

RISKY BRITS ABROAD

Insurer advises winter sun-seekers to keep their wits about them

Holidays are a time to kick back, relax and leave your troubles behind you. However, **Lloyds TSB Insurance** is warning winter sun-seekers not to get too relaxed, as a new study¹ reveals that Brits abroad are more inclined to drop their guard and take more risks with their belongings and personal safety.

According to the report, a quarter (26 per cent) of those surveyed admits to getting caught up in the holiday spirit and taking more risks. Men are the worst culprits, with a third (29 per cent) throwing caution to the wind when it comes to holiday fun.

Phil Loney, managing director, Lloyds TSB Insurance, said: "We all look forward to holidays and the chance to switch off and let our hair down. However, our research shows that Brits abroad are ditching their common sense at the departure gate and are potentially putting themselves and their valuables in jeopardy. It is vital to ensure that you have adequate travel insurance and that you take the necessary precautions to ensure that you are covered, should the worst happen."

Travellers are unwittingly making themselves targets for thieves by failing to take simple steps to safeguard their belongings. One in five (21 per cent) have gone out and left valuables such as money and passports lying around in their hotel room. One in ten (11 per cent) admit to leaving valuables unattended on the beach whilst they go for a dip and a further one in ten (9 per cent) have left their hotel room unlocked or the windows open.

But it is not just their belongings that people are leaving to chance. Seduced by sunshine and sangria, travellers are also gambling with their own health and safety. Despite widespread health warnings, one in three (34 per cent) confess to getting badly sunburnt in a bid to get a tan whilst one in four (28 per cent) admit to drinking the local tap water risking the dreaded 'delhi belly'.

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Holidays also tend to bring out the adventurous side in Brits who are prepared to do things they wouldn't normally do in the UK, such as taking part in the more risky watersports (23 per cent) and speeding around foreign roads on mopeds (13 per cent). Despite regular safety campaigns, a further one in ten (9 per cent) have failed to wear their seatbelt whilst driving abroad.

Despite the fact that holidaymakers are taking a 'devil may care' attitude with their valuables and personal safety, seven per cent of those questioned admit that they do not take out travel insurance. Men are worse than average with nine per cent failing to get themselves insured. Worryingly, 16 to 24 year olds are least likely to take out insurance (13 per cent) even though they are the most likely to take more risks whilst on holiday (43 per cent).

Of those who do arrange insurance before they travel, 16 per cent take the insurance offered by their travel agent which may not necessarily be the cheapest deal.

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Notes to editors:

- 1365 people were surveyed by Tickbox in October 2004.

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