

PERSONAL SAFETY

Staying safe should be a priority for everyone. Unfortunately however, busy schedules, time constraints and routines often result in complacency. This guide to personal safety should raise your level of awareness. By being aware of your surroundings and employing these simple but effective strategies, you can reduce your chances of becoming a victim.

If we all remain alert, aware and tuned in to what is going on around us, we are less likely to be a target of opportunity for a criminal. Take the time to review this brochure and refer to it periodically. Being prepared and taking a proactive approach can mean the difference between staying safe or being a potential victim.

A Final Note

COMMON SENSE...
Can prevent most problems
before they occur...

STAY ALERT: Try not to daydream or become preoccupied. Pay attention to your surroundings. Give the message that you are confident and know where you are going. Stand tall, walk purposefully and make eye contact with people around you.

In an emergency, call **911**. Stay calm. You will need to give your name, where you are and the type of assistance you will need (police, ambulance, fire, etc.)

Somerset County Prosecutor's Office
40 North Bridge Street
P.O. Box 3000 • Somerville, NJ 08876-1262
908-231-7100

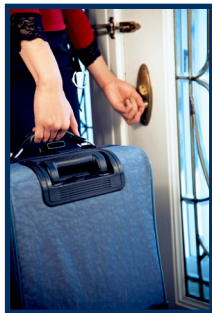
www.scpo.net

TIPS HOTLINE 1-888-577-TIPS (8477)

Personal Safety Guide



Somerset County
Prosecutor's Office



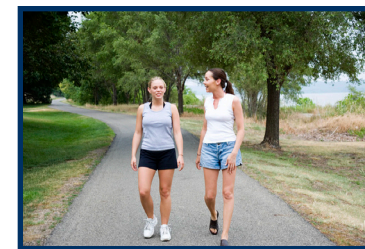
SAFETY AT HOME

- Give the appearance that the residence is occupied.
- While away from home for extended periods of time, do not allow newspapers or mail to accumulate.
- Do not pin notes to your door.
- Close blinds, shades and curtains at night.
- Keep your doors and windows locked.
- Have and use a chain guard on your door, but don't rely on a door chain to protect you, install a dead bolt.
- Use timers to turn on lights at night, setting them to coincide with your daily habits.
- If you live alone, do not advertise it: use your initials on the mailbox, address labels and in the telephone directory instead of your full first name.
- Never hide keys under a mat or in the garden, etc.
- Don't leave the phone off the hook, or use an answering machine if you are away from home for an extended period of time. Consider a "call forwarding" service.
- If you move to a new home or apartment, install new locks.
- Request I.D. from everyone before you open the door: maintenance, delivery and repairmen... even the police.



SAFETY IN YOUR VEHICLE

- Always keep your vehicle locked.
- Know your destination and plan your route. Advise family or friends where you are going.
- When approaching your vehicle, have your keys in your hand.
- Be aware of the area surrounding your vehicle.
- Park in a well lit and well traveled area.
- Look inside your vehicle prior to entering.
- While driving keep your vehicle locked and windows up.
- If you feel you are being followed, do not go home. Instead go to the nearest police or fire station or other place of business where you can get help.
- Put packages out of view, or in the trunk.
- Keep the gas tank at least one-quarter filled at all times.
- Keep your car in good running condition, and have your tires checked regularly.
- If your car is disabled: raise the hood and tie a white cloth to the aerial or door handle. Stay in the car - do not get out. Ask any motorists that stop to call the police for you.
- Consider obtaining a cell phone.
- If you notice a disabled vehicle, do not stop. Note the location and stop at the first safe phone to call the police.



SAFETY WHILE WALKING OR JOGGING

- Know your surroundings and avoid areas that are unfamiliar to you.
- Avoid short cuts between buildings, lots or other unfamiliar areas.
- Avoid places where people can hide such as doorways and shrubbery.
- If you carry a purse, do not wrap the strap around your wrist or neck. If the purse is grabbed you could be knocked down causing injury.
- If you are carrying packages, do not overload your hands. Always keep one hand free. Be willing to drop them quickly if you are being followed.
- Try to walk or jog with a friend; there is strength in numbers.
- Walk on a sidewalk or near the curb, facing traffic.
- Be careful when strangers ask directions or the time, or offer to carry your packages home.
- If you are attacked (or feel you are in danger) yell FIRE not RAPE or HELP!
- Carry a whistle on a separate key-chain. Keep it ready (in your hand or pocket). Do not carry pepper spray or mace - it can easily be used against you.
- When you are brought home, ask the driver to wait until you are safely inside.