



Safety While Away from Home

The following is a list of items to be mindful of while you are away from home.

Vehicle Safety

- ☐ If someone approaches your vehicle with a gun or weapon, grabs you, or threatens you as you enter or leave your vehicle, give up your vehicle and run away. Try to remember any details about the individual[s] and contact the police immediately.
- ☐ Carjacking is typically an opportunist crime by a person looking for the most vulnerable person or vehicle. They can happen anytime but are most common in late night hours. The following locations are some common areas:
 - ☐ ATMs (automated teller machines).
 - ☐ Self-serve gas stations and car washes.
 - ☐ Garages and parking lots of shopping malls, grocery stores and mass transit.
 - ☐ Intersections that are controlled by stop lights or signs.
 - ☐ Highway exit and entry ramps, or anyplace else where drivers slow down or stop.
 - ☐ Residential driveways and streets as people get into and out of vehicles.
- ☐ Make sure your car entry FOB, [the wireless transmitter that controls our car door locks], is set so that a single push of the 'unlock' button only unlocks the drive door. If it unlocks all other doors as well read in your owner's manual or call the manufacturer to change the setting so it only unlocks the driver door.
- ☐ Lock your vehicle and roll up windows at all times at gas stations, restaurants, rest areas, or other areas even if you are leaving it for only a minute or two.
- ☐ Check inside and around the car before getting in.
- ☐ Do not park in isolated or dark areas. Choose to park under a light and if you are uncomfortable ask a security guard or store staff to escort you to your car. Have your car keys and personal protection items, such as pepper spray and a loud whistle, in your hands or readily available.
- ☐ Never leave your valuables such as cameras, cell phones, wallet or items such as a purse, backpack, etc. in plain view.
- ☐ Keep your gas tank at least half full and always make sure you have enough gas to get where you are going and back.
- ☐ If you think you are being followed drive to nearest police station, fire station, or open, well lighted business and ask for help. Do not head home.
- ☐ Only use your cell phone in an emergency such as to report an accident or call the police.
- ☐ Use a two piece key ring and keep car keys on separate ring. Never give other keys to parking attendant, valet, or others.
- ☐ As soon as you get in your car, lock it. Do not linger in a parking lot and leave as soon as possible.
- ☐ If you are in a line such as a drive through or at a traffic light, leave some space between you and the car in front of you so that in the event someone approaches your vehicle you can detour from the traffic and drive away.

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- ☐ Be aware of the cars parked near you and if they have persons in them. If you are parked next to a big van, enter your vehicle from the other side. Many abductions occur from a van door being open and the victim grabbed while not being observant. If you are concerned go back into the store and ask for help or call the police.

Gas Station Safety

- ☐ Pick stations that are well lighted, with open area around gas pumps.
- ☐ Pick stations that have video surveillance cameras. Video cameras are often mounted on the building and looking at each pump.
- ☐ Remove keys and lock car doors when pumping gas or going into station.
- ☐ Hide your valuables so that are not in plain view.
- ☐ Don't let your cell phone, children, or others distract you.

Pedestrian Safety

- ☐ Always walk on the side of the street facing the traffic so you can see cars approaching and avoid them. Walking with the traffic allows a car to follow you and sneak up from behind.
- ☐ Do not walk alone in evening hours if at all possible. If you do tell a trusted friend your destination and probable time of arrival.
- ☐ Walk in well lighted areas on the sidewalk if possible. Avoid shrubs, doorways, and other objects that someone could hide in.
- ☐ Wear clothes that allow you freedom of movement and do not carry so many items that your hands are full.
- ☐ It is best not to wear headphones so you can hear your surroundings, but if you do keep the volume low so you can still be aware of noises around you.
- ☐ Never hitchhike or get into a car with strangers. If a car approaches and tries to contact you, keep your distance if you answer them and be aware of escape routes if you need to run.
- ☐ Avoid stairwells or closed in places that limit your ability to evade predators. Always use an elevator instead of stairs.
- ☐ Maintain your situational awareness skills at all times while walking or exercising.
- ☐ Have your house key in hand before you reach the door so you are not an easy target searching for your key at your door.
- ☐ If a predator has a gun and you are able, always run away as fast as you can. Run in a zig-zag pattern.

Tips specific for Women

Women are targets of predators because they are assumed to be weaker, less physical, and perhaps a sex crime target. Some safety precautions for women include the following.

- ☐ Dress in baggy, non-form fitting clothing.
- ☐ Wear simple, standard shoes in lieu of open toed sandals or heels.
- ☐ Look as much like a man as possible.
- ☐ Wear a bust minimizer bra.
- ☐ Put your hair up in a hat.
- ☐ Do not wear jewelry, extensive makeup, or nail polish.

- ☐ Do not openly carry a purse.
- ☐ Walk with a purpose.

Runners, Exercisers and Cyclists

- ☐ Stay alert at all times. The more aware you are, the less vulnerable you are.
- ☐ Run, walk, or bike with a partner or a dog if possible.
- ☐ Vary your route. That way, a potential attacker won't get to know your routine.
- ☐ Exercise in familiar areas. Know which businesses or stores are open.
- ☐ Ignore verbal harassment. Use discretion in acknowledging strangers. Avoid eye contact if possible and keep your distance and keep moving.
- ☐ Avoid unpopulated areas, deserted streets, and overgrown trails. Especially avoid poorly lit areas at night.

Travel Safety

- ☐ Carry only the credit and debit cards you absolutely need and leave others securely stored at home.
- ☐ Do not carry large amounts of cash.
- ☐ Before you leave make sure your home is securely locked and other preparations are taken. See Home Security Checklist for more info.
- ☐ Take the least amount of luggage possible and make sure it stays under your control or with an authorized person.
- ☐ Make sure all of those traveling with you have the name, address, and contact info of the place[s] you are staying.
- ☐ Never leave your room key where it could be picked up by a stranger. Be especially vigilant at a swimming pool or other place where you may leave your purse or bag unattended.
- ☐ Never leave your lodging room unlocked.

Buses and Mass Transit

- ☐ Use well lighted and busy stops. If you must use a remote or isolated stop, ask someone to meet you or escort you.
- ☐ Use your situational awareness skills and stay hyper vigilant. Do not doze or daydream.
- ☐ Keep your valuables out of site. Do not make yourself a target.
- ☐ Watch who gets off the stop with you, and anyone loitering at the stop. If you feel uneasy walk to a place with other people.
- ☐ If approached by some who hassles you ask them loudly, so others can hear, to leave you alone. Do not be embarrassed to ask for help.

If Someone Tries to Rob You

- ☐ Give up your property, don't give up your life.
- ☐ Stay calm and follow their directions.
- ☐ Call 911 as soon as you are safe.

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- ☐ Try to remember the predator's description and any prominent details that may help the police. If there is more than one pay attention to their conversation, if possible, for things such as names, locations, and other details.
- ☐ Keep an eye on their hands. Are they nervous, threatening such as making fists, going in and out of their pockets?
- ☐ If they have a weapon or you feel threatened remember the mantra Run, Hide, Fight!
 - ☐ Run – Get away and increase distance between you and the threat.
 - ☐ Hide – Go to a safe place and hide as safely as you can. Be prepared to defend yourself and find something to use to defend yourself if possible.
 - ☐ Fight – Fighting is a last resort and is likely not practical against a desperate, crazed, or drugged assailant. In face to face combat against an opponent with a weapon most experts would recommend trying to gain control of their weapon, if this is not possible use whatever you can to defend yourself and if possible, kick, hit or inflict pain, make noise, call for help, search for something to use as a weapon and if you get a chance to run, do so as quickly as possible.
- ☐ If you are ever thrown in the trunk of a car, kick out the tail lights and stick your arm out the hole to attract attention. The driver will not be able to see you and others will.
- ☐ If someone asked you to give them your wallet do not hand it to them. Rather, toss it away from you and when they go to retrieve it run for safety.

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