

# PERSONAL SAFETY

We are offering these tips and suggestions to help you be more aware of potential dangers. We have included some ways to help reduce the odds of your becoming a victim.

## PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

**Be** aware of your surroundings. Allowing yourself to get distracted may make it easier for an assailant to get close. Don't dawdle.

**Stay** on well lit populated streets. Pay attention to places that could conceal an assailant such as bushes, fences, dark areas near buildings, or anywhere else someone could hide. Don't take shortcuts through alleys or any other deserted areas.

**Look** at your reflection in windows to see if anyone is behind you. If possible, never walk alone. There is safety in numbers and when you will have someone to talk with, time goes by faster.

**Try** to avoid being alone when using a Laundromat, a phone booth, or an ATM. Avoid dark stairwells and laundry rooms when you are alone.

**If** you believe you are in danger, run to the nearest well lit, populated area. Yell for help as you are running. YELL **FIRE** OR **RAPE**! People are more likely to react to someone shouting "fire" or "rape" as opposed to "help".

**Limit** the number of packages you are carrying. Use a fanny pack or small hand bag instead of a large purse. If you must have a large purse, carry it like a football. A shoulder strap is easy to grab. If your purse is snatched, **LET IT GO**. Don't risk injury by fighting. Your life is not worth losing over personal property.

**Don't** wear headphones. They will interfere with your ability to hear someone behind you.

**Never** accept a ride from a stranger. If someone asks you for directions, stay back from the vehicle.

**Don't** be afraid to trust your instincts. If a situation feels uncomfortable, you may be right. Don't hesitate to leave if something *doesn't feel right*. Don't be afraid to make a scene. Your personal safety is more important than some possible embarrassment.

***The majority of rapes ARE NOT committed by strangers.***

**Most** law enforcement officers recommend against carrying a gun or knife. Not only could they be turned against you physically, there are potential legal difficulties. They suggest having something in your hand such as keys, pepper spray, or a personal alarm. Don't just carry one of these in your purse or backpack, carry it in your hand. With something in your hand, you are better able to act quickly in a dangerous situation.

## **AUTO SAFETY**

### **NEVER PICK UP HITCHHIKERS!**

Share a ride if you can. There is safety in numbers and you will also have someone to talk with.

**Always** look around the area before leaving or approaching your car.

**Always** lock your car doors. Keep windows rolled up. Never leave your car unlocked and unattended with the engine running, even for 'just a second'. Never leave a child unattended in a vehicle (If you have a pet along, beware of temperatures in the car).

**Always** try to leave a buffer zone around your vehicle while driving. Try not to drive next to the curb to avoid being cut off. Leave space between cars when stopped so you could pull out if threatened.

**Should** someone "tap" your rear bumper while stopped, keep calm. Don't get out or roll down your window. Instead, have that person follow you to the nearest police station to exchange information.

**Try** to keep your car in good running condition and the gas tank at least half full to avoid breakdowns. If your car does break down, raise the hood and stay in the car. If someone stops to offer assistance, only open the window a crack to talk to them. Ask them to call the police for you.

**If** you see someone stalled, Don't stop to help. Either use your cell phone to call for help or call from a safe place.

**When** parking, get as close to your destination as possible and park in a well lit spot. Don't be embarrassed to ask a security person to walk with you when retrieving your car.

**When** leaving your car with a valet service or service station, only hand over the ignition key.

**When** you approach your parked car, if you don't have remote access, have your keys ready.

**Having** a cell phone is worth the investment (If for nothing more than peace of mind).

## **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SAFETY**

### **BUS**

**If** possible, stand near other people while at a bus stop.

**While** riding, sit near the driver and use an aisle seat if you can.

**DON'T SLEEP.**

**If** you feel you are being followed, only get off at a well lit, populated stop.

**Don't** be afraid to make a scene. The driver should have access to a

dispatcher who can call the police.

## **TAXI**

**If** in a new city, taxis can be the safest way to travel, especially after dark.

**Note** the driver's license ID.

**Sit** in back with the doors locked.

**Ask** the driver to wait until you are safely inside your destination.

**Ride** with a companion if possible.

## **PLANE**

**Pack** only essentials if possible. If you can, carry your own luggage.

**Don't** put your full name or home address on your luggage tags.

**Never** set your luggage down without knowing exactly where it is at all times.

**Keep** your eye on bags passing through x-ray machines.

## **REST ROOMS**

**Always** check stalls before going in. If it is a single person room, lock the door.

**NEVER** allow young children to use public rest rooms alone.

## **HOTELS/MOTELS**

**If** you are on an upper floor, try to get a room near the elevator.

**Look** around as you enter your room. If it doesn't feel right, contact the front desk.

**Make** sure all doors and windows are securely locked.

**If** an employee should come to your room, don't be afraid to ask for ID or call the front desk for verification.

## **ELEVATORS**

**Stand** back from the door when waiting. You can't be pushed in from a distance.

**Never** enter an elevator with a lone occupant if you feel uncomfortable. Trust your instincts.

**If** possible, push your floor number last. Try to stay near the button board for easy access to the alarm button.

## **MISCELLANEOUS TIPS**

**You** should never go anywhere without telling a trusted person the details of your trip. They should know who you are going with, where you are going,

and when you expect to return.

**Y**our best defense may be rehearsing in your mind what you would do in a potentially dangerous situation. With enough practice, you may be able to act in a more calm manner. By being calm, you will be able to think more clearly and be able to focus on protective behaviors you have rehearsed. Your safety may depend on a quick and decisive reaction.

**W**hen in public places, be careful what personal information you divulge while talking on your cell phone.

**N**ever leave your schedule on your voicemail or answering machine.

**W**hen leaving your children with a trusted babysitter, make sure you leave all important phone numbers. The sitter should also have information about all safety equipment (alarms, fire extinguisher, first aid kit).

**I**f your keys are lost or stolen, change your locks immediately.

**D**on't carry all your credit cards with you. Only have the ones you will be using on that particular trip. Carry credit cards and cash on your person or in a fanny pack instead of your purse.

**B**e aware of your surroundings when approaching or leaving an ATM. Try to use the ATM in daylight. Never "flash your cash" when leaving the ATM.