



## ***Crisis Management Group***

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## **PERSONAL SAFETY and AWARENESS**

### **Three Rules**

- \* Stay alert
- \* Show confidence
- \* Trust your instincts

### **General Safety**

- Be aware of your surroundings and any person who is in it.
- Use the \*"terminator technique" (scanning) when out in public.
- Stick to well lit, well traveled areas, avoid wooded areas, parking lots and alleys. Be cautious of shortcuts.
- Carry a whistle or PA (personal alarm)
- Strength in numbers, go with friends.
- If you feel something is not right ask guards or store employees to escort you to your vehicle.
- Carry your purse football style. Keep your credit cards, money, ids and drivers license in your pocket.
- Be very wary of any approaching strangers. Maintain a safe distance. Do not be afraid of being rude.
- If in trouble make loud noises. Yell fire; honk your horn, panic alarm, break glass etc.
- Consider your clothing when out in public, high heels, scarves, ties etc.
- Consider using elevator in lieu of stairwells.
- Keep a noise maker (whistle) and or some sort of self-defense weapon on your key chain.
- Carry a PA or some type of weapon or safety device. Keep it visible. Not in the bottom of your purse.
- Try to at least let one person know where you are and when you expect to return. (leave a msg on your pho)
- Be wary of wearing or flaunting expensive items.
- Never overburden yourself with packages, groceries, books etc.
- Listen to your gut, if it doesn't feel right leave!
- If you do not want a loaded gun for protection, consider a gun that fires blanks only.
- If you cannot afford a cell get an old one without service, a \*(celug) and keep it charged you can still contact 911.

### **Safety at Home**

- Make sure all windows and doors are locked. Keep entrances well lit.
- Install deadbolts with a peephole or intercom to know who it is before opening the door.
- Check identification of any sales or service person before letting them in.
- Check references of any person calling about a survey or CC information.

- Never let your answering machine indicate you are not at home.
- Use only your last name and initials on your door, mailbox and in the phone book.
- Do not hide a spare house key outside. Give a spare one to a trusted neighbor or relative.
- Lock up when you leave even for a short while.
- Replace old locks when you move into a new house or apartment.
- Pull your shades after dark.
- If you come home and see signs of a forced entry, do not enter, leave and call police.
- If you live in an apartment install a keyless deadbolt.
- Install an alarm system or the very least inexpensive door alarms.
- Cannot afford an alarm system, buy the signs and put them in the yard and windows.
- Keep a cell phone and flashlight by bed.
- Keep emergency numbers by your phone or put in speed dial.
- Establish a safe room with a dead bolt and equip it with a cell phone, flashlight and a secured weapon.
- Have an exit plan.
- You have 911 services on all old cell phones. Keep one charged in your car, by the bed and in the safe room.
- Use timers and motion lights.
- When going on vacation have a trusted friend pick up your mail rather than notifying the post office.
- Open a savings account or a safe deposit box to keep your money and valuables.
- Consider getting a dog. Number one deterrent.
- Use a, beware of dog, signs.
- Do not let strangers in your home. If they need to make call do if for them.
- Never give the impression that you are alone if a caller or a stranger is at your door.
- Do not give any information to “wrong numbers” callers. Never give them your name.
- Do not leave your garage door opener in an unlocked vehicle.
- Keep a charged cell phone with no service \*(celug) by your bed and in your safe room and car you can still talk to 911 from it (it is required by law). You will always know where it is and you can find one anywhere.
- Car keys with a panic button are a good deterrent. Keep one near bed at night. Noise is a big deterrent.
- Do not discard your mail with your name and address in a public trash can.
- Do not put your address on your key chain. (telephone number)
- Anytime something is suspicious, call the police. That is their job.
- If you arrive home and feel there could be someone inside your home, leave, call the police and ask them to do a security sweep of your home.
- If you have a friend you have not heard from or they have broken a routine call a family member or have the police do a welfare check on that person.

### **Leaving Home for the holidays and Vacations**

- Ensure the house is securely locked, including windows usually left open.
- Cancel newspapers and redirect your mail or have it collected by a friend.
- Put pets into a boarding kennel or have friends visit them often.
- Tell neighbors or friends who can check on the house, you are away and whom will be at the house legitimately – e.g. gardeners, pet minders.
- Secure your garage or, if unable – move items such as bikes inside the house.
- Consider security devices, including light timers etc.
- Do not leave cash in the house and locate jewelry in a safe place.
- Ensure your lawn is cut, the property tidy and stop all deliveries.
- Avoid leaving the answering machine on and turn the phone volume down.

## **Safety in Your Vehicle**

- Have your keys ready when you approach your vehicle.
- Be aware of the surroundings including inside vehicle.
- Always keep vehicle locked even while driving.
- Keep a cell phone in your car.
- Keep your vehicle in good repair and enough gas in it.
- Avoid isolated roads and shortcuts.
- Park in well lighted areas if possible.
- Do not leave items of value in open view. Use trunk or glove box to secure them.
- Avoid parking next to or walking near vans and tinted window vehicles.
- When dropping off someone wait until they have safely entered their residence or destination.
- If you get bumped by another vehicle, call the police and wait in your car or drive to a public location.
- If your vehicle breaks down, raise hood, turn on hazard lights and then lock yourself inside. Call for help if you can. If someone stops and offers aid, remain in the auto and ask them to call for help. Don't worry about seeming rude.
- If you have a flat tire in unsafe area, you might consider driving slowly to a safer location.
- If an unmarked car is flashing lights for you to stop or pull over and you cannot verify it is the police, call 911 and drive slowly to the nearest public place before stopping. (an average of 25,000 crimes are committed annually by individuals impersonating police)
- If for some reason your key will not unlock your car, be wary, do not accept assistance from a stranger, return to a safe area and call the authorities.

## **Road Rage**

Many motorists become victims every day because of "road rage." Many drivers get angry when someone cuts them off or tailgates them. A lot of drivers get angry at slow drivers. Violent incidents on the road recorded by police have increased more than 50 percent over the last five years. The following are some tips to avoid becoming involved in a "road rage" confrontation;

- Don't let another motorist egg you on into getting into a confrontation on the highway. If someone is tailgating you, let them pass. Don't take bad drivers personally.
- Avoid eye contact with an obviously aggressive driver.
- Don't make obscene gestures. Use your horn sparingly, as a warning, not as an expression of anger.
- Make sure you give yourself plenty of time to get where you are going. Being stressed because you are running late can make you an aggressive driver with a short temper.
- If you see someone driving aggressively, stay out of their way and contact the police. Consider carrying a cellular phone in your car to contact police in the event of an encounter with an aggressive driver.
- Be wary of putting bumper stickers on vehicle that could offend or cause an unwanted reaction.

## **Carjacking**

Carjacking is the taking of a motor vehicle in the possession of another by means of force or fear. Security conscious drivers are less likely to be a victim of carjacking than those who are careless. Crimes can take place at any time but more often take place at night, and are more often committed by young males. Top spots for carjacking include intersections and parking lots at malls, apartments, businesses and schools. The following precautions will reduce your chances of being victimized:

### *Getting In*

- Reduce your chances of being carjacked by walking to your car purposefully, and stay alert.
- Approach your car with the key in hand. Look around and inside the car before getting in.

### *Getting Out*

- Park in well-lighted areas, near sidewalks or walkways. Avoid parking near dumpsters, wooded areas, large vans or trucks, or anything else that limits your visibility.
- Never leave valuables in plain view even if the car is locked. Put them in the trunk or out of sight.
- Keep doors locked and windows rolled up, no matter how short the distance or how safe the area.
- Look around, especially at places where you slow down or stop such as garages and parking lots, intersections, self-serve gas stations and car washes, highway entry and exit ramps, and ATMs.
- When coming to a stop, leave enough room to maneuver around other cars, especially if you sense trouble and need to get away.
- Avoid driving alone, if possible. Travel with someone, especially at night.
- Don't stop to assist a stranger whose car has broken down. Help instead by using your cell phone or driving to the nearest phone and calling police to help.
- Always keep your car well maintained, and make sure you have plenty of gas.

### *If It Happens to You*

- If the carjacker threatens you with a gun or other weapon, give up your car. Don't argue. Your life is worth more than a car.
- Get away as quickly as possible.
- Contact the police immediately.

### **Buses and Elevators**

- Try to use well-lighted and frequently used stops.
- Try to sit near the bus driver. Do not fall asleep. Stay alert.
- While waiting stand near other people.
- If you are harassed, attract attention by talking loudly or screaming.
- Be alert to who gets off the bus with you. If you feel uncomfortable, get back on or walk to a public place.
- Look into the elevator before getting in to be sure no one is hiding.
- Stand near the controls.
- Get off if someone suspicious enters.
- If you are attacked, hit the alarm and as many floor buttons as possible.
- Avoid stairwells unless it is an emergency.

### **ATMS**

- Stay alert.
- Try to plan your visits during the day.
- Choose ATMs in busy public places.
- Do not count your money at the machine.
- If someone offers to let you go ahead, decline and leave.
- If someone suspicious approaches hit cancel, get your card and leave.
- As always be mindful of your surroundings. Don't select an ATM at the corner of a building — corners create a blind spot. Do your automated banking in a public, well-lighted, high traffic locations that is free of shrubbery and decorative partitions or dividers.
- Maintain an awareness of your surroundings throughout the entire transaction. Be wary of people trying to help you with ATM transactions. Be aware of anyone sitting in a parked car nearby. When leaving an ATM make sure you are not being followed. If you are followed or think you are, drive immediately to a police or fire station, or to a crowded, well-lighted location or business.
- If lights around the ATM are not working, don't use that machine

- Do not use an ATM that appears unusual looking or offers options with which you are not familiar or comfortable. There are machines that thieves stick on top of ATM machines called skimmers that steal your banking information
- When using a walk-up ATM, park as close as you can to the machine. Before leaving the safety of your car, check for suspicious persons or circumstances. Have your ATM card ready before you approach the machine
- Use your body to block the view of your transaction. Especially as you enter your PIN and take your cash. If necessary, ask a person to leave, even if that person is just curious. If the ATM is in use, give the person using the machine the same privacy you expect. Allow them to move away from the ATM before you approach the machine. Having a friend with you is also beneficial.
- Do not wear expensive jewelry or take other valuables to the ATM. This is an added incentive to the robber.
- Never count cash at the machine or in public. Wait until you are in your locked car or another secure place.
- When using a drive-up ATM, keep your engine running, your doors locked and leave enough room to maneuver between your car and the one ahead of you in the drive-up line.
- Beware of a car that 'accidentally' bumps into yours, if you are at a drive-up ATM, and have gotten your cash
- Maintain a supply of deposit envelopes at home or in your car. Prepare all transaction paperwork prior to your arrival at the ATM. This will minimize the amount of time spent at the machine.
- Many of the new ATM's will take your cash or check without envelopes, so be extra careful especially if you are depositing cash. If possible do these transactions inside a bank.
- Closely monitor your bank statements, as well as your balances, and immediately report any problems to your bank.
- If you are involved in a confrontation with an armed robber who demands your money, COMPLY. Your cash is not worth your life.
- Some banks offer secure ATM's that can only be accessed with a bank card. If you have the opportunity, use these. If possible, have someone go with you to the ATM.
- Do not leave your car running or the keys in the ignition as you walk up to an ATM. As you return after your transaction, have your car keys and your [protection](#) device ready and check around and under your vehicle.
- If there are other people at the ATM you want to use, remain in your car with the doors locked and windows up until they leave, or go to another ATM.
- When using a drive-up ATM, keep your doors locked and windows up until you are ready to use the machine, Keep cash, checks, or money bags out of sight until you are ready for your transaction.

### **Social Functions**

- Watch your drinks and food to ensure that nothing is added to them.
- Try to attend with friends and designate someone to limit their self so they can monitor the group.
- Be especially careful never to leave your drink unattended, even if you are going onto a dance floor or to the toilet.
- If your drink has been left unattended, do not drink any more of it.

- If something tastes or looks odd, do not eat/drink any more of it. Be aware though that some date rape drugs are colorless and tasteless.
- If someone you do not know or trust offers to buy you a drink, either decline politely or accompany them to the bar and watch that nothing is added to your drink.
- Know your own limit.
- If you meet someone new at a party DON'T go home with them. DON'T invite them back to your home or accept a lift from them. Arrange a second date in a public place to get to know the person better.
- Pay attention to your instincts. If you feel uneasy about someone, there may be a reason – don't give them personal details about yourself and don't arrange a second date.
- When it's time to go home, carry your keys, travel card, mobile phone and some money in your pocket, so you can give up your handbag or wallet and escape quickly if necessary on the way home.
- If possible carry a personal alarm and know how to use it to shock and disorientate an assailant so that you can get away.
- Take a friend to the restroom with you.
- Keep in mind that date rape drugs are odorless, colorless and tasteless.
- If you suspect that you have been drugged and sexually assaulted, go to the emergency room immediately, request urine samples and test relative to an assault.
- Remember; alcohol use by the victim, perpetrator or both has been implicated in 46-75% of date rapes among college students.

\*"Terminator technique" is a technique developed by us to teach you how to be aware of your surroundings.

\* "Celug" is a name we have coined to identify a cell phone with no service but can still be use to contact 911. These phones are cheap and usually you can find them anywhere. You can always keep one in your vehicles, safe room and by your bed or carry with you (always be sure it is charged).