

## TRAVEL TIPS

DECA offers many opportunities to travel. It may be to your state conference; a leadership program; a career focused conference, such as the New York Experience or Sports and Entertainment Conference; or the International Career Development Conference. Wherever you decide to travel, you can be sure that your DECA experience will be full of learning and fun. To make your adventure the best it can be, you may wish to heed the following travel tips, which have been compiled with the help of past and present national officers.

**1. Make sure that you have all of the itinerary and general information that you need:**

- Have the hotel or conference site address and phone number written down and with you. Give a copy to your family.
- Know your transportation options for getting to and from the conference and for getting around during the conference. (Hints: Have extra cash for public transportation or in case you get separated from the group. Never walk from building to building alone in a strange place.)
- Carry a picture ID.
- Use an online service or the Weather Channel to check out the weather at your destination before you pack.
- Check the conference agenda for any events for which you may need special attire.
- If you are flying, be sure to double check airline regulations for what you can and cannot carry on board. For example, all sharp objects (even nail files) must be kept in checked bags, not carry-on bags.

**2. Pack practical, “must-have” items before you pack those things that would just be “nice” to have.**

- DECA blazer or business suit, if there are formal programs at the conference
- Appropriate shirts or blouses for business attire
- Dress shoes (socks and/or hosiery)
- Enough underwear for each day + one extra.
- Casual (but not sloppy) clothes
- DECA T-shirt or polo for dances or other casual events
- Sleepwear
- Belts, ties, scarves, jewelry or other necessary outfit-completing items
- Cosmetics and toiletry items (toothbrush and paste, lotion, safety pins, make-up, etc.)
- Cell phone, if you have one, or change for the public phone (for keeping in touch with your advisor and family)
- Necessary medications

**3. The following are “nice” to have items if you find you have room.**

- Swimming attire (many hotels have pools), including cover-up and appropriate footwear
- Hair dryer – though most hotels furnish these, your room may not have one, have the kind you like, or you may not have an easy time sharing one with three other people
- Travel alarm clock – good insurance against a missed wake-up call
- Camera – recording your trip makes for fun memories later
- Pens/pencils and paper - again, most hotels and events furnish these but you may find that there are other times to make notes, like getting the phone number of the new friend you made
- Face-wipes – There are many good brands on the market now that make a quick refreshing clean up or make-up removal easy.

**4. Don't waste space bringing the following items to a DECA event.**

- Unless an advisor specifically tells you that there will be an opportunity to wear jeans (for example, at an outdoor ropes-course team-building event) do not bring them. Even when you are on an airplane, you are representing DECA to those around you and you should be dressed neatly.
- Open-toed shoes or flip-flops (except for the pool)
- Expensive jewelry or electronic items that would not ALWAYS be on your person – in other words, don't bring anything you can't afford to lose.
- Midriff-baring tops or falling-off-your-hips pants.

**5. Here are some packing, unpacking and hotel staying tricks to make your life easier.**

- Rolling clothes in a suitcase makes for more compact packing and in some cases reduces wrinkling.
- Always put toiletries (shampoo, lotions, make-up) in plastic bags with a strong tie or zip. Spills in a suitcase can be devastating!
- If you have room, consider taking extra hangers – like those white ones that come from the dry cleaners – that you can leave at the hotel at the end of the conference. When people share a room, there are rarely enough hangers to go around.
- Pack some empty space. There will always be a souvenir or extra shirt to bring back.
- An extra towel and washcloth, preferably of a really ugly color or pattern that no one else will even be tempted to use or take, is good insurance against your roommates soiling all of the hotel towels before you get one.
- If you REALLY can't sleep without your special pillow, go ahead and take it. Just be sure that you can manage carrying it with everything else you have and that it has a very distinctive pillowcase on it.
- Unpack as soon as you get there; later you will be too tired or busy.
- Be respectful of other hotel guests. Loud TV, music or talking can be disruptive and give DECA a bad image.

- Avoid using room service, minibars, or pay-per-view movies, even if you have access to them. These are extremely expensive and can get people in trouble if the room has been pre-paid.

Remember that you are representing a great organization. Always be prepared with a short explanation of what DECA is for those who ask questions about that insignia on your shirt or why you are traveling. From Chris Nguyen, 2003-04 Western Region Vice President comes this example of an appropriate “elevator speech”:

“DECA is an association of over 180,000 high school and college students from around the world focusing on marketing, management and entrepreneurship. We participate in numerous competitive events, perform many hours of community service, and always seek to develop and strengthen our leadership skills. I’m here/headed to \_\_\_\_\_ for one of our annual career development conferences and I’m looking forward to the exciting programs that DECA has lined up for us!”

Lastly, don’t forget to take a positive attitude with you. There is nothing like it for making your trip the most successful it can be.