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## SAFETY AND CRIME PREVENTION

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### EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS

Telephone numbers for the Hungarian public emergency services are as follows. These numbers may be dialed from any payphone, without a coin or card.

EMERGENCY (general line)	112
Ambulance:	104
Police	107
Fire	105

### GENERAL PRECAUTIONS

As has any large city, Budapest also has its fair share of crime, typically against property (burglary, theft, robbery, etc.). While there is no fail-safe method of protecting oneself completely, some basic safety precautions can help reduce the chances of becoming a victim:

1. To minimize the impact of a pick-pocketing incident, please keep your money in a bank account or in a safe in your hotel and carry a minimal amount of cash.
2. Pay attention to your bag and wallet especially on crowded streets, squares, popular tourist places and on public transportation. If you are carrying a great deal of money, you are strongly advised to split it up and place it in several different locations in your bags and/or pockets. A common pick-pocketing method in Budapest is for two or more pickpockets to work together. An individual will board a bus, metro, or tram in front of an unsuspecting victim, pausing for a moment to block the door. The thieves behind the victim will then push forward, as though anxious to get on, while picking the pocket of the trapped victim.
3. When staying in a hotel (including the CEU Center) leave all your money and other valuables in the hotel's safe or other places designated by the hotel.
4. Exchange currency at *bureaux de change* only since abusers may deceive you with counterfeit money.
5. Try to avoid being alone outside in the late-night hours, keep away from deserted, dark places and do not behave provocatively.
6. If you need a taxi, order it by phone: the ride is cheaper and more reliable this way.
7. In order not to be a victim of a fraud ask a policeman for his police identity card before paying a cash fine or insist on paying by check. (Police officers can be identified by their uniform, identification badge or police service ID card.)
8. In order not to face any inconvenient situation, after entering a restaurant ask a waiter for a menu. Never order anything in a cafe or restaurant, etc., if there is no price list available to check the prices. Budapest's most notorious cases of this form of rip-off can cost an unsuspecting tourist as much as a thousand dollars for a few drinks.
9. Familiarize yourself with your neighborhood and the university facilities by walking around in daylight. On frequently traveled internal routes, note the location of the CEU emergency telephones or call boxes before you might ever need them.

### SCAMS IN BUDAPEST

#### Taxi scams

All taxis in Budapest are legally required to stick to specific fees and mileage charges, and taxi drivers working for legitimate taxi companies don't usually try to charge customers more.

Taxis **without company names** and **without listed prices** are to be avoided. These cars will have a simple **rectangular 'Taxi' sign** on their roof, with no company logo visible and little to no information printed in or around the car.

#### Bar scams

Another kind of scam occurs in many bars and restaurants, not just ones you are led to by women on the street. If you are clearly a tourist, the establishment may swap menus to one with higher prices when you go to pay, or not show you a menu to start with at all. So make sure you **always verify the price prior to the purchase** and look out for any hidden costs.

**Compare prices between the Hungarian and English menus** to be sure you are not getting ripped off. Keep the menu with you at all times.

Taxi drivers can also be involved in the scam. They will suggest bars to take you to because they are getting a commission from the owners who are waiting to rip you off.

Most of the places that have been reported to be out to get you are located in Budapest's fifth district, on or near the main tourist street, the Váci utca. It's best to avoid bars and clubs that can't be easily accessed from street level, for example, a place that you can only get to by elevator. Also, be wary of places that don't clearly display menus and have their own ATM. Of course, most of the restaurants are correct, however, innocent mistakes can happen. Sometimes the restaurant is busy and mixes up the orders and you get the wrong bill.

### **Drug scams**

**All drugs are illegal in Budapest**, but fake drug dealers often try to scam Budapest tourists. Many men and women like to patrol through the popular areas of Budapest, usually the 6th and 7th districts (the party districts), attempting to sell drugs to passersby. These drugs are not real and they are simply trying to scam tourists out of their money. All drugs are illegal in Budapest and can result in heavy legal action. Beware that anyone 'selling' drugs on the street is simply scamming you.

### **A Friendly Stranger**

Many scams or attacks start with casual conversation. The perpetrator is sizing up the situation to see how easily he/she can intimidate or dupe you. Although most people would recognize something strange about these types of situations, many ignore their intuition because they do not want to appear to be unfriendly or suspicious. If your instincts about a person (stranger or acquaintance) make you uneasy, get out of the situation as quickly as possible, even if it means being rude, making a scene, or feeling foolish. Use caution with strangers who offer you gifts or who ask you to accompany them to an unknown place.