



FIVE WAYS TO SAFEGUARD YOUR TRAVELS

USTOA offers tips

In today's economic environment safeguarding your travel dollars is more important than ever. The US Tour Operators Association – whose members send 11 people annually on vacation – provides the following five tips:

Buy from a reputable company: -- Before putting money down on a tour or vacation package check out the company. One way is to look for membership in a professional organization such as the National Tour Association (NTA) or the US Tour Operators Association (USTOA). USTOA's members have met the travel industry's strictest requirements, and all Active members must participate in the association's Travelers Assistance Program. The Travelers Assistance Program, among other things, reimburses travelers up to \$1 million for payments in case the tour operator goes out of business. USTOA is the only travel industry organization with a \$1 million plan. For more information and a list of USTOA member companies visit www.ustoa.com or www.ustoa.travel.

Consider travel insurance: If you have to cancel or interrupt your trip because of your illness or that of a family member, as well as other reasons, travel insurance can reimburse you for non-refundable payments such as hotel and other travel arrangements. Some travel insurance policies also protect against tour operator and/or company default. Check the US Travel Insurance Association, www.ustia.org, for more information.

See a travel agent: Travel agents make it their business to stay on top of what's happening in the travel industry. A good travel agent will help you select the best type of vacation for your dollars, and also direct you to reliable companies.

Use a credit card: Credit cards will normally reimburse for undelivered services providing the services were paid for within a specified time period. In case a travel provider such as a hotel, tour operator, airline, etc. goes out of business and you have paid with a credit card, contact your credit card company.

Be scam savvy: If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Be wary of unsolicited emails and faxes, and check out the travel provider. Be careful if someone asks for the money up front, or pressures you for a credit card number. Check out the company before putting your money down.

For more information on USTOA, phone 1-800-GO-USTOA (800-468-7862).