

# PERSONAL SAFETY TIPS

**AVOID BEING ALONE** – Criminals look for a quick, easy, low-risk target and do not want to be detected and caught.

When you are alone you present an easy target. Don't get distracted! If you cannot get friends or family to walk or shop with you, let them know where you are going and call them when you arrive. File a "flight plan."

**AVOID HIGHER RISK AREAS** – Take a route around them. If you do not know where they are, ask someone. It's that simple.

**AVOID POORLY LIT, DESERTED STREETS AND ALLEYS** – Plan out your travel route. Stay on well-populated, well-lit streets.

**MAKE BRIEF EYE CONTACT WITH STRANGERS** – when approaching them in parking lots or less populated areas.

**DON'T STOP TO TALK TO STRANGERS.**

**DRESS DOWN FOR SAFETY** – If you jump from a fancy car, dressed in your finest, flaunting gold chains and jewelry, then walk through a lonely parking lot, you are asking for it. Dress for safety in casual, loose clothing and comfortable shoes that allow you to run, if necessary. Save the designer clothing, fancy jewelry and impractical spiked heels for parties.

**ALWAYS** – have one hand free to defend yourself.

**DON'T CARRY A SHOULDER BAG** – it is hard to defend, and can injure you if an attacker tries to rip it from your shoulder. A waist pack would be a great alternative. Be sure to record credit card numbers in case of a theft.

**WHILE IN RESTAURANTS OR STORES** – never leave your purse or packages unattended.

**PACKAGES, PURSES, WALLETS, GARAGE DOOR OPENERS** – should never be left in plain view while in vehicles. These items should be removed or placed in the trunk.

**DON'T WAIT UNTIL YOU HAVE REACHED THE DOOR** – to get your keys out. Have them in your hands with the proper key in place. If you see a stranger near the door, it may be a good idea not to go in until the situation is safer. This applies to your vehicle and residence.

**LOCK YOUR DOOR** – immediately upon entering your car or home.

**WALK BRISKLY** – confidently and purposefully, holding your head upright, as if moving toward a definite destination. Shuffling along with your head down, or moving along as if you have just lost your best friend, could invite an attack.

**WALK FACING TRAFFIC** – this prevents an assailant in a car from coming up behind you.

**WALK IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SIDEWALK** – so you can't be grabbed from the doorway of a building or by someone hiding in bushes.

**TRUST YOUR INTUITION** – If you sense something is wrong, there is about a 90% chance it is. Avoid the situation. Call 9-1-1.

**CARRY A PERSONAL SAFETY DEVICE** – such as a whistle, pepper spray or personal safety alarm to eliminate the would-be attacker. Usually, noise and flashing lights are safer deterrents than chemical sprays and electric stunners which can be turned against you and could agitate an attacker toward more violence. Plan ahead.

**AVOID USING** – walk-up Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs). If you must use one, make sure no one has followed you. Many attacks occur at ATMs because criminals expect you to have a large amount of cash in your wallet when you leave.

**BE WARY OF CON-ARTISTS** – Con-artists use a number of ploys to scam you and steal your property. Some divert your attention while another picks your pocket. Some pose as utility workers or tradesmen to gain access to your home, while others conduct scams that are more elaborate, involving several con-artists. As a consumer you should be wary of unlicensed vendors selling goods on the street. Purchase merchandise from only licensed vendors or reputable stores. Follow your instincts and remember, "If it seems too good too be true, it usually is."

**ALWAYS CARRY** – change for a payphone to call friends or relatives for help. **BUT REMEMBER, 9-1-1 EMERGENCY CALLS ARE FREE.**

**DO NOT CARRY** – anything that you want to use as a weapon unless you fully intend to use it. If you are not mentally ready to use it against a person trying to harm you, he/she will take it away and use it on you instead.

**THERE ARE NUMEROUS WEAPONS IN PURSES** – Your comb, keys, pens, pencils, hair spray, etc. All are damaging to the eyes and other vulnerable areas of the body.

**KEEP AN EXTRA** – jacket or blanket, and flashlight with charged batteries in your vehicle for emergency situations.