, taking a “side-trip” to Mexico during spring break at the south Texas coast was a tradition for many college students. However, there has recently been a tremendous increase in violence south of the border. The Texas Department of Public Safety is again warning Texans to avoid traveling to Mexico in light of recent violent events.

Mexican drug cartels are engaged in increasing violence for control of narcotics trafficking routes along the border. A Texas missionary was killed earlier this year as she and her husband attempted to escape from a number of men trying to stop them. Other recent violent events along the border this fall include the shooting of an American on the Mexican side of Falcon Lake, the killing of a UT-Brownsville student and the discovery of stray bullets found on the campus of UT-El Paso. In order to combat violence, the government of Mexico has deployed troops in various parts of the country. U.S. citizens should cooperate fully with official checkpoints when traveling on Mexican highways.

Other points to be aware of include:
- While traveling in Mexico, American citizens are subject to Mexican law.
- Mexican law can impose harsh penalties for violations that would be considered minor in the United States.
- Excessive alcohol consumption and unruly behavior can lead to serious problems with Mexican authorities.
- Use only the licensed and regulated “sito” or taxis.
- It is best not to carry even a pocketknife into Mexico as this can result in a weapons charge.
- For any emergencies involving U.S. citizens in Mexico, please contact the closest U.S. Embassy or Consulate.

Travelers going to Mexico over spring break should refer to the State Department’s “Country Specific Information for Mexico”, the publication “Tips for Student Travelers”, and the publication “Help for American Victims of Crime Overseas”. All these resources are available at the US State Department’s website at http://travel.state.gov/.

References: travel.state.gov, tods.state.us & aacentral.com

UTSAPD Wants You To Be Safe
Watch for travel advisories to Mexico
Photos: Google images

Take the Initiative to Make a Difference:

Our department is seeking men and women from all backgrounds who want to take the initiative to make a difference in service to the university community as a police officer. We offer excellent training, great pay and benefits and opportunities for advancement. To apply, go to www.utsajobs.com. More information about the department, go to www.utsa.edu/utsapd. Hurry! Position closes March 28th!

On Thursday, 24 February 2011, the area near the Downtown Campus lost power. Cpl. Weber, Officer Guerrero and Guards Carrion, Sejd & Kinsman responded to critical areas to ensure the safety and security of the campus. After the power was restored and classes resumed, several individuals thanked the Police Department for their assistance during the outage. One student stated that it looked like we were everywhere and wanted to thank us.

The Bottom Line by Chief Steve Barrera

This month’s newsletter is dedicated to spring break safety. I have been hearing quite a few students talking about how happy they are that spring break is finally here! Seems like the holiday break was long ago. Now that the weather is also becoming much warmer I’m sure there will be a lot of outdoor activities students will partake in. My message to all our students and staff this break is to make it a safe and productive spring break. I’m sure some of you will be driving on a short vacation so be sure to be conscious of driver safety tips and be a defensive driver while on your break. Don’t be in a hurry and obviously don’t mix alcohol with driving. Whatever your plans for this spring break just make sure you make good decisions when it comes to your personal safety. The best thing to remember is to not place yourself in situations where you may be in danger. Do not take unnecessary risks and always err on the side of caution when it comes to your safety. The goal is to have fun and make it back safe. Before you know it the semester will be over and summer will be here. Don’t forget to have a great spring break this year while being safe!