

# Personal Safety Tips

## General Safety

Be aware of surroundings. Plan in advance what you might do if danger arises. Be prepared to act.

Listen to and act on your intuition. It's better to be safe and risk a little embarrassment than stay safe in an uncomfortable situation that may be unsafe.

If you are in danger and want to get help, yell, "Call 911!" Or give specific directions to onlookers, for example, "You! Get the police!" or "Walk me to the store on the corner, I'm being followed."

Have your keys ready when approaching your car or building.

Don't label keys with your name or any identification.

Vary your routine. Drive or walk different routes every day. If you suspect someone is following you by foot or vehicle, don't go home or they will know where you live. Go to a public place or trusted neighbor, or directly to a police station.

## In Your Home

Have lights at all entrances.

Have good locks on all doors and windows. Use the locks at all times.

Do not use your full name on your mailbox or door.

If you live alone, invent a roommate or big dog.

Know which neighbors you can trust in an emergency.

Check to see who is at the door before opening it. Do not open for strangers.

Ask for photo identification for all repair persons. If you are still suspicious, call to verify employment.

Do not give personal information to telephone solicitors.

Do not let strangers into your home for any reason.

## On the Street

Don't hitchhike.

Be very careful using outside ATMs at night or in unfamiliar areas.

When walking, face oncoming traffic.

Tell someone where you will be and time you expect to return or if you will be with someone you don't know very well.

Don't overload yourself with packages. If you must have your hands full, visualize how you would respond if approached, how you would get your hands free, etc.

Don't wear headphones and don't focus on your cell phone when walking or running.

If you carry a purse with a shoulder strap, be prepared to let it go if snatched. Otherwise, you may be knocked to the ground and hurt by a mugger.

## In a Car

Check the inside and around your car before entering to ensure no one is hiding there.

Check your surroundings before getting out of your car.

Don't pick up hitchhikers or give rides to people you don't know well.

Keep doors locked and windows rolled up.

Keep at least a quarter tank of gas in your vehicle.

Park in well-lighted, heavily traveled areas is possible.

Don't leave valuables in our car.

Give only the ignition key to a parking attendant.

If you see an accident or a stranded vehicle, call to report it instead of stopping.

Equip your car with a powerful flashlight, spare batteries, flairs, fix-a-flat kit, warm clothing, blanket, drinking water and a white cloth to flag for help.

## Defense against Dogs

When confronted by a threatening dog, do not run. This triggers the chase instinct. Stand still and remain calm.

Don't scream at the dog. Be aware of where it is and look in its general direction. Staring into its eyes is considered an aggressive challenge.

Let the dog sniff you.

In a low voice, say "No. Go home." Stay until the dog leaves.

Back slowly away until it is out of sight.

If the dog attacks, try to "feed" it your jacket, backpack, bike equipment, briefcase or purse to distract it while you back away towards safety.

If you are knocked down or fall, curl into a ball and keep your hands over your ears, face and neck. Try not to scream and roll around.