

Be Aware, Protect Yourself

The key to safety is being aware of places or situations that could put you at risk.

At Home

- Get to know your neighbors. Make arrangements to keep an eye on each other's homes when one of you is away.
- Draw drapes or close blinds after dark.
- Ensure that your outside doors and door frames are sturdy. This includes entry doors and windows.
- Install security-rated locks (i.e. deadbolts rather than bathroom door locks) on main doors and windows.
- Install a 180-degree peephole in your door. Identify visitors before opening your door and do not open your door to strangers.
- If a stranger asks to use your phone, offer to make the call yourself.
- List only your initials and last name on the mailbox or in the telephone book. Do not list your first name or indicate Mr., Mrs., Ms. or Miss.
- Never give personal information to telephone solicitors or wrong number callers.
- Have emergency telephone numbers on or near your phone.
- Make sure that all entrances are well lit. Install a light timer.
- Have your keys ready as you approach the door. Do not hide spare keys outside your home.
- Be aware of your surroundings and evaluate your situation so you can make decisions about your safety. Stay alert in laundry rooms, parking garages and elevators. Avoid dark or secluded streets.
- Be aware of what security measures a website is using to protect your personal information when requested over the Internet.

In your Vehicle

- Keep your vehicle locked when you are driving or when it is parked.
- Have your keys ready when approaching your parked car. Check the inside of your car before opening the door.

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- If you are being followed, drive to a police station or a busy public area, such as a 24-hour convenience store or gas station. Try to note the license plate number and make of the car. Do not drive home as the person may follow you and find out where you live!
- Park in well lit areas. Be observant so you can assess your surroundings and safety, especially in parking garages.
- Do not leave car registration and insurance documents in your vehicle. They show your address and other personal information.
- Keep your garage door opener out of sight until you need it. Thieves can use it to get into your home.
- Do not hide spare keys under the hood, in the bumpers or anywhere else in the car.
- Have regular vehicle tune-ups to keep your vehicle in good working order.
- If your vehicle breaks down, raise the hood and switch on the hazard lights. Stay inside with the windows up and keep the doors locked. If somebody offers to help, assess the situation to determine if it is safe to accept assistance. For example, is the motorist travelling with a family or alone? If you feel unsafe, ask the helper to call for assistance.
- If possible, carry a cell phone with you. You can phone for help when you need it and maybe even help other stranded motorists.

In your Community

- Be assertive when walking. Attackers seek victims who appear intimidated or vulnerable.
- Plan your route ahead of time before going for a walk and let others know where you are going.
- Walk with a companion if you feel that being alone may put you at risk. Observe your surroundings. If you are hesitant about rounding a corner or walking down a certain street, follow your instincts.
- Stay on busier, well-lit streets. Avoid dark or concealed areas and never assume parked cars are empty.

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- Do not over load yourself with parcels. These may block your view or reduce your mobility. If you are followed, quickly assess your options. Can you run or change directions? Are there people nearby, a house or an open business to run into? Is there a well-lit area to move towards?
- Never hitchhike!

Trust your Intuition

Intuition is that chill down your spine, that tightening in your stomach, the hair standing up on the back of your neck when you just don't feel good about a situation or a place you are in.

Don't ignore those feelings! Respect them and respond accordingly! Whatever your instincts are trying to tell you, pay attention!

Safety Tips:

- If someone is following you too closely on the sidewalk, stop and tell them "you are following too closely, please go ahead of me". This is not being paranoid, this is trusting your instincts.
- If you enter your residence and it just doesn't feel right, it is okay to leave and call someone for help.