

## **RECOMMENDATIONS TO AVOID GETTING IMPORTANT ITEMS STOLEN**

Most volunteers don't have anything stolen from them and often, after feeling a volunteer or the maid has taken something from them, they find it where they put it, under the bed or in their suitcase. But some volunteers do have things stolen from them.

You should NOT carry ANYTHING on you that isn't necessary or that you can't afford to lose. You don't need your driver's license or your social security card in Ecuador. You should not carry your passport on you unless you really do need to have your actual passport (for example, going to the jungle or flying anywhere), however, you should always carry a COPY of your passport as identification. When you arrive you should put away (lock in your suitcase or something) all important items you don't need in Ecuador (your wallet, driver's license, etc. if you brought them)—you shouldn't leave any of this stuff lying around in your room or anywhere in the house.

A good rule of thumb: leave your wallet locked in your suitcase once you arrive and put what cash you need in your purse/Ecuador bag to get by, more if you have a specific plan to spend it. Your debit/credit/ATM card should stay in your wallet locked in your suitcase in your room unless you need to withdraw cash from the ATM machine (buy something), and then once you've gotten the money, your card and the cash you don't need right away, should go right back into your wallet in your locked suitcase. You should specifically bring for this: a combination suitcase lock or else a key lock (but if you do the latter, don't bring one that has the generic-type of key which many people might have).

You shouldn't take much money on you/in your purse when you go on shifts. For all instances of volunteers losing money/wallets/passports/cameras/etc...we feel bad for them...but when we hear the details of what happened, all we can really say is "Why did you have that stuff with you?" Or "Why did you leave your wallet/passport/camera lying around anywhere?"