

## Personal Safety

### ARE YOU AS SAFE AS YOU CAN BE?

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#### Personal Safety Tips

Although theft and burglary leave emotional and financial effects, violent crimes have a much greater impact on our lifestyle and our feelings of vulnerability. The following will answer some questions and give you tips to alleviate the worry we all have regarding our personal safety.

##### **AUTOMATED TELLER MACHINE**

- Memorize your personal identification number (PIN). Do not carry your PIN anywhere on your person or in your wallet.
- Never give your PIN to anyone else.
- When using an automated teller machine (ATM) have your paperwork and ATM card ready before you arrive at the ATM.
- Be aware of people around the ATM and in parked cars who seem to be loitering or subtly watching customers transact business. If you feel uncomfortable, leave the location and find another ATM where you can safely transact your business.
- Report suspicious persons to bank personnel.
- When using a drive-up ATM always keep alert to your surroundings. Be sure your car doors are locked and the windows are closed. Look around and check the area before you open your car window to make sure no one is loitering around the ATM. Open the window only when you are sure it is safe to do so. Open the window long enough to conduct your transaction and leave the location promptly.
- Do not sit in the car at the ATM and do your personal accounting.
- Never use an ATM after dark.
- When using a walk-up ATM always keep alert to your surroundings. Choose an ATM in a shopping mall, market or an ATM that is in a bank or located near a busy street.

- Place your money in your pocket, purse or wallet before you turn away from the ATM.
- Take the receipt with you.

##### **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**

- Locate convenient, well-lighted, frequently used bus stops, train stations and taxicab stands.
- Check public transportation schedules in advance, especially if traveling at odd hours.
- Do not wait alone at a bus stop, train station or taxicab stand.
- Know where you are going and how to get back.
- When you board a bus sit near the driver.
- If you are verbally or physically harassed, report the incident to the driver or conductor immediately.
- Be alert to who gets off the bus or train with you.
- Trust your instincts. If you feel you are being followed, inform other passengers getting off with you or walk to a place where there are other people for assistance. Report the incident to the police as soon as possible.

##### **OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES**

When biking, jogging, roller-skating or participating in other outdoor activities remember the following:

- Choose a route in advance that is safe and populated
- Always carry proper identification
- Advise a loved one or a friend the route you will be taking so they will know where to look for you in an emergency
- Vary your route and activity schedule so that your behavior is not predictable
- Avoid pursuing outdoor activities after dark

usually respond during a confrontation. What is your style? Do you fight, run, cry or freeze?

- Know businesses that are open and the locations of the police, sheriff, highway patrol or fire stations along your route
- Keep your exercise gear in good repair and carry the necessary tools in case of an emergency
- Consider carrying a personal alarm

### **AT WORK**

- Become actively involved in working with your employer to improve security in and around your work place.
- If possible, get into the habit of traveling to and from work and parking areas with other people.
- Park in areas that are patrolled and well-lighted after dark.
- Avoid using isolated, deserted stairways in office buildings.
- If a suspicious looking person follows you into an elevator, step out of the elevator immediately.
- If you see a suspicious looking person inside an elevator you are about to enter, do not get in.
- If you are in an elevator and another person makes you feel uncomfortable, get off as soon as possible.
- When using elevators, stand near the control panel by the door so you can easily press the alarm button in an emergency.
- Lock valuables such as a purse, wallet and keys in desk drawers or other secured areas.
- Do not advertise your vacation plans, times you will be away from home or the amount of cash you are carrying.
- Observe security measures when using restrooms in office buildings. If the facilities are locked, never leave the door unlocked or give the key to an unauthorized person. Do not enter the restroom if the lock appears broken or the door is ajar. If the facilities are not kept locked, enter cautiously and check the area thoroughly before closing the door behind you.
- Avoid working late or odd hours if possible. If you must work late or an odd hour alert a family member, friend or security officer.
- Report all suspicious persons and activities to security personnel

### **IF YOU ARE ATTACKED**

Be physically and psychologically prepared to defend yourself. Start by preparing an inventory of your personal skills. Think about how you

Think through various strategies. Talk with other people about ways to handle confrontations and rehearse alternatives. By preparing, you will have more options to choose from if you ever find yourself in a confrontation.

Every confrontation is different. The best response depends on a combination of many factors, such as the location of the incident, characteristics of the assailant, the presence of weapons and your personal skills and available resources. Your most effective weapon in a confrontation is your own judgment.

Only you can decide how you will respond to a given situation. When faced with danger, trust yourself. Stay as calm as possible. Think rationally, without panic. Find a way to escape. Evaluate the situation and the options available to you.

### **The following strategies may be effective in confrontations:**

- Nonresistance
- Negotiating
- Stalling for time
- Distracting or diverting the assailant and fleeing
- Verbal assertiveness
- Screaming or using a personal alarm to attract attention and help from people nearby
- Physically resisting and fighting off the assailant

Keep assessing the situation as it is happening. Never give up. If the first strategy you choose does not work, try another strategy. Observe as much as you can about the identity, clothing and behavior of the assailant. This information will be important and useful for the police investigation.

### **REPORTING CRIME**

Be alert and observant wherever you are and learn to recognize signs of criminal behavior. Report all crime to the police even if it is only an attempt. Crime cannot be controlled or prevented if it is not reported. By reporting crimes and suspicious activities, you can protect yourself and others.

### **CONCLUSION**

Get a good description of the assailant. Carefully observe and remember as much as you can about appearance and behavior. Try to memorize details of the assailant's identity such as age, height, weight, eye and hair color. Look for any distinguishing personal characteristics, such as scars, tattoos, hairstyle, or other prominent

features. Observe the assailant's clothing style and colors, jewelry, gait and manner of speech. If a

car is involved in the crime, note the make, model, color and license number. Call the police immediately to make a crime report. The sooner you report the crime, the more likely the police will be able to collect important evidence and apprehend the offender.

## Want to Learn More?

National Crime Prevention  
[ncpc.org](http://ncpc.org)

Get Safe!  
[getsafeonline.org](http://getsafeonline.org)

Personal Safety Tips  
[personalsafetytips.com](http://personalsafetytips.com)

Sources: [ncpc.org](http://ncpc.org); [personalsafetytips.com](http://personalsafetytips.com)

