

BE AWARE, PLAN AHEAD and TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS

From crossing a street, to protecting your belongings, to fears about violent crime, there is a lot to think about where your own safety is concerned.

Unfortunately, nobody can stop crime or accidents from ever occurring. You do have control over your own actions, however, and this is where prevention comes into play. Using some simple techniques, you can be your own best line of defense to stay safe and protect your property . . . by being one step ahead.

While this brochure will give you tips for specific situations, there are three simple actions you can use to reduce your risk of finding yourself in a potentially dangerous situation. Reminding yourself to **BE AWARE, PLAN AHEAD** and **TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS**, are effective strategies and are simple enough that they can easily become a natural part of your daily routine:

BE AWARE

Avoid “autopilot.” Remain alert and walk with purpose. Even if you are on a route you take every day, be aware of your surroundings. Also pay close attention to crosswalks and driveways even if you have the “right of way.”

PLAN AHEAD

Think about where you are going and plan your route before you leave. What time of day is it? Are you walking through an uninhabited or badly lit area? If you see trouble, can you cross the street or go into a nearby store? If you are not familiar with the area, did you take directions with you?

TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS

Trusting your own instincts that a situation seems “wrong” can be the best personal safety tool you have. Pay attention to it and don’t be afraid to act on it! A moment of embarrassment if you are incorrect is far less important than your overall safety.

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

IF YOU ARE CONFRONTED:

Do whatever you can to protect yourself. It is not worth a fight to keep property.

- It may seem like a good idea to tell a robber that you have no money, but this technique may actually backfire. It is safer to give up a few dollars. Carry a little money separate from your other funds in an accessible place.
- If someone demands your property and displays or implies that they have a weapon, don’t resist. You have a greater chance of getting hurt if you do, and usually the robber will get your property anyway.
- If someone tries to grab you, make a scene. Scream, kick, fight . . . do what you can to get away and attract attention.

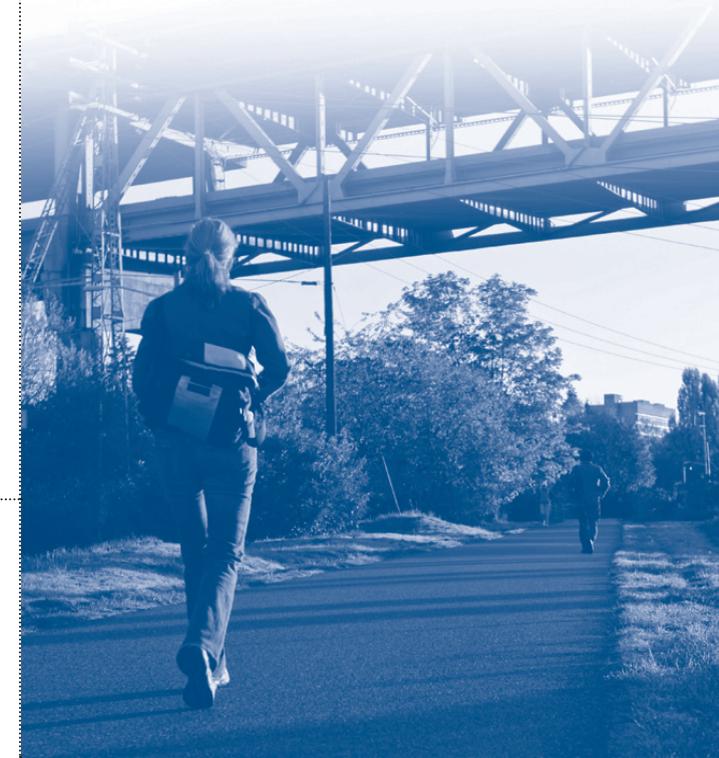
REPORT THE INCIDENT TO THE POLICE:

- In an emergency: **CALL 9-1-1**
- To report a crime that is not an emergency: non-emergency # **(206) 625-5011**



PERSONAL SAFETY

How to Protect Yourself from Crime



PRODUCED BY THE SEATTLE POLICE DEPARTMENT IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE SEATTLE NEIGHBORHOOD GROUP



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PREVENTING THEFT

- **MINIMIZE WHAT CAN BE LOST:** Carry only what you need, small amounts of cash, and only the credit cards you plan to use. Try not to carry anything that is irreplaceable or of sentimental value. If you **MUST** carry a lot of cash or valuables, store them in a pocket or pouch inside your jacket.
- **PURSES/BAGS:** Should be closed, carried in front of the body with an arm held loosely across it. Many people carry a bag out of habit, but if you don't really need it, travel without one.
- **BACKPACKS:** Make sure to zip and secure all pockets and to check on your backpack periodically. When in crowd situations, on public transportation and at street corners, bring your backpack around to your front and hold your arm loosely across it.
- **SEPARATE ESSENTIALS:** If you keep everything in one place, and a thief takes your bag, they now have **EVERYTHING** - your keys, your money, and your ID with your home address. Consider keeping small essentials, such as your keys, ID, cellphone and a small amount of money separate in a coat or pants pocket.

WHAT THIEVES LOOK FOR

- **EASY PICKINGS:** Items left in grocery carts, dressing rooms or desks and wallets protruding from pockets only take seconds to grab.
- **CROWDS:** The noise and confusion of crowds help conceal crime. Be especially vigilant anywhere that is busy or crowded.
- **DISTRACTION:** When you are distracted you are less able to remember identifying characteristics of a thief and are often even unaware a theft has occurred until much later. Thieves will sometimes cause a distraction, (i.e. bumping into you) or observe one, (i.e. talking on your cellphone) to steal a wallet or purse.

SAFETY ON THE STREET

- **WALK WITH PURPOSE:** Project an assertive image that conveys you know where you are going (even if you are lost - pretend).
- **AVOID ISOLATION:** Avoid uninhabited parks, parking lots, garages and alleyways; stick to well-lit, high-traffic areas.
- **KEEP A DISTANCE:** Don't let people get too close, even if they appear to have a reason, such as asking for the time.
- **DRESS SO YOU CAN MOVE WITH EASE:** Consider wearing clothing and shoes you can move quickly in.
- **PACK LIGHT:** Take only what you need, overloading yourself can make you appear vulnerable.
- **BEING FOLLOWED BY A PERSON:** If you think you are being followed, switch direction or cross the street. Walk toward an open store, lighted house or an area with other people. Don't be embarrassed to yell for help.
- **BEING FOLLOWED BY A CAR:** If a car follows you, slows down, or beckons to you while walking, do not approach it. Turn around and quickly walk in the *opposite* direction.
- **HAVE YOUR PHONE READY:** Keep your phone on and in your hand or pocket so if you need to call police you don't have to fumble around to find your phone.
- **TALKING ON THE PHONE:** If you talk on the phone while walking, don't get lost in conversation. Pay attention to traffic, people around you and where you are going. **STAY ALERT!** Also keep in mind the information you may be inadvertently giving out when talking on your phone. Others can hear your conversation.

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY

BUS RIDERS

- Use schedules to minimize time waiting at bus stops.
- Have your pass or money ready and easily accessible. Don't open and go through your purse or wallet at the bus stop.
- Sit near the front of the bus if possible, especially late at night when there are not a lot of other passengers.
- Keep your possessions on your lap.
- Pay attention - avoid sleeping, cleaning out your purse or pockets, balancing your checkbook. If you read or listen to music, look up and around periodically.
- If someone is bothering you, don't be afraid to tell the driver and move seats.

DRIVERS

- Have your keys already in hand as you leave the building.
- Be alert when approaching your car. Look around at the cars parked nearby as parked cars can provide good hiding places (inside and out).
- If someone is loitering near your car, do not approach it. Go back inside and wait or have someone accompany you to the car.
- Enter your car quickly and lock the door first thing once inside. Keep your doors locked whenever you are driving.
- If you are followed, drive to a public place and honk to attract attention.
- If you need to pay for parking, get your money ready inside the locked car.
- Always leave your car locked and empty of possessions, even small change.