

Keeping People Safe



# Personal Safety

**Advice for women**

## Help stay safe by taking further simple precautions:

### How you can help yourself

- Carry a charged mobile phone.
- Carry a personal attack alarm.
- Vary your daily routines, have company whenever possible, and always let someone know what your plans are.
- Remember - flight not fight!

### Staying safe when you're out and about

- Cover up expensive-looking jewellery. Carry your bag close to you with the clasp facing inwards. Carry your house keys in your pocket. If someone grabs your bag, let it go, do not get hurt. Your safety is more important than your property.
- Don't take short cuts through dark alleys, parks etc. Walk facing the traffic, so a car cannot pull up behind you unnoticed.
- Don't hitch-hike or take lifts from strangers.
- When walking alone carry a personal attack alarm. Carry it in your hand so you can use it immediately to scare off an attacker. Make sure it is designed

to continue sounding if it is dropped or falls to the ground.

- Self-defence/safety awareness classes may help you feel more secure, but remember - flight not fight!
- Arrange transport home in advance. Do not go out alone. Don't get isolated from your friends.
- Stay in well-lit areas and don't wander in areas you are unsure of.
- Never leave your drink unattended or accept a drink from someone who you don't know or trust.
- If you feel drunk, dizzy or disorientated seek help from a trusted friend or a member of bar staff.
- Consider carefully whether to leave with someone you have just met.
- When jogging or cycling, vary your route and time. Use well-lit roads with pavements. On parkland, keep to main paths and open spaces where you can see and be seen by other people - avoid wooded areas. Using a mp3 player may limit your awareness to the surroundings.

## Victim of sexual assault?

If you have been attacked, call the police straight away. They need your help to catch the attacker. You can help the police by:

- Taking the name or address of any witness.

- Trying to remember exactly what the attacker looked like.
- If a car was involved, try to note the colour, model and registration number.
- You do not need to go to the police station to report an assault - you can be interviewed in your own home if you wish. These crimes are dealt with sympathetically, regardless of sex. Police stations have specially trained officers who will help and support you, and many areas have comfortable victim suites, separate from the police station, where you can be interviewed privately.
- Although your immediate reaction will be to wash, try not to if you can possibly help it. It will destroy vital medical evidence that will help prove the case against the person who sexually assaulted you.
- Should your case come to trial, the law will guarantee your anonymity if you are female, or under 18 years old. The law forbids newspapers to publish anything that might identify you, also, as a general rule, you should not be asked about your previous sexual history in court.
- If the violence is within your family, legal protection is possible under either civil or criminal law. In some cases for example, they can require a husband or partner not to enter your home, or even your neighbourhood.

# Safer Travel

- Using taxis - use reputable taxi companies. Private hire taxis must be booked either at their office or by phone. Legal taxis display the new licence plates.
- All legal taxi drivers must carry identification. Keep the number of a reliable firm handy. Avoid private hire taxis that tout for business.
- Check that the taxi which arrives is the one you ordered. Ask for a description of the car - colour, make, etc - and check this when it arrives. If you gave your name when you booked, check that the driver can tell you it before you get in. When you get home, ask the driver to wait until you are inside.
- Try to share with friends, never strangers. Last person out should sit behind the driver.
- If you feel uneasy, ask to be let out in a well-lit area where there are plenty of people. If in any doubt, don't get a taxi.
- If travelling alone on public transport sit close to the driver. On a train use a carriage that is already in use, where you personally feel safer.

# Self-Defence

- You have every right to defend yourself with reasonable force against an attacker. The law however, doesn't allow the carrying of anything which is **intended** for use as an offensive weapon.
- Remember - flight not fight!

**For more information**



**ask for your Local Crime Prevention Officer**