

## We should all be safe from violence.

No victim ever 'asks for' a crime like assault, harassment, or abuse. But there are personal safety habits we can all adopt that make us less likely to be targets. Here are just a few ideas: At home, lock doors and make sure windows can't be pried open. Use curtains or blinds. Be wary of visitors and callers you don't expect. Never let them in or give them personal information. When you're out, pay attention to people around you and where you are. Notice escape routes. Lock your car doors when you're inside. For security, park in well-lit areas. Help build safe communities - think about starting or joining your community's crime prevention efforts.

By following these tips, you can reduce your own, your family's, and your neighbours' risk of being targets. Working together with those in your home and community – preventing crime becomes our common goal for creating safer communities.

### IN YOUR HOME

- Get to know your neighbours and look out for each other.
- Doors should be visible from the street or from your neighbours' home. Cut down or take down anything that makes a hiding spot for criminals.
- Walkways and doorways should be well-lit. Use timers to automatically turn lights on when you are away from home.
- Protect your privacy by using blinds and curtains.
- Use only your initial and last name on mailboxes or in telephone books. Do not use anything that can help someone identify your gender (i.e. Mr., Mrs., etc.).
- Keep your doors locked at all times – even when you are home.
- Install a 180-degree peephole in your door.
- Never answer a door without checking who is there. Never let in a stranger. Being polite is not an issue – your safety is.
- Plan for safety – when planning for renovations, know who your contractor is and their staff working in your home. Always ask for and check references.
- Never give out personal information to callers whom you don't know to avoid being a victim of a scam.

- Report threatening and harassing calls to the police.
- Talk to your phone company about their security and privacy features.
- When you are leaving your home – be aware of your surroundings. Evaluate your situation and stay alert in laundry rooms, parking garages, elevators, and avoid dark or secluded areas.
- For parents:
  - Ensure you know and have appropriately screened those supervising your children. You may wish to ask for a criminal record check.
  - Consider hiring babysitters that have completed a babysitting or first aid course. Ensure they know what to do and who to call in case of an emergency.
  - Ensure children are adequately supervised by a responsible and sober adult.
  - Create family rules around fighting and dealing with conflict.

### IN YOUR VEHICLE

- **Keys:**
  - Have them in hand when approaching your vehicle. Glance into your vehicle before entering.
  - Do not hide spare keys on the vehicle (i.e. under bumpers, under the hood, etc.)
- **Locks:** lock your doors when you are driving or when it is parked.

- **Car registration and insurance documents:** don't leave them in your vehicle. They show your address and other personal information.
- **Garage door opener:** keep them out of sight. Thieves can use it to get into your home.
- **Maintenance:** regular tune-ups will keep your vehicle in good working order.
  - **If the vehicle breaks down:**
    - Raise the hood and turn on the hazard lights.
    - If someone offers to help, assess your situation to see if it safe to accept the assistance.
    - If you feel unsafe, simply ask the helper to call for assistance.
    - Do not leave your vehicle in order to walk for help, especially in unknown or unsafe areas.
- **Parking:** park in well-lit areas. You may wish to use anti-theft devices for your vehicle such as steering wheel locks and vehicle alarms. Always check the back seat before entering your vehicle. Lock your doors immediately upon entry.

**Roll up your windows, lock your doors, take your keys – everytime!**

### **IN YOUR COMMUNITY**

- Plan your route ahead of time and let others know where you are going and when you expect to be back.
- Pay attention to people around you and your surroundings. Notice escape routes.
- Walk proud and attentively. Attackers look for vulnerability or timidity.
- Try to walk with a friend and use well-lit, busy streets.
- Never assume parked cars are empty.
- Follow your instincts about people and places. If you think you are being followed, go towards more people, into a business, or into a well-lit area.
- Don't carry a bunch of bags or wear shoes that are impossible to run in.
- Never hitchhike or accept rides from strangers.

- Consider taking a self-defense class.
- Be smart with your cell phone.
  - Don't get too distracted talking on the phone that you don't notice your environment.
  - Don't reveal too much about yourself if using the phone where others can hear the conversation.
  - Program 'in case of emergency' numbers on a one-touch function.
- Help build safe communities – think about joining your community's crime prevention efforts.
- If you think a crime is being committed, report it to the police immediately (i.e. impaired driver, suspected child abuse, etc.).
- If you become aware of a crime committed but not reported, encourage the victim to report the crime as this may prevent future incidents from happening to others.

### **PRACTICE ONLINE SECURITY**

- Keep all your passwords to yourself.
- Don't trust people you meet over the Internet.
- Don't give personal details that could identify you or let a potential attacker know where you are.
- Ensure you are on a secure website before giving personal information over the Internet.
- Update security software regularly.

### **TELEMARKETING FRAUD**

- Legitimate lotteries and sweepstakes never charge up front fees to deliver your prize.
- Report suspicious offers and telemarketing pitches to [www.phonebusters.com](http://www.phonebusters.com) or call 1-888-495-8501 where additional resources and information is available.

### **SELF-DEFENSE TIPS**

- Always be alert and aware of your environment. Is there a place you could run to or are there people nearby who could hear you if you screamed.
- There is no perfect answer to a situation. Do the best you can to respond.

- Know what you would be prepared to do to an attacker to get away.
- Keys, bags and umbrellas can be weapons. That works for both you and the attacker.
- Be rude and cause a scene. This will draw attention to you – something the attacker does not want.
- Be assertive, make eye contact with the attacker, speak in a firm and confident voice, and use short, simple statements.
- Sometimes physical resistance may be effective. Immediate and forceful resistance may throw the attacker off-guard and allow you time to escape.
- Stay calm as best as you can and look for opportunities to escape or let someone know you are in trouble.
- Consider carrying an emergency whistle or personal safety alarm if you are outside walking, jogging, etc.

#### **IF YOU ARE ASSAULTED**

- Remember it was not your fault and there was no ‘right’ way to do things.
- Call the police immediately. They will come and take you to the hospital.
- Don’t wash yourself or change your clothes because your body may have evidence of your attacker.
- Don’t clean up the scene – leave everything where it is.
- Don’t consume anything. Try to remember and write down as many details about the incident as you can. Be honest about what happened.
- Call for support services. Your local police service can connect you with a Victim Services Unit that can help you in the aftermath of an assault.

#### **WHAT DO WE HAVE IN COMMON?**

For more about personal safety, contact your local police service or visit [www.crimeprevention.gov.ab.ca](http://www.crimeprevention.gov.ab.ca)

