

PERSONAL SAFETY



Personal safety does not have to begin with a self defence course. **Your best defence is an alert and cautious mind – be aware your environment and surroundings.** Below are some common sense tips to reduce your risk of being victimized.

AT HOME ADVICE

- Install a door viewer and never open the door to strangers. Speak through the door!
- If someone asks to come in for help, keep the door closed and call police for them.
- If you live alone, don't reveal this on your answering machine. Advise the number they have reached and that you are unavailable.



DATING TIPS

- The use of drugs or alcohol can affect your better judgment.
- Exercise your independence. Bring enough money to pay for your own ride home.
- Always trust your instincts. If a situation makes you feel uncomfortable, act on your instincts rather than over rationalizing the situation, as doing so may cause you to convince yourself that you are not in any danger when in fact you may be. If something doesn't feel right, get to a safe place.



STREET ADVICE

- Walk with another person. If you can't, notify someone of your route and estimated time of arrival.
- Be alert and walk with confidence.
- Avoidance is better than resistance. Try to be aware of developing situations and give yourself time and opportunity to run away.
- Avoid walking in dark, deserted areas such as parks and vacant lots.
- Choose the sidewalk across from potential hiding spots such as doorways, alleys or shrubs.
- Trust your instincts. If you get a bad feeling about a situation go to a safe place immediately.
- DO NOT allow an attacker to take you to another location. You can improve your odds of survival if you try to escape or yell for help at the point of initial contact rather than at the attacker's preferred location.
- If a threatening vehicle approaches you, turn and walk in the opposite direction. It's more difficult for a driver to pursue you if they must drive in reverse, or turn around.
- If you think you're being followed, go to the nearest well-lit public area or store to seek assistance.
- Don't feel pressured to talk to strangers, especially if they make you feel uncomfortable. You don't need to talk to someone just because they talk to you.
- If someone grabs your purse, let it go. (To avoid this, try a knapsack or fanny pack, or wear your purse strap diagonally across your body.)
- If you're forced to give up belongings, throw them in one direction and run the other.
- If you are in danger, make noise. Yell, scream, or do whatever it takes to attract attention and discourage your attacker. It is normal to feel uncomfortable "making a scene," but your safety is more important. Give yourself permission to be loud if you feel you're in danger.
- Carry a personal security alarm or whistle.
- Avoid using bank machines after hours.
- Never carry large amounts of money and never count it in public.
- Conceal small personal electronics underneath your clothing.
- If you are being pulled along or dragged against your will, fall to the ground and roll. This makes you harder to control and may enable you to break free.



VEHICLE TIPS



- Have your keys out and ready before you get to your vehicle, especially if parked underground.
- Visually check the outside and interior of your vehicle for someone hiding inside.
- Immediately lock your vehicle once inside and again when you leave it.
- Park in well lit areas, with pedestrian traffic. Avoid underground parking if you are alone.
- Keep your vehicle well maintained to minimize breakdowns.
- Carry a “call police” sign and emergency kit in your vehicle.
- Plan your route. If you get lost, head to the nearest service centre to review your map or ask for directions.
- If you don't already have a cellular phone, consider purchasing one.
- Keep track of where you are. Mentally note road signs so you can tell police where you are.
- In case of car trouble, turn on your hazard lights; keep your doors locked and your windows rolled up. Place your call police sign in your window. Use your cellular phone or your emergency GPS system if your vehicle is installed with one.
- If a stranger stops to help you, don't get out of your car. Speak to them from the safety of your vehicle.
- If you think you're being followed, drive to the nearest open store, restaurant, fire or police station. Stay in your vehicle and honk your horn to get help.
- And of course....never pick-up hitchhikers!

TRAVEL TIPS

- When using public transportation, sit near the driver. Know the schedules and routes.
- Most major Canadian cities take part in the Request Stop Program, so you can ask the driver to let you off between stops after 8 p.m. in the evening.
- When staying in hotels, use a door stop for your room.
- When traveling afar, always keep your luggage and bags with you.
- Use a security pouch under your clothing.



ADDITIONAL TIPS

If you travel, work in remote locations, hike, bike or are a boater, consider purchasing a personal GPS messenger device.

ALWAYS HAVE A PLAN IN MIND AND PRACTICE IT!
Your best defence is an alert and cautious mind – be aware of your surroundings.

Content of this fact sheet is provided courtesy of Peel Regional Police Service.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THIS SUBJECT OR OTHER CRIME PREVENTION TOPICS PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT WWW.HAMILTONPOLICE.ON.CA OR PLEASE CONTACT:

HAMILTON POLICE SERVICE – CRIME PREVENTION
155 King William Street, Hamilton, Ontario Phone: 905-546-4900 Fax: 905-546-4720