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How To Care For Your Luggage

THE PLANET TRAVELLER...TRAVEL TIPS

frequent travelling...

Frequent travel is as tough on bags as it is on travellers. Proper care and handling of your luggage will not only reduce the risk of damage but also extend its life-span. As a rule, do not overpack, as it puts a strain on zippers, wheels, seams, handles, frames and hinges.

start with the right luggage...

Buy luggage that meets your most demanding travel needs. Consider if the material used, whether it is soft or hard sided and the features meet the needs of both business and leisure trips.

Do not buy cheap luggage and risk its falling apart from airport handling. Nor go for designer or expensive luggage as it attracts attention. A sensible, sturdy, medium priced luggage is best.

Consider replacing old or worn luggage. Luggage that is several years old may not be able to withstand today's automated luggage handling systems.

just before you leave home...

Take a photo of your luggage in case you lose it. It helps in assisting baggage and insurance claims.

Remove all old baggage claim tickets from your luggage.

Always place an ID tag on all luggage, including your hand-carry bag, backpack, briefcase etc.

Put your business address or the address of your next destination with a contactable phone number.

For shopping trips, pack a smaller suitcase and place it inside an empty larger case to protect it and use as a spare luggage on your return.

Always lock luggage, not only to discourage theft but to make sure it does not fall apart during handling.

Buy small locks to lock all external zipper pockets of bags.

Buy sturdy, lockable luggage straps to strap round the girth of your luggage to keep them closed and for identification.

when checking in luggage...

Only check in luggage that is sturdy enough to withstand airline baggage handling systems.

Never check in a bag that does not completely close. If you need a bungee cord or luggage strap to keep the bag closed, it probably won't survive the trip.

Never check in a bag that has broken components such as wheels, handles, zippers, latches and locks.

Never check in a luggage that is meant to be carried on. Most briefcases, tote bags, plastic garment covers are not designed to survive check-in handling.

Remove all pull-straps upon checking in to prevent it from catching onto other objects and going missing.

Ensure that you personally check in your luggage. Constantly count your luggage at all stations and tally it with your luggage check-in tickets.

before leaving the airport...

Check you bag carefully in the baggage claims area before leaving the airport. Report any damage immediately to the baggage service centre of the airline on which you travelled. Damage claims should be filed before and not after leaving the airport. By not following this procedure, your damage will not be covered under warranty or airline policy.

when not in use...

Crumpled-up newspaper and placed inside luggage will help keep dampness and mildew to a minimum as the paper will absorb the wetness. Change newspaper every few months. If dampness occurs, use a hairdryer to eliminate it. If your luggage has been stored for quite a while, place it under the sun to air before packing it. Use a small vacuum cleaner to clean your luggage. Remove all stains from fabric immediately with toothbrush, soap and water. Water-repellent sprays work wonders on soft-sided luggage to prevent stains and keep water from soaking in.