

Personal Safety Tips

The following are tips that can help you avoid becoming a victim of a crime when you are out and about, or working at your job. By taking a few simple precautions, you can reduce the risk to yourself, and also discourage those who commit crimes. Burglars, robbers, and thieves seek primarily to remove cash or property. Many such intruders are capable of harming people with little provocation, so whether at work, at home, or out on the street, these precautions should be taken.

At Home

- Always leave your headlights on when arriving home after dark until you have unlocked the garage door, or unlocked the front door.
- When arriving home by private auto or taxi, ask the driver to wait until you are safely inside.
- Have the door key in your hand so you can open the door immediately when you return home.
- If you are a woman alone, list only your first initial and last name on the mailbox, or in the telephone directory.
- When moving into a new apartment or residence, **ALWAYS** have the locks re-keyed, or changed.
- Know who is at your door before opening it. Wide angle door viewers (180 degrees or 190 degrees) enable you to identify the visitor. You can see the person, that person can't see you.
- Never rely on chain locks. They are a privacy lock, but not a security lock.
- Never dress in front of windows, always close your drapes.
- Never let anyone into your home without proper identification. Don't be afraid to ask for identification.
- Never let strangers into your home to use the telephone. Make the call for them while they wait outside.
- Always leave outside lights on after dark, or use motion lights.
- If you receive a wrong number phone call, don't give out your name or phone number.
- If you receive an obscene phone call, hang up and call police.
- In an apartment building, **NEVER** be alone in the laundry room.
- If you suspect anyone is in your house, do not go in. Go to a neighbor and call the police.
- If you see or hear anything suspicious, call the police.

At Places of Business

Opening the business: Have two employees together meet and unlock the business. One should stay outside, while the other checks the interior. After clearing, both may enter.

Closing the Business: Employees should accompany each other to their vehicles-- especially at night. If this is not possible, perhaps a security guard for the shopping center can escort the last employee to his/her car.

Bank Deposits: Making bank deposits alone can be dangerous. Employees making deposits should always go in pairs. If you are alone, vary deposit times and carry the deposit inside a purse or a plain bag. Do not use a bank bag or a bag with a name on it. **Never** make deposits after closing, as this is an obvious for hold-ups.

Taking out the trash: Doing this in pairs is much safer, both for the employees and the business.

Panic buttons: Install panic buttons at the front counter. Make sure there are phones near both front and rear entrances.

Controlling Access: This enhances personal security. Keep secondary exits locked. Limit access to secondary exits by non-employees by having doors alarmed and labeled "**EMERGENCY EXIT ONLY**" or limit access to the area around the door.

Keep Restrooms Locked: Be in control of access to restrooms, storage areas, etc. This prevents assailants from hiding in waiting and "breakouts."

ID Badges for Access Control: They are only as good as the enforcement of the policy.

Visibility: This increases safety. Keep parking and walking areas well lit, and keep the area around the building clear of debris. Stacks of boxes and pallets can be hiding places for assailants. Install mirrors or Closed Circuit TV in rooms with blind corners and in enclosed parking facilities.

Help Keep Employees Safe

- Keep buildings locked whenever public access is not necessary.
- Watch for suspicious persons (persons not having legitimate business.)
- Look into your car before entering it.
- If you think you are being followed, find other people.
- Use the "buddy" system.
- Take access control policies seriously.
- If Confrontation Does Occur, These are the Safety Procedures to be Kept in Mind:
 - Don't be a hero. Do nothing to risk your personal safety.
 - Consider all guns, or threat of guns, as loaded weapons.
 - Activate alarms only if you can do so without detection.
 - Attempt to alert co-workers only if you can do so safely.
 - Follow directions exactly, without volunteering.
 - Without seeming obvious, study attacker's distinguishing features.

While You Are Out

- Try **NOT** to go out alone at night. Avoid unfamiliar areas, if possible.
- Don't take shortcuts: don't walk in or near alleys, and don't walk on deserted streets.
- Use caution in parking lots, and don't walk in poorly lighted areas, or dark doorways, or near shrubbery.
- Don't accept rides from strangers, and don't respond to comments from strangers on the street.
- Don't get into an empty elevator with a stranger. If you do ride with another person, stand near the control panel and if attacked, press as many of the control buttons as possible.
- Don't hitchhike, and if someone suspicious is following you, cross the street and walk into an open business.
- Watch your surroundings and be alert for suspicious persons, especially around banks, stores, street, and your car or home.
- If you are alone at work after business hours, keep the door locked.
- If you work late, ask the security guard or a co-worker to walk you to your car.
- When meeting a new friend, exchange phone numbers only, not addresses. On a first date, let family and friends know where you are going. Consider a daytime meeting rather than a night meeting, for a first date, and meet in a public place.
- It is never a good idea to go to a nightclub alone, and if you do, provide your own transportation.
- Keep your space - Intimate space - 0 to 1.5 feet Personal space - 1.5 to 4 feet Social space - 4 to 12 feet Public space - 12 feet or more

- Don't allow alcohol or drugs to impair your judgment. If you haven't already set a few social standards, do so and stick to them. Don't allow an overly aggressive pursuer to change your mind.

In Your Automobile

- Never pickup hitchhikers.
- Don't park in the dark.
- Never leave your keys in the car.
- Never allow another vehicle to follow you home.
- Have your keys in hand so you can open the car door without delay.
- Always keep your car in gear when stopped at a traffic signal or stop sign, so if threatened in any way, you can quickly drive away.
- Always check the back seat of your car before getting in.
- If you stop to aid others, do not get out of the car. Ask what the problem is, and go to the nearest phone and call the police.
- Always lock your doors while driving.
- Always prearrange meeting with anyone so you do not have to wait alone.

Riding The Bus or Trolley

- During off hours, ride as near the operator as possible.
- If you are going to be out late, make sure you have cab fare.
- If someone on the bus bothers you, change seats and tell the operator.
- Have your fare or pass ready in hand when boarding the bus.
- At night avoid dark and isolated intersections or stops.
- Look around when getting off the bus or trolley, and be aware of people around you.

If You Are Attacked

- Use common sense. Try to talk your way out of it.
- Try to negotiate.
- Stall for time.
- Be verbally assertive.
- Distract or divert the assailant, then flee. Run toward an open business or a group of people. Hide if you get the opportunity.
- Scream loudly and keep it up to attract attention and help from people near by.
- If the attacker threatens you with a deadly weapon, and you come out of it alive, you took the proper course of action. During an armed attack, you must decide the proper course of action. There is no hard and fast rule as to self defense. You must consider your physical capabilities, your location, and your perceived chances of success. If you cannot escape, bide your time and look for another opportunity, a half-hearted attempt could be worse than no attempt at all.
- Notify The Police immediately, when you get the opportunity, and if there are witnesses, ask them to stay until police arrive.
- It is not advisable to carry guns, clubs, knives, or chemical sprays. It is illegal to carry some of these weapons, and they could be used against you. It is advisable not to carry weapons.
- And finally, if a crime occurs, report it. When you report a crime and all the facts about it, it helps the police to assign officers in the places where crimes are occurring or where they are most likely to occur. If you don't report a crime, this allows the criminal to operate without interference. Tell The Police what you know. No fact is too trivial.

Purse Protection

- If at all possible, don't carry a purse.
- When possible, carry your wallet, keys, and other valuables on your person, or in an inside pocket, or other suitable place, rather than your purse. Your purse should be used to carry brushes, combs, make-up, etc.
- Credit cards and checks should be carried instead of cash. Maintain a record of the account numbers at home. Practice carrying only the cards you will be using.
- Carry a shoulder bag securely between your arm and body away from traffic.
- If you are wearing a coat, carry a purse worn over the shoulder, but under the coat.
- Watch your surroundings. Be alert for suspicious persons especially around banks, stores, streets, and your home.
- At night, stay in well-lighted areas and avoid walking close to shrubbery, dark doorways, or other places of concealment.
- Practice the "buddy system", and shop with a friend when possible. When walking in twos, place your purse between you and your friend.
- Carry a clutch bag un-snapped and upside down between your arm and body with any valuables in the zippered compartment. If someone attempts to steal your purse, loosen your grip, thus allowing the contents to fall to the ground.
- Consider "fanny packs" whenever possible.
- If you are attacked, don't struggle. Your purse can easily be replaced; you can't be. If there is a witness, ask that person to stay until police arrive.
- **Notify police immediately after an attack -911.**
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- **Don't . . .**
- **Don't** carry large amounts of money. The first rule is to limit your losses.
- **Don't** carry more than you can easily afford to lose. Many purse snatches are committed solely to finance narcotic addictions.
- **Don't** carry unnecessary valuables in your purse.
- **Don't** let your purse hang loosely in your hand.
- **Don't** carry a lethal weapon; it could be used against you.
- **Don't** fight. Surrender your purse.

<http://www.montclairsic.org/personalsafety.htm>