

PERSONAL SAFETY WHEN OUT & ABOUT

When on foot:

- Be aware of your surroundings.
- Keep to well-lit and busy areas whenever possible and try to avoid routes that include underpasses, quiet alleyways, wooded or deserted areas.
- Try to look and act confident.
- Keep valuables out of sight. Be careful if you decide to take out your phone, mp3 player or wallet in public. If you are wearing your music player this will also make it more difficult to hear someone approaching you.
- Try to avoid chatting or texting on your mobile phone when walking alone, as this could distract you and prevent you from noticing potential danger approaching.
- Spread your valuables around – e.g. keys in jacket pocket, phone in bag, money in trouser pocket.
- Consider getting a personal safety alarm to carry with you when out and about.

If someone tries to take something from you, it is usually safer to let them have it, rather than get into a confrontation.

- Walk facing traffic so a car can't pull up beside you without warning.
- Try to avoid using cash machines at night.
- Consider using a purse chain or bell.
- Avoid carrying important documents or credit cards that you don't need to take with you.
- Cover up expensive-looking jewellery.
- Remember that you are more vulnerable to attack when you have been drinking. Be careful of drink spiking – never leave drinks unattended; ask a trusted friend to look after your drink for you if you need to go to the toilet.
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If you go **jogging** or **cycling**:

- Vary your route from day to day, and the time if you can.
- Stick to well-lit areas and open spaces

If you think someone is **following** you, go to the nearest place where there are other people, such as a shop.

If a **vehicle driver** stops and speaks to you:

- Keep your distance from the vehicle.
- If you feel threatened, move away quickly in the opposite direction from the way the car is facing.
- If you can, try to remember vehicle details (number plate, make, colour) and call the police.
- Never accept a lift from someone you don't know well or don't feel comfortable with.

When **driving**:

Before you go:

- Make sure your vehicle is in good condition and has plenty of fuel. Carry a spare empty fuel can and a torch.
- Tell someone where you are going and what time you plan to arrive.
- Plan your route.

On the road:

- Don't stop for hitchhikers.
- Make sure you have enough money, contact details for breakdown services and a fully charged mobile phone.
- Keep any bag, phone or valuables out of sight.
- When driving in towns or cities, don't wind your window down far

enough for someone to reach in while you are stopped in traffic.

- If you think you are being followed, or if someone tries to flag you down, drive on until you come to a service station or somewhere busy and call the police.

On **public transport**:

Buses & trains:

- On buses, try and avoid isolated stops.

If you want to feel safer, sit on the lower bus deck near the driver.

On trains or tubes, sit in a busy carriage.

- If you are arriving at night, try and arrange to be met by someone at your destination. Use main escalators and walkways where there is CCTV.

Taxis:

- Always use a reputable mini-cab or private hire car firm and prebook at their office or by phone.
- Check your taxi is the one you booked. Give your name at the time of booking and ask the driver to repeat it before you get in. Look for identification on the driver or vehicle. If you are not sure about the driver, do not get in. If you feel uneasy once you are in the taxi, ask the driver to let you out at a busy, well-lit place.
- At the end of your journey, ask the driver not to drive off until you get indoors.
- Find out if your town has a Taxi Marshalling Scheme at weekends. These are available in many major towns and cities.

For more information about personal safety, visit

www.suzylamplugh.org