

Personal Safety FACTSHEET



Staying Safe

The chances that you or a member of your family will be a victim of violent crime is low. However, many people are still frightened that they, or someone close to them, will be the victim of a violent attack.

There are sensible precautions you can take to cut the risk of attack. This factsheet, which is being distributed free of charge by Kleeneze for you to keep, provides simple and effective advice for both men and women, which can help you stay safe.

At home...

- make sure your home is secure (see the NNWA Home Security factsheet for tips on keeping your home safe)
- if you are moving don't show tenants or buyers around the house on your own
- draw your curtains after dark
- if you see signs of a break in at home, don't go in, the intruder may still be there - go to a neighbour's and call the police

Out and about

If you are often out and about on your own or in the dark then there are lots of simple precautions you can take to keep yourself safe:

- carry a personal attack alarm. These are available from DIY stores and often from local police. It is a good idea to carry the alarm in your hand so you can use it immediately to scare off an attacker.
- if you are carrying a bag, keep it close to you with clasps and zips inwards
- keep house keys in your pocket so that if your bag is stolen, a thief won't have your house keys and your address
- if you think someone may be following you, check by crossing the street once or twice to see if they follow you. If it seems that they are, or you are still worried then go to the nearest place with people, such as a pub or shop and call the police. Avoid using a phone box in the street as an attacker may try and trap you inside.
- if you follow the same route regularly then it is a good idea to change your route from time to time
- always stick to well lit areas
- on parks or commons keep to the main paths and open spaces - avoid wooded areas
- if you are wearing a personal stereo remember that you cannot hear traffic or somebody approaching behind you
- don't take shortcuts through dark alleys
- walk facing the traffic so a car can't pull up behind you
- don't hitch hike or take lifts from strangers
- cover up expensive looking jewellery and keep mobile phones and wallets/purses hidden away
- at cash machines don't let anyone see your personal identity number

THIS FACTSHEET INCLUDES INFORMATION ON:

- *Staying safe while out and about*
- *How you can help crack phone crime*
- *How to avoid being a victim of car jacking*

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Other factsheets available in this series include Vehicle Crime, Bogus Callers and Home Security. Contact the NNWA for copies or check www.neighbourhoodwatch.net to download factsheets.

Staying safe in taxis

- if you are going to be out late, try to arrange a lift home or book a taxi through a registered company
- check that the taxi that arrives is the one that you ordered
- when you get home a taxi driver can help you by waiting until you are safely inside before he drives off
- do not hail minicabs from the street or use taxis that are touting for trade- this is not only illegal, but you also have no guarantee that the driver is licensed
- do not sit in the front seat of the taxi - always sit in the back
- 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 in a taxi

Public transport

- try to stay away from isolated bus stops especially after dark
- on an empty bus, sit near the driver or conductor
- on a train sit in a compartment with lots of other people and check to see where the emergency chain is

Mobile phone theft

Mobile phone is on the increase and thousands of phones are stolen by street robbers every month. To prevent being a victim of mobile phone theft you should:

- try not to use your phone in crowded areas where someone could easily snatch it from you
- avoid keeping your phone in public view

In case your phone is stolen you should keep a safe record of the following details - these will help to trace your phone and make it more difficult for thieves to use it and sell it on:

- always use your phone's security pin code
- security mark the battery and phone with your postcode (UV pens are available from your local police station or DIY stores)
- register your phone with your network operator- they will then be able to block your phone's SIM card if it is stolen
- make a note of the serial number of your handset- you can get this by typing *#06# into your phone. This number is unique to your handset. If your phone is stolen, this number will enable your phone manufacturer to block the actual phone handset.



If you follow all of these precautions your phone will be effectively useless to thieves making them less attractive to steal.

Car jacking

Car jacking is not necessarily a new form of crime, but like mobile phone crime it is on the increase. Take these simple steps to protect yourself:

- keep car doors locked while you are driving around town
- keep valuables such as bags and mobile phones out of sight
- try to park in well lit areas where there are other people around
- when you return to your car have your keys ready so you can get straight in
- never give lifts to strangers
- if another car tries to signal you to stop or you think you are being followed then drive to a busy place such as a garage or even a police station before stopping. Even then keep your doors locked until you are sure there is no danger.
- never leave keys in the ignition when you are out of the car
- if bumped from behind stay in your car with the doors locked and wait for the other driver to approach you. If you are suspicious then ask the other driver to follow you to your local police station.
- if you feel threatened then use your lights, horn and mobile phone to summon help

REMEMBER - Your security is more important than your property - if somebody attempts to snatch your bag, phone or your car, then the safest thing to do is to let them go.