

Awareness and Prevention

Personal and Home Safety

- Trust your instincts. If you feel threatened, try to get away immediately. Too often, we ignore danger because we don't want to be impolite or cause embarrassment.
- Have your key in hand when going to your car. Have your house key ready before getting out of your car. You may want to hold keys so they stick out from your fingers below your knuckles. If you should have to punch someone, it increases the power of your punch.
- If you are frightened, make as much noise as you can to draw attention. Many people believe it is more effective to yell "fire!" than "help." Most people will check on a fire - they might be afraid of personal harm if they intervene in an attack. Shouting itself is likely to make an attacker take off.
- If someone grabs you from behind, try to turn and strike their face with your elbow, or stomp your foot on their instep. It's likely to loosen their grip long enough for you to get away.
- Lock your car, and keep windows at least halfway up while driving.
- Carry a cell phone. You can even have 911 punched in, so you just need to hit send should something happen.
- Control your environment. Entering an empty house, parking in an isolated area, or relying on others for transportation can place you at risk.
- If crimes are occurring in your neighborhood, think about a "buddy" system - a roommate or someone in your building who will watch while you go in or out, someone you can be on the phone with as you walk, or someone you check in with when you're home for the night.
- Keep your doors and windows locked, be sure you have good locks, and investigate devices such as a floor bar if you have a sliding door to a patio or balcony.
- Keep a phone near you at all times. A mobile phone on a land line can be tracked to your location if you reach 911 but don't have time to tell them what's happening. Cell phones cannot yet be traced to a location.
- Keep a baseball bat in every room. Train everyone in your home to get behind a door and use the bat as someone enters a room if there is an intruder. Child size bats are shorter and easier to swing in a small space.

Dates, Parties, Clubs and Bars

- Know your expectations and be sure they are made clear.
- If your date makes you uneasy, call someone for a ride if you don't know others at the party.
- Use assertive language. It can deter the person who is trying to intimidate you.
- Let others know when you feel uncomfortable. If you don't like what someone is doing, object to the action - not the person.
- Remember that alcohol and drugs can impair your ability to respond
- Don't leave with someone you don't know.

Rape Drugs

Rape drugs have become more prevalent in our society. Rape drugs are put into a victims' drink, food, or even chewing gum and used to make them more vulnerable to rape. The symptoms are:

- appearing drunk without excessive alcohol consumption
- unexplained drowsiness and impaired motor coordination
- dizziness, confusion, impaired judgment and loss of inhibition
- impaired ability to remember details

To reduce risks of being drugged:

- Do not leave beverages unattended
- Do not take beverages from someone you do not know well and trust

- At a bar or club, accept drinks only from the bartender or server
- At parties, bring your own beverage and do not accept open-container drinks from anyone
- Be alert to the behavior of friends and ask them to watch out for you. Anyone extremely intoxicated after consuming only a small amount of alcohol may be in danger.
- Leave with the same group of people that you came with to the party.
If you think you have been drugged:
- Request a urine test as quickly as possible so the drug is still in your body. However depending on the substance, the test can be reliable 24-72 hours later.

Internet Safety

The Internet has become a way to meet people. Unfortunately, the Net has also become an easy place to find rape victims. On-line, many people give out information about themselves. It is important to remember that people you meet on-line are no more trustworthy than the people you meet in public places.

Here are some tips to keep yourself safe while online:

- Be cautious about giving out personal information (i.e. work or home address, phone number, whether or not you live alone, last name).
- Choose a gender-neutral e-mail address and username.
- Send yourself an e-mail to make sure that your e-mail address doesn't give out personal information. Contact your system administrator to change the information if needed.
- Find out what information is available about you on-line. If you don't like what you see, contact your Internet Service Provider for assistance in changing your entry.
- If you have children, monitor their e-mail and Internet usage. They are vulnerable targets.

If you plan to meet someone you met online:

- Try to meet the individual with a group of friends. If this is not possible, meet in a public place and make sure you have a way to get home.
- Make sure someone you trust knows your whereabouts and what time to expect you home.
- If possible, arrange for the meeting to be in a public place, during the afternoon or early evening.

Travel Tips

When traveling, it is important to take precautions.

- Choose a secure hotel and store your valuables in the hotel safe.
- Know the address and phone number of your hotel.
- Never answer the door without verifying who's there. Even if you are expecting your travel companion who just ran down the hall for ice. ALWAYS check.
- When you are in the hotel room always bolt the security lock.
- Be careful where you lay your room key. By the poolside, anyone could take it, or find out your room number.
- Get the cab driver's name and use it. That way he is aware you know his name and company. Know the address of the place you are going.
- Try to pick up your rental car during daytime hours.
- On the road, don't stop if a car starts bumping you from behind or even if you see another motorist signaling for help. Step on the gas. Speed on the nearest well-lighted gas station.
- Have an idea of unsafe parts of town.