



## **PERSONAL SAFETY**

### **Four ways to increase your personal safety:**

1. Reduce or eliminate opportunities that may make you a target.
2. Increase awareness in places you're most comfortable.
3. Trust your instincts regardless of feeling embarrassed.
4. Prepare your daily schedule with safety in mind.

## **PURSE/WALLET SAFETY**

- Carry purses, portfolios or briefcases in a manner that will allow you to let go. Straps placed across your shoulder, around your neck or wrapped around your waist have caused injuries because women could not free themselves during a purse snatch.
- Always be aware of your surroundings and carry your purse clasp toward you, close to your body, tucked in the bend of your elbow as if it were a football. If there is a long strap, wrap it around the bag.
- If someone attempts to snatch your pocket book, let go of it, especially if there is a weapon involved. When dining out, the only place for your purse should be your lap. The back of a chair is an easy target for a thief. Never carry a wallet in a rear pocket; use a front trouser or an inside coat pocket.
- Be particularly aware of your purse/wallet in crowded situations, such as rush-hour trains and buses. If you are jostled in a crowd, be aware that a pickpocket might be responsible. Beware of arguments or commotions designed to distract you while your pocket or purse is being picked.
- Minimize the amount of money, credit cards and valuables you carry by only taking items that are necessary for the day. Divide money between your purse/wallet and pockets. Carry your keys on your person separate from your identification.

## **WALKING/RIDING - BE STREET SMART**

- Use well-populated and well-lit streets. If you suspect you're being followed, stay away from deserted blocks and head for an area where there are people or to the nearest open store.
- Should a motorist bother you while you are walking, reverse your direction. If you are still followed, seek a safe location and CALL 9-1-1.
- If you're driven home, ask the driver to wait until you are safely inside.

## **WHILE DRIVING**

- Upon approaching your car, look to make sure no one is hiding in or around the vehicle, especially in the back seat. Check your tires for flats. Keep windows rolled up, except for a small opening for ventilation and keep the doors locked at all times.
- Keep valuables secured in the trunk, not lying on the seat next to you. Put your purse on the floor of your car. Plan your route before you leave.

- When stopped in traffic, always leave enough space between your car and the one in front of you. This will allow you to pass easily, if necessary. Keep your car well maintained and the gas tank at least half full to avoid getting stranded.
- Should you suspect that you are being followed, make several turns down active streets. If the vehicle continues to follow, head for the nearest police station, fire house, or open store. Avoid driving to your home. If someone attempts to force you off the road, remain calm and blow your horn continuously to attract attention. If forced off the road, stop, put your car in reverse and back away.

## **WHEN PARKING YOUR VEHICLE**

- Park in a well-lit area to discourage a personal attack and reduce the risk of your car being stolen.
- Look around before exiting your car. Close all windows and lock the doors. Take any valuables with you.

## **AT HOME**

- Have your keys ready before you get to the door. Make sure your entrance area is well lit. If you live in an apartment, close the lobby door behind you, especially if a stranger is approaching. Make all visitors and delivery persons use the doorbell. Place your name on the inside of the mailbox where only the mail carrier will see it. If a name must be on the outside, use only the last name, e.g., the Smiths.
- When recording an outgoing message on your answering machine, avoid leaving your name, phone number or a message that you're not at home. A good message is, "We are unable to answer the phone, please leave a message." Say it confidently.
- If a stranger asks to use the phone, keep your door locked and tell them you will place the call for them. If there is an emergency, call 9-1-1. Keep him/her out of your home. Should you arrive home and find signs of a burglary, STAY OUT. Call 9-1-1 and wait for the police to arrive.

## **ELEVATOR**

- When waiting for an elevator, leave the lobby/hallway if someone makes you feel uncomfortable.
- Check the elevator's mirror before entering. Stand between the control panel and door when in the elevator.
- Exit the elevator if someone enters that makes you feel uneasy. If you feel the need to give an excuse, you can say, "Oh, I forgot my mail." If accosted, press as many buttons as possible to try and get the elevator to stop at the next floor.

## **TRANSIT SAFETY TIPS**

- Be alert and aware of your surroundings.
- Try to avoid confrontations/disputes with strangers.
- Trust your instincts and remove yourself from situations that make you feel uncomfortable.
- Always have an escape route. Know where exits that will lead you to safety are located.

## **ATM**

- Be aware of suspicious people near the entrance. Use well-lit, well-populated ATM's. Avoid ATM's that have unlocked doors or are directly out on the street.
- Block a bystander's view when doing your transaction. Use mirrors, positioned at the ATM, to see behind you. Put your money, card and receipt away before exiting an ATM. Your card is exclusively for your entry only. Make sure the door closes behind you.