

# Tips To Protect Yourself *when away from home*



## **Walking, Jogging, or Riding a Bike:**

- Don't walk or jog early in the morning or late at night when the streets are deserted.
- Don't take shortcuts: don't walk in or near alleys, and don't walk on deserted streets. Avoid unfamiliar areas if possible.
- Use caution in parking lots, don't walk in poorly lighted areas, or near shrubbery or dark doorways. Avoid isolated hallways, exercise caution in stairwells and restrooms, stand near the emergency buttons in an elevator.
- Watch your surroundings and be alert for suspicious persons, especially around banks, stores, streets, and your car or home. Don't listen to headphones or read while walking.
- Perpetrators often walk past, then attack from the rear. If you think someone is following you, switch directions or cross the street. If the person continues to follow you, move quickly toward an open store or restaurant or a lighted house.
- Make eye contact with people around you. Use body language to communicate that you are calm and confident.
- Carry only the money or credit cards you'll need on a particular day. Keep a record of the account numbers at home.
- Don't withdraw large amounts of cash from bank or ATM, or display large amounts of cash while shopping.
- Don't overload yourself with so many packages that you become defenseless.

- Don't display inviting targets such as cell phones, hand-held electronic games, cash or expensive jewelry and clothing.
- When crossing a street be aware of oncoming traffic or vehicles turning a corner; anticipate them not stopping.
- Don't accept rides from strangers, and don't respond to comments from strangers.
- When being dropped off, ask the driver to wait until you are safely inside.
- When you return home, have your key in your hand so you can open the door immediately.

## **Protecting Your Purse:**

- If at all possible, don't carry a purse.
- "Spread your risk:" when possible, carry your wallet, keys, and other valuables on your person, or in an inside pocket, or other suitable place, rather than your purse. Your purse should be used to carry brushes, combs, make-up, etc.
- Carry a shoulder bag securely between your arm and body away from traffic.
- If you are wearing a coat, carry a purse worn over the shoulder, but under the coat.
- Practice the "buddy system", and shop with a friend when possible. When walking in twos, place your purse between you and your friend.
- Carry a clutch bag un-snapped and upside down between your arm and body with any valuables in the zippered compartment. If someone attempts to steal your purse, loosen your grip, allowing the contents to fall to the ground.

## **Driving a Car:**

- Have your keys in your hand as you approach your car.
- Check the backseat and floor before entering your car.
- Keep your valuables out of sight, under the seat, or in the glove compartment or trunk (before you park if you can.)
- Lock your doors when driving and after parking.
- Do everything you can to keep a stranger from getting into your car or to keep a stranger from forcing you into his or her car.
- Try to park in well-lighted areas with good visibility and close to walkways, stores, and people.
- Be extra cautious when in parking structures or in desolate areas.
- Be observant of surroundings as you arrive at destination and look around before exiting vehicle. Do not exit if you sense trouble.
- If you have car trouble, signal for help by raising the hood or tying a handkerchief to the door handle. Remain in your car with doors locked until identifiable help arrives. Should another motorist offer to help, roll down the window slightly and ask them to call the police or an auto club.
- Keep an emergency kit containing a flashlight, distress signs, and other essentials in your car.
- To protect your car, use a lock bar that prohibits the use of the steering wheel.
- Always lock your car, even if it's in your own driveway; never leave your motor running.
- Always leave your headlights on when arriving home after dark until you have unlocked the garage door, or unlocked the house door.
- Make sure you have your key out as you approach your house door.

If someone tries to rob you, give up your property—don't give up your life.

If there is a witness, ask that person to stay until police arrive.

**Notify police immediately after an attack.** Tell The Police what you know. No fact is too trivial. **Call 9-1-1 if an emergency.** The District 3 **non-emergency # is 933-4444, enter "9"** when menu options start so that the call goes to communicator and gets recorded.

### **Information needed by police:**

What happened? When? Where? Is anyone injured? Description of attacker? Vehicle description and license number? Direction of flight?

**Be cognizant of suspicious activity** on streets, sidewalks, and alleys. Trust your instincts. Don't worry about bothering the police – that is why they are there. Don't worry if your suspicions prove unfounded. Your actions can help prevent someone else from becoming a victim.

References: Milwaukee Police Dept. PCSD-47 Rev. 05/13 "Steps On the Street"

Wisconsin Crime Prevention Practitioners Association "Burglary Prevention Tips"  
([http://www.wicrimeprevention.com/?page\\_id=789](http://www.wicrimeprevention.com/?page_id=789).)