

# Know How to Protect Yourself on the Street

You may not ever be faced with the prospect of a mugger, but it's important to know how to act if you ever encounter such a situation. The best way to protect yourself from a street robbery, or mugging, is to reduce your exposure to potentially being victimized — stay in groups, walk in well-lit areas, and pay attention to your surroundings. Thieves will look for “easy prey” before they try to attack someone who is prepared.

## Basic Street Smarts

- Wherever you are—on the street, in an office building or shopping mall, driving, waiting for a bus or subway—stay alert and tuned in to your surroundings.
- Send the message that you're calm, confident, and know where you're going.
- Trust your instincts. If something or someone makes you uneasy, avoid the person or leave.
- Know the neighborhoods where you live and work.
- Check out the locations of police and fire stations, public telephones, hospitals, and restaurants, or stores that are open late.

## If Someone Tries to Rob You

- Don't resist. Give up your property—don't give up your life.
- Report the crime to the police. Try to describe the attacker accurately. Your actions can help prevent others from becoming victims.
- Self defense measures are most effective when applied as preventive steps—avoiding the crime in the first place. These measures include running away, hiding, screaming, and raising an alarm—remember, more people will respond to someone yelling “Fire” than they will to “Help!”

## Safety In Your Vehicle

- The crime of “carjacking” — which is stealing a car by force — captures headlines across the country. Statistically speaking, however, your chances of being a victim of carjacking are very slim, and taking preventive measures can reduce that risk even more.
- If the carjacker threatens you with a gun or other weapon, GIVE UP YOUR CAR!
- Don't argue. Your life is definitely worth more than a car!
- Get away from the area as quickly as possible.
- Try to remember what the carjacker looked like — sex, race, age, hair and eye color, special features, clothes.
- REPORT THE CRIME IMMEDIATELY TO THE POLICE!

## Automated Teller Machine Safety Tips

- Try to use machines you are familiar with, and try to use terminals located in banks rather than independent terminals.
- Be aware of your surroundings. Look around before conducting a transaction. If you see anyone or anything suspicious, cancel your transaction and go to another ATM.
- If you must use an ATM after hours, make sure it's well-lit.
- Never walk away from an ATM with cash still in hand. If you are going to count your money, do so at the ATM.
- When making an ATM transaction from your car, be aware of your surroundings. Keep your eyes and ears open, and keep car doors locked!
- Robbery and assault are serious crimes. While money is often the motivation, these are considered crimes of violence because they involve the threat or actual use of physical violence. The basic rules of prevention are to be sensible and to be alert.
- If possible, don't walk alone during late-night hours. Walk in groups whenever you can there is always safety in numbers.
- Let a family member or friend know your destination and your estimated time of arrival or return. That way, the police can be notified as quickly as possible if there is a problem.
- Stay in well-lit areas as much as possible. Avoid alleys, vacant lots, wooded areas, and other short-cuts or secluded areas. These are usually not well-lit or heavily traveled.
- Walk on the sidewalk whenever possible. Walk close to the curb, avoiding doorways, bushes, and other potential hiding places. If you have to walk in the street, walk facing traffic. A person walking with traffic can be followed, forced into a car, and abducted more easily than a person walking against traffic.
- Walk confidently, directly, and at a steady pace. Don't stop to talk to strangers.
- Wear clothing and shoes that give you freedom of movement. And don't burden yourself with too many packages or items.
- Always be aware of your surroundings.
- If you are wearing headphones, don't turn up the volume so high that you cannot hear outside noises.
- Never hitchhike or accept rides from strangers.
- Avoid carrying large sums of cash, or displaying expensive jewelry, etc. in public. If you must carry large sums, divide the cash into smaller quantities and carry in multiple places on your person (wallet, purse, side pocket, etc.)

**Report any suspicious activity or person immediately to the Richmond Police Department at (510) 233-1214. If it is an emergency, dial 9-1-1.**

