

Accommodation Fraud

If you're booking accommodation for the London 2012 Games, the **Metropolitan Police Service's Operation Podium** urges you to follow this advice to protect you and your personal details from being exploited by criminals.

- The safest way to protect yourself from booking bogus accommodation is to book directly with an established hotel or through a reputable travel company.
- If using a travel company, ensure it is a member of a trade body such as the Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA), the Travel Association or the Air Travel Organisers' Licensing organisation (ATOL).
- If you decide to book independently you should exercise caution. Establish if you are dealing directly with the property owner or a letting agent.
- Research the property or hotel that you are booking - verify that the address exists through web searches and online maps. Do the images match those on the advert? Check whether there are any reviews for the accommodation from previous visitors.
- If dealing with the property owner ask them about the property and the area in detail. Can you confirm that what they tell you is accurate from your own research?
- Research any agent that you are dealing with via an online search engine. Are there any reviews of the website or agent? Ask what checks the agent makes on the properties that they are advertising and its owner? Does the website use the Padlock symbol to indicate the site is secure?
- When paying for accommodation never pay by cash or use a Money Transfer Agent such as Western Union or Moneygram, as these are not intended for commercial payments.
- If possible pay by credit card as this may protect your payment.
- Always check the terms and conditions to confirm exactly what you are being sold. Double check your booking before travel, particularly if there is a long gap between making the booking and arrival.
- Be aware that fraudulent adverts do exist. If you have any doubts do not book it!

If you become a victim of accommodation fraud, report it to www.actionfraud.org.uk

For more advice on protecting yourself whilst online see www.getsafeonline.org.uk

