



# Victim Services of Waterloo Region

## Fact Sheet on Planning for Safety

### Why Plan?

When we make plans it prepares us for the possible scenarios we might encounter, and allows us to formulate strategies to better ensure a successful outcome. At no time is this more important than it is when dealing with safety. Whether they be about stalking, domestic violence, abduction, fire or any other incident, planning for an emergency escape and preventative safety measures is critical. Whether it be for oneself, one's child or one's family, time spent making and practicing these plans is time well spent.

### Escape Plans

*If needed, make an emergency escape plan.*

Think of a safe place you could stay if something happened... a shelter, a hotel, etc.

Keep a packed bag and some money  
in your car or workplace.

Remember to have copies of identification and  
important documents.

Don't forget prescription medicine.

Pack for other family members and pets,  
if applicable.

Be prepared - the less you have to worry about  
during an emergency, the better.

*Let your family or a close, trusted friend  
know about your plan.*

### General Tips

- Always look around- be aware of what is happening
- Be aware of locations and situations which would make you vulnerable to crime, such as alleys and dark parking lots.
- Keep paper and pen on you at all times so you can write down a license number or other details.

### Travel Safety

#### On the Street

- Whenever possible, travel with a friend.
- Stay in well-lit areas as much as possible.
- Walk close to the curb. Avoid doorways, bushes and alleys where someone could hide.
- Walk confidently, and at a steady pace.
- Make eye contact with people when walking.
- Do not respond to conversation from strangers on the street, continue walking.
- If you carry a purse, hold it securely between your arm and your body.

#### Car Safety

- Always lock car doors after entering or leaving your car.
- Park in well-lit areas.
- Have your keys in your hand so you don't



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have to linger before entering your car.

- ❑ Check the back seat before entering your car.
- ❑ If you think you are being followed, drive to a public place.
- ❑ If your car breaks down, open the hood and attach a white cloth to the car antenna. If someone stops to help, stay in the locked car, roll down the window a little and ask them to call a tow service.
- ❑ Don't stop to aid motorists stopped on the side of the road. Go to a phone and request help for them.

### Waiting for a Bus

- ❑ Avoid isolated bus stops.
- ❑ Stand away from the curb until the bus arrives.
- ❑ Don't open your purse or wallet while boarding the bus. Have your pass or money already in your hand.
- ❑ Don't invite trouble — keep gold chains out of sight; don't flash your jewelry; and turn your rings around so the stones don't show.

### On the Bus

- ❑ During off-hours, sit as close to the bus driver as possible.
- ❑ Stay alert — and be aware of the people around you.
- ❑ If someone bothers you, change seats and/or tell the driver.
- ❑ Carry your wallet inside your coat, or in a front pocket. A comb, placed horizontally in the fold of your wallet, will alert you if someone tries to remove it from your pocket.
- ❑ Keep your handbag in front of you and hold it close to your body with both hands.
- ❑ Check your purse or wallet if someone is jostling, crowding, or pushing you.
- ❑ If you see any suspicious activity, tell the driver.

**Stay alert at all times!**

### Office Safety

- ❑ Never leave your purse in plain view or in the pocket of a jacket hanging on a door.
- ❑ Personal property should be marked with your driver's license number.
- ❑ Don't leave cash or valuables at the office.
- ❑ If you work alone or before/after normal business hours, keep the office door locked.
- ❑ If you work late, try to find another worker or a security guard to walk out with you.
- ❑ If you are in the elevator with another person, stand near the control panel. If you are attacked, press the alarm and as many of the control buttons as possible.
- ❑ Be alert for pickpockets on crowded elevators.
- ❑ Report all suspicious people and activities to the proper authorities: office manager, building security, law enforcement.
- ❑ Be aware of escape routes for emergencies, and post the phone numbers of the police and fire department near telephones. Call 911 if the situation is life-threatening.

## Your Responsibility!

Everyone should consider it their responsibility to report crime. Many criminals target favorite areas and have predictable methods of operation. When you report all the facts about a crime, it helps the police assign officers in the places where crimes are occurring or where they are most likely to occur. Many crimes go unreported, because people don't think law enforcement can do anything about it or they don't want to get involved. If you don't report crime, the criminal can continue to operate without interference.

In many cases, it is the information provided by victims and witnesses that leads to the arrest of a criminal. So tell law enforcement as much as you can; no fact is too trivial. They need the eyes and ears of all citizens.



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