



PERSONAL SAFETY

Personal safety is extremely important to everyone's peace of mind. The chances of you or someone you know becoming a victim of violent crime are low. Violent crimes by strangers in public places account for a small portion of recorded crime and are rare.

You can make yourself less of a victim of violent crime by taking a few sensible precautions. You may already do things to keep yourself safe and it does not mean you will have to drastically change your lifestyle.

For personal safety reasons you should plan ahead and think what you would do in certain situations. For example, would you stay and defend yourself or would you give the offender what they want. There is nothing wrong, whichever way you act but you should consider the options as there will be little time to think when the situation arises.

General rules to follow

Safety is in numbers – never walk alone in unfamiliar territory or late at night. You will be safest in well lit areas with the highest traffic volume.

Plan your route; always know where you are going.

Look and act confident as if you have a purpose for being where you are.

Don't store all your valuables in one bag or pocket. Keep your keys in one pocket, your cell phone in another and cash in your wallet or purse

If you are handicapped and in a wheelchair, keep your valuables tucked in beside you. Don't keep them at the rear of the chair.

If someone demands something from you, it may be wise to let them

have it and avoid confrontation and injury. Material items are not worth the risk to your life. Self defense or reasonable force can be used in life threatening situations but weigh the situation carefully.

Shouting or yelling are good defense mechanisms. Draw attention to yourself. Shouting "fire" rather than "help" sometimes draws a quicker response.

Be aware of your surroundings and the people around you. Always be alert.

Try not to be obvious about any valuables you are carrying. Don't flash jewelry, fancy cell phones or lap tops around.

When walking or jogging you should not be listening to a headset as you can't hear what is around you and therefore not alert to danger.

When using a credit card or ATM card be aware of the people around you and cover the key pad when punching in your code.

When using public transport plan your route. Wait in well lit areas for your ride. Never get in a vehicle with someone you feel uncomfortable with. If on a train or bus, sit near other people and if they make you feel uncomfortable, move or move near the driver or front of the vehicle.

If you know you are going to be out alone at night, prearrange a ride home with someone you know or plan on how you will get home.

If driving yourself always be sure your vehicle is in good running order, and always keep it fueled.

Keep doors locked when driving and never leave your vehicle unlocked when parked. Make sure windows are secured.

Secure all valuables in your vehicle out of sight of passers by.

When parking your vehicle in the morning, think about how it will be when you return to it after dark.

Do not pick up hitchhikers and never accept lifts from people you do not know well.

If your vehicle breaks down, stay in the vehicle with the doors locked.

Call for help using a cell phone or put a sign on your vehicle asking people to call police.

Never drink and drive or get in a vehicle with someone who has.

If at a function and a person begins to make you feel uncomfortable or presses to close, move away to another area or surround yourself with others. If they persist, advise them loudly to stay away or keep their hands off. Draw attention to them and make others aware you are being bothered.

Following the above steps may keep you safe but you should always be alert in any situation for danger. Plan your trips and stick to an itinerary, always let someone know where you should be or what you are doing. Being sensible and cautious is the best self protection you can have.