

BE ALERT, STREETWISE AND SAFE

You can do a great deal to reduce your risk of becoming a victim of crime. *The most effective weapons against crime are common sense, alertness, and involvement.* Armed with these, you can protect yourself by reducing the opportunity for muggers, purse-snatchers, and other street criminals to strike.

Elementary Street Sense

- Wherever you are, be alert to what's going on around you. Don't get distracted or daydream. Look to see who is ahead of, and behind you.
- Communicate visually that you are a calm, confident individual. Stand tall with your head erect, and walk purposefully. Make quick eye contact with the people around you so that you give the impression of awareness.
- Always trust your instincts. If you feel uncomfortable in a place or situation, leave as soon as possible.
- Don't drop your guard because you feel that you are in a familiar area. Crime knows no boundaries.

Walking Smart

- Plan the safest route to your destination and USE IT! On the sidewalk, use the part farthest away from shrubs, doorways, and alleys, where people can hide.
- Walk with a companion whenever possible. There is safety in numbers.
- Learn the neighborhood. A few minutes to notice what stores are open, the type of street lighting, and the locations of telephones may be important if you need help later.
- If you are carrying a purse, hold it close to your body or wear it under your coat. Keep a firm grip on the purse, and don't let it hang loosely by its straps. Wallets should be carried in an inside coat or front trouser pocket.
- Don't overburden yourself with books, backpacks, or packages. Avoid wearing shoes or clothing that restricts your movements. Notice how many women executives wearing five-hundred dollar suits walk the city streets in designer sneakers. Three-inch high heels would make them easy prey for attack.
- Have your key in your hand when entering your residence or car. This allows quick access and also provides a weapon if you're attacked. Remember to look into the back seat before getting in your car to make sure nobody is hiding there.
- Avoid carry large amounts of money. Don't wear expensive jewelry or clothing when going on home visits. Thieves give in easily to temptation.
- Consider buying and carrying a shriek alarm.
- Leave all headphones at home. You need to use all your senses. Headphones eliminate sounds that would alert you to danger.
- Don't give money to people who ask for it on the street. Your "loose change" is not really going to help their situation. Instead, volunteer some time to a local program designed to help the homeless.

Elevator Sense

- Familiarize yourself with the emergency buttons of the elevators you ride frequently. Always stand near the controls.
- Look inside the elevator before you get on board to make sure nobody is hiding inside.

- Get off the elevator if someone suspicious enters. If you are uneasy about someone who is waiting with you for the elevator, pretend that you have forgotten something and don't get on the elevator with the person. Listen to your gut reactions and intuition about what and who is around you.
- If you're attacked while in the elevator, hit the alarm button and as many floor buttons as possible.

Defensive Driving

- *Always lock your car doors, even when driving.* Don't put your purse or other valuables on the seat next to you. Thieves have broken windows, even while a car is waiting at a stoplight, to reach inside and steal. Keep your windows rolled up whenever possible.
- Keep your car in good running condition and always have enough gas to get where you're going and back again. If you do have car trouble, raise the hood and sit in the locked car. If someone offers to help, always stay in the car. Ask them to call the police to help you.
- Park in well-lighted areas that will still be well-lit when you return to your car. If you expect to return to your car after dark, park near or under a light.

Tips for Buses

- Use well-lighted and busy bus stops. Stand with other people whenever possible.
- Sit near the front, close to the driver. Do not fall asleep.
- If someone is harassing you, tell him firmly and loudly, "Leave me alone!" Persistent persons should be reported to the driver.
- Be alert to who gets off the bus with you. If you feel uneasy, walk directly to a place where there are other people.

If You Are Threatened

- Remain calm---try not to panic or show any signs of confusion.
- Don't resist if the attacker is armed or is only after your valuables. You don't want to escalate a property crime into a violent confrontation.
- If resistance is an option, don't get scared. Get mad! Shout, "No!", "Stop!", "Fire!", or "Call the police!" loudly and forcefully. Try to incapacitate or distract your assailant long enough to escape. A jab to the throat or eyes, even a swift kick to the knees or groin may give you a few minutes to get away or attract attention for help.
- After the attack, call the police *immediately*. Identify yourself and your location. During the attack make a conscious effort to get a good look at the assailant: their facial features, type of clothing/shoes, height and weight, race and sex, or anything distinctive about him/her (for instance, a large nose or obvious scars). If a vehicle is involved, try to get the license number.
- *Remember that any crime is a traumatic experience*, even if you're not hurt. Turn to others for help and support. Tell your field supervisor and faculty liaison. Allow others to help you get in touch with such supportive services as a victim assistance program.

Source: This material has been adapted from the pamphlet *How to Be "Streetwise"---and Safe*, published by the Marquette University Public Safety Department. Used with permission of the Marquette University Public Safety Department, 12121 W. Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee, WI, 53233.