

Crime Prevention Tips Personal Safety

Crime usually happens to “the other guy”. Often, this is the case. But, what if crime happens to you? Would you be prepared? What would you do if someone tried to rob you? Tried to abduct you? Tried to hurt you?

“Prepare for the worst, hope for the best”. Good advice, if not extreme in both respects. Consider another option: educating yourself in what can happen, what to expect if something bad does happen to you, and how to handle the situation to minimize the possibility of being hurt – or worse.

Keys to Survival – “Street Smarts”

- Being aware of your surroundings. What is the landscape around you? Are you in a well traveled area, or on a sparsely populated street, hidden from view? Are those around you walking with purpose, or are they just “hanging around”, watching others? Trust your gut feelings. If you feel something’s not right, it probably isn’t right.
- Keep in well populated areas. Don’t consider walking through an alley to save a block of walking. The exercise will do you good, and who knows who, or what, is in that alley?
- Walk with purpose. Look confident. Know where you’re going, and if you get lost, make it look like you know where you are. Confidence is power. Make sure everyone around you knows that you’re aware of them, and aware of your surroundings. If you’re not easily surprised, you’ve won “half the battle” already.
- If you’re being followed, or see a person or group ahead you want to avoid, make changes in your path. Cross the street (and walk on the other side), walk in another direction, or duck into a well populated place (a busy store, restaurant etc – someplace you may easily loose yourself in, and leave sight of the other person or group). Quicken your pace.
- In social situations (in public), or when otherwise distracted (at the ATM, pumping gas into your vehicle, etc), work on keeping an eye on your surroundings. Don’t become so immersed in your activity that you loose touch with your surroundings.
- Know your neighborhood. Identify “safe havens” (places with people that are well lighted) you can go to if you feel threatened.

- When walking adjacent to a two way street, consider walking on the side of the street against traffic (IE on a west bound roadway, walk east bound). It is harder for suspects in vehicles to stop and commit a crime if their victim is walking against the way they are driving.
- Keep your arms and hands free. Don't carry groceries in your arms, for example; use a cart. The more encumbered you are, the less you can move and escape.
- If possible walk in groups. The more people, the less likely a criminal is to strike.
- Have your keys with you when you're approaching your parked vehicle, or your home or office. If you see suspicious people, avoid your destination and go to a "safe haven".
- When walking, stay away from hidden doorways, shrubs, and other areas that criminals may hide when stalking their prey.

If You Are Confronted, Robbed, or Assaulted:

- **YOUR LIFE IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING!!!** Don't do anything to provoke a suspect, and do everything to make him "happy" so he leaves the area, and leaves you alone.
- If someone tries to harm you, to sexually assault you, to apprehend you, "make a scene", and make noise. Kick, scratch, fight back any way you can. If its property he wants, give it to him. If it's his life you want, resist in any way you can.
- Remember: Fight for your life, not your property.
- Give the suspect whatever property he demands. Property can be replaced; your life cannot.
- Resist telling criminal demanding cash that you have none. This may enrage him, and he may strike out in anger. Consider carrying cash "for a rainy day" to give and satisfy a criminal.
- Make a mental note of the suspect's description. This is secondary to protecting your life. If you're able to get a description, that will help police to identify the suspect. Observe how the suspect flees (on foot, in a vehicle, on a bike, etc). What direction did they flee? If in a vehicle, description of the vehicle?
- Consider a "drop wallet" that does not have your driver's license or ID card inside. This way, a thief doesn't have your home address. If you don't have a "drop wallet" during an offense, give him whatever you have. Your objective is to get out of this situation quickly, and unharmed.
- Call 911 as soon after an offense as possible. Tell 911 you were the victim of a crime against your person. If you feel you need an ambulance, ask for one. Even if you weren't harmed by the suspect, the trauma of such an event can potentially bring on other health related issues. Better safe than sorry.