

# Safety First

**A Primer on  
Personal Safety  
at Work, Home and  
All Points In-Between**



# Table of Contents

- ▶ General Personal Safety Tips..... 3
- ▶ How To Protect Yourself At Home..... 6
- ▶ In Your Vehicle..... 8
- ▶ In A Parking Lot/Garage ..... 10
- ▶ When Shopping ..... 11
- ▶ When Using An ATM Machine..... 12
- ▶ When Traveling..... 13
- ▶ How To Protect Your Children ..... 14



# General Safety Tips

- ▶ Be alert!
- ▶ Walk with confidence and purpose.
- ▶ Be aware of your surroundings.
- ▶ Know who is around you and what is going on.
- ▶ An attacker will look for someone who appears vulnerable or distracted.
- ▶ Walk in well lighted, well traveled areas.
- ▶ Carry a flashlight with you in case you are ever out at night. (keychain flashlights)
- ▶ Be wary of isolated areas. (parks, laundry rooms, parking lots, etc.)
- ▶ Always let someone know where you are going and when you will return.
- ▶ Do not place personalization of any kind on your vehicle. This can create a great conversation topic for a criminal that wants to gain your trust. (This can also protect your children.)
- ▶ Do not wear clothing that restricts your movement. Wear shoes that will allow you to run if necessary.
- ▶ Do not let alcohol or drugs cloud your judgment.



- ▶ Trust your instincts. If you feel uncomfortable or uneasy no matter what the situation is remove yourself immediately.
- ▶ If you see suspicious activity notify law enforcement immediately, even though you may not be the only observer. Do not assume that someone else has called. Law enforcement would rather receive multiple calls concerning the same incident, than no calls at all.
- ▶ Often times citizens fail to act because they are not sure if what they are observing warrants a call to law enforcement. A good rule of thumb to follow is: When in doubt, call the police, or in an emergency call 911.
- ▶ When you call law enforcement try to provide accurate information and indicate whether the crime is in progress or has already occurred.
- ▶ Describe the event as briefly as possible.
- ▶ Be sure to provide information to include: WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN (cell phone), and HOW.

**Safety First**



- ▶ If there is a suspect/suspects involved provide as much of the following information as possible: sex, race, age, height, weight, hair color, clothing to include color, facial hair, and distinctive characteristics such as scars or tattoos. If they have left the area also provide a direction of travel.
- ▶ If there is a vehicle/vehicles involved try to obtain the color, make (Toyota, Ford, etc.), model (Camry, Mustang, etc.), approximate year, tag, special markings or identifiers to include dents, scratches, bumper stickers and the direction of travel.
- ▶ If possible and it is safe, stay on the phone with the dispatcher until they obtain all of the needed information.
- ▶ Trust your instincts. Do not ignore feelings of uneasiness or concern.
- ▶ If you see a potentially harmful situation developing remove yourself from the area immediately and call law enforcement.
- ▶ Avoid driving through high crime areas whenever possible.



# How to Protect Yourself At Home

- ▶ Invest in solid doors and good quality locks on doors and windows.
- ▶ Strike plates should be case hardened steel material and mounted with 3 inch wood screws which will secure the plate to the wall stud rather than the door frame only.
- ▶ The minimum recommended throw of a dead bolt is 1 inch.
- ▶ To secure sliding glass doors use a square dowel rod, not round or use a "Charlie Bar". Pin the top of the door by screwing sheet metal screws into the track to keep the door from being lifted up and removed.
- ▶ Secure your windows by pinning them shut. This is accomplished by drilling a hole at a slightly downward angle through both the movable and fixed window frame and placing a pin, nail, or dowel in the hole. This will prevent the window from being pried open and raised. The pin, nail, or dowel should be removable for fire safety.

**Safety First**



- ▶ Landscaping around doors and windows should be kept trimmed away from the exterior of your house and below the window level. This will maintain visibility and not create an area where someone can hide.
- ▶ Always keep your doors locked
- ▶ Make sure that you lock the interior door that leads from your garage to the interior of your home.
- ▶ Whenever you go outside lock the door and take the key with you even if it is for a brief period of time.
- ▶ Do not hide spare keys anywhere outside of your home.
- ▶ Do not put your name on your mailbox.
- ▶ If you come home and find a door ajar or a window broken, call law enforcement immediately. Do not enter your home until they arrive and check the area thoroughly.
- ▶ Keep a phone with a lighted keypad next to your bed.



# Vehicle Safety Tips

- ▶ Keep your vehicle in good operating condition.
- ▶ Try to keep your gas tank at  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  should you need to get to safety.
- ▶ When you take your vehicle in for service only leave the ignition key and the key fob for your alarm.
- ▶ Always have your keys in hand when you approach your vehicle (keys as weapon).
- ▶ Always look around and under your vehicle as you approach. Also check your rear seat when you prepare to enter your vehicle.
- ▶ Never hide a spare key for your vehicle anywhere on the outside of your vehicle.
- ▶ Be cautious about opening the doors to your vehicle with key fobs.
- ▶ Be suspicious of anyone that approaches your vehicle with fliers, asking for directions or money.
- ▶ When stopped at a red light or stop sign, leave enough space between you and the vehicle in front of you to allow for an escape.

**Safety First**





- ▶ Do not stop to assist a disabled motorist. Contact local law enforcement and let them assist.
- ▶ If your vehicle is bumped from behind and the circumstances are suspicious or you do not feel comfortable call law enforcement and stay in your vehicle with doors locked and windows up until they arrive. Be sure to activate your hazard lights.
- ▶ If you do not feel comfortable staying where you are, motion the person to follow you to a well lit populated area to wait for law enforcement to arrive.
- ▶ Be cautious of flyers left on the back window of your vehicle. (carjacking)
- ▶ If you think someone is following you, do not drive home. Drive to the nearest police or fire station, or 24 hour business (call law enforcement on a non-emergency number). Stay in your vehicle and blow your horn to get help if you do not feel comfortable getting out of your vehicle.
- ▶ If you are sure that someone is following you, call 911 and remain on the phone with the dispatcher. Follow their instructions until someone arrives.



# How to Protect Yourself in a Parking Garage/Parking Lot

- ▶ Always pay attention when walking through parking lots/garages.
- ▶ Walk with your head up and be aware of your surroundings.
- ▶ Always lock your vehicle and set any vehicle theft devices. Secure your valuables in the trunk.
- ▶ If you observe a suspicious person in the garage or parking lot go back into the building and call law enforcement.
- ▶ If you know that you will be leaving late, move your vehicle closer to the building earlier in the day or call someone for an escort to your vehicle.
- ▶ Try to leave the building in groups, there is safety in numbers.
- ▶ Do not talk on your cell phone or listen to your MP3 player while walking to or from your vehicle.
- ▶ Do not park next to large vehicles or vans.
- ▶ Do not walk right next to vehicles in a parking lot.
- ▶ When walking in an angled parking lot walk in a direction where you can see in between vehicles.

**Safety First**



# How to Protect Yourself While Shopping

- ▶ Do not overload yourself with packages because this will interfere with your ability to react to a situation.
- ▶ Return to your vehicle several times if needed and place packages in your trunk or other area out of view.
- ▶ Always carry your purse close to your body and do not leave it dangling from your arm as you walk. Keep your purse away from the lane of traffic.



# How to Protect Yourself When Using an ATM

- ▶ Use ATM Machines located in well lit and highly visible areas.
- ▶ Be ready to conduct your transaction before you approach the ATM.
- ▶ Be observant when you use the ATM and if you see someone in the area that makes you feel uncomfortable, leave immediately.
- ▶ Try to plan your visits to the ATM during daylight hours. Consider cash back as an option instead of using at ATM at night.

**Safety First**



# Travel Safety Tips

- ▶ When traveling to an unfamiliar place, drive around the block and observe the area first.
- ▶ When using elevators always try to stand next to the operating panel. Be sure that you know what the emergency and stop buttons look like.
- ▶ If you feel uncomfortable about getting in an elevator with someone, don't. If someone gets on the elevator with you that makes you uncomfortable, get off.
- ▶ If you use a cab when traveling be sure to get the cab number and the name of the driver that will be picking you up. If anyone else other than that person comes call the company to verify. Cab radios are easily scanned. Also be sure that you know the general route to your destination.
- ▶ When checking into a hotel check the peephole in your hotel room door. Be sure that you can see out but no one can see in.



# How to Protect Your Children

- ▶ Teach your children to yell, "Stay back you're not my mom/dad!", if someone tries to grab them. This cannot be mistaken for a tantrum and will draw attention from adults.
- ▶ Teach your children to cause a scene if someone grabs them or tries to grab them. They should yell, kick/knock things over and make as much noise as possible.
- ▶ Teach your children to go to a trusted adult if they are lost, scared or need help.
- ▶ Teach your children never to get in a vehicle with someone they do not know.
- ▶ Teach your children if they are approached by a stranger in a vehicle to stay three giant steps back. They should be ready to run and find a trusted adult if the stranger tries to talk to them.
- ▶ Create a secret password with your child that must be used if someone unfamiliar is to pick them up from school or play.
- ▶ Your children must understand that adults help adults –not kids!

**Safety First**



- ▶ Monitor your child's activities on the Internet.
- ▶ Review possible abduction scenarios with your child on a regular basis. (ex: candy, pets, photos)
- ▶ Teach them to never open the door to strangers and to never give out any personal information over the phone or let the caller know they are alone.



## ▶ **Resources**

Florida Highway Patrol  
**245-7700**

Emergency  
**\*FHP (\*347)**

**Safety First**