

PRESS RELEASE THURSDAY 4 JULY 2002

**TIPS FROM THE FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE FOR
GAY, LESBIAN, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER (GLBT) TRAVELLERS**

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has today (4 July) issued travellers tips specifically for the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender (GLBT) sector. The tips, which will be available on the FCO web site (www.fco.gov.uk/knowbeforeyougo) are part of the on-going 'Know Before You Go' campaign.

The tips have been developed with Stonewall, a leading pressure group fighting for equal rights for gay and lesbians, along with other key figures in the GLBT travel industry and media such as Respect Holidays, Gay Times, gay.com, Diva and the Pink Paper to ensure that the tips incorporate 'real' issues and above all are relevant.

Baroness Amos, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, said " We are proud to be one of the first Foreign Offices to address the concerns of the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender travellers. The 'Know Before You Go' campaign was launched last year to help British travellers better prepare before going abroad so they are more likely to enjoy a trouble free holiday.

"Our web site has a wealth of useful travel advice and our new gay tips are a critical addition. We want everyone to be sure that they will receive the same help and practical advice from the FCO if they should encounter problems abroad."

Notes for Editors:

The tips are designed to give general advice to GLBT travellers prior to travelling abroad. The tips include:

1. Check out the FCO Travel Advice, available online at www.fco.gov.uk/knowbeforeyougo or by calling 020 7008 0232/0233.
2. Make sure you take out adequate travel insurance before you go, checking that the cover provided is appropriate to you and your circumstances.
3. Get to know your destination. There are many gay travel guides on the market and the Internet and gay press can also be a great resource for travel information.
4. Think about your sexual health before you go. Many sexual health products are not as readily available abroad as they are in the UK and quality can differ depending on where you are.
5. More and more hotels are now actively welcoming same-sex couples. But it's wise to check before you go and make reservations in advance to avoid difficulties when checking in.
6. Bear in mind that some resorts can be quite segregated and, when you're outside distinct gay 'neighbourhoods', open expressions of your sexuality might be frowned upon.
7. Try to avoid potentially risky situations. Be aware of your environment, stay alert and in control.
8. Be aware that criminals have been known to exploit the generally open and relaxed nature of gay 'neighbourhoods' and beaches. Don't leave your belongings unattended and try not to carry large amounts of money around with you.
9. If you get into any difficulties, seek the advice of your tour operator, local police or the nearest British consulate. Our consular staff overseas are

there to help all British nationals and your concerns will be taken seriously and handled in a discreet and courteous manner.

10. Have fun! Although attitudes in other countries can be very different to those in the UK, you can have a very positive and enjoyable travelling experience.

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