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Issues

Attention All Travelers!

Authors Leslie Kelly and Diane Kirrane omitted a very serious tip in their article, "Don't Trip Up When You Travel" (January 1987). They suggest that upon checking into their hotel rooms, travelers should first inspect the rooms' basic equipment and order adjustments if necessary. I submit that doing this without first checking the fire exits and escape routes available can lead to a life-threatening situation.

The Fire Chiefs of America recommend that all travelers should find the nearest fire exit and be able to get to it in the dark on their hands and knees, as they would in the case of a real emergency. It is imperative that this be done *before anything else*.

It is now my own practice to do just that. Once I put my bags down in the room, before I check to see if the television and the air conditioner work, before I check to see what the view is like, even before the door locks behind me, I go back into the hallway and find the nearest fire exit by feeling along the wall and counting the number of doors I have to pass to get to the stairwell. If I wait until I check the amenities, it may be too late for me to determine an escape route.

In light of recent hotel tragedies, no one should stay in an unfamiliar hotel room unaware of an emergency exit.

Garry F. Slobodian
Great-West Life
Winnipeg, Canada

Viewpoints

[In response to January's "Tell Us What You Think" on cutbacks and elimination of employee benefits.]

Being self-employed, I grapple daily with the question raised on your January "Issues" page: How would you react if your company cut out health insurance, tuition reimbursement, retirement plans? My solution? Self-provided insurance and money-market funds. (Being an adjunct professor at a local university may mean I *am* the tuition

problem!) Although a consultant's yearly income is often less than that of a salaried employee, I have always found the money to make those monthly insurance payments. Providing your own perks can be a burden, but not an insurmountable one.

More important for the white-collar employee is the increased power providing your own perks would give you within an organization. The elimination of benefits reduces an employer's negotiating options. The savvy employee will recognize this and secure a higher salary—liquid cash that can be invested in a personally more advantageous way than any company personnel office could.

One final advantage for the employer: Employees who work for the money, I have found, are harder working, more efficient, and take less sick days than those who work mainly for the benefits. Anyone who appreciates the joys of working in a professional, lean-and-mean operation will see the elimination of benefits in a very positive light.

George Bland
George Bland Associates
Washington, D.C.

Tell Us What You Think

The great appeal of video teleconferencing is puzzling to many trainers who fail to see the advantage in "live via satellite" sessions versus prerecorded ones. In a live classroom setting, direct student-teacher spontaneity is a primary draw. Many argue that video teleconferencing doesn't offer this opportunity any more than a taped version could. What, therefore, justifies investing in complex hardware over a simple VCR? We'd like to hear your opinions. Send your viewpoints to "Issues," *Training & Development Journal*, 1630 Duke St., Box 1443, Alexandria, VA 22313.

"Issues" is compiled and edited by Patricia Fitzgerald. Send your viewpoints to: *Issues*, *Training & Development Journal*, 1630 Duke St., Box 1443, Alexandria, VA 22313.