

Personal Safety Recommendations

All activities in life involve a risk, to some extent. Some people get involved in very risky activities with little concern for personal safety, where others shy away from all activity, in the hopes of eliminating all of life's risks. Somewhere in between the two is a reasonable middle ground, where risk and precaution balance out, allowing for a life full of rewarding experiences with a minimum of danger involved.

Following the recommendations listed below will not guarantee safety, as that is an impossible standard to set, but they will minimize criminal opportunities.

Personal Safety

- Avoid being taken by surprise. Keeping your senses alert to your surroundings is called situational awareness, and is a good way to provide yourself with advanced warning of a potential problem, allowing you to act in advance, and avoid dangerous situations. Remember to listen to that little voice in your head if it warns you of danger.
- Avoid being distracted by using music headphones, reading, or texting while walking. Remember to keep aware of your surroundings.
- Use the SAFE strategy:
 - Secure yourself and your environment against crime
 - At home
 - In the car
 - While walking
 - Avoid risky circumstances
 - Situations that make you vulnerable
 - Enclosed spaces (including being blocked in by other cars)
 - Be alert to your surroundings
 - Flee if necessary
 - Flight is safer than fight
 - Drop your valuables, if necessary, and run
 - Keep your car in gear
 - Head towards other people- occupied areas are safer
 - Attract attention- sound an alarm, a car horn, or just scream
 - Engage the threat
 - If you can't get away, fight back
 - Passive or aggressive resistance may work
 - Remember points of vulnerability
- Be especially careful when using ATM machines, as they are a favorite target of thieves and robbers. Remember to be aware of your surroundings, and try not to use ATM machines after bank hours.

Safety on the road

- Avoid dark roads at night, if possible
- Keep your car in good working condition and the gas tank at least half full.
- When stopped at traffic lights or in traffic, allow space between your car and the vehicle in front of yours so you can drive away if necessary.
- If your car breaks down, call for help and remain in your car. Lock your doors, and speak with others through a slightly opened window.
- If you are involved in a minor motor vehicle crash under suspicious circumstances, stay in the vehicle with the doors locked and the windows up and await the police. If you believe you may be in danger, write down the other vehicle's license plate and drive to a safe, populated location to report the accident to the police.
- Getting pulled over by law enforcement
 - Pull to the right, and stop in a safe, well lit area
 - Try to avoid stopping on a curve, hillcrest, narrow roadway, or unlit area
 - Unmarked vehicles may conduct traffic stops. The officers must show proper identification. If in doubt as the authenticity of an unmarked car, slow down, activate your hazard lights, and call the local police department for confirmation.
- Remember to use proper holiday shopping safety
 - Park in well lit lots, even if you have to walk a bit farther
 - Don't keep packages where they can be seen through a window
 - Use the buddy system, and keep an eye on each other
- Darkened parking lots present several dangers
 - Keep your keys out and ready to open your door quickly. The longer you search for keys, the longer your attention is distracted from potential danger.
 - When you approach your parked vehicle, visually check the area around your vehicle for any suspicious persons or activity. If you see anything suspicious, go to a populated area and call the police.