



BE AWARE, PLAN AHEAD AND TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS

From crossing a street, to protecting your belongings, there is a lot to think about where your own safety is concerned.

Unfortunately, nobody can stop crime or accidents from ever occurring. You do have control over your own actions, however, and this is where prevention comes into play. Using some simple techniques, you can be your own best line of defense to stay safe and protect your property.

BE AWARE

Avoid "autopilot." Remain alert and walk with purpose. Even if you are on a route you take every day, be aware of your surroundings. Also pay close attention to crosswalks and driveways even if you have the "right of way."

PLAN AHEAD

Think about where you are going and plan your route before you leave. What time of day is it? Are you walking through an uninhabited or badly lit area? If you see trouble, can you cross the street or go into a nearby store? If you are not familiar with the area, did you take directions with you?

TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS

Trusting your own instincts that a situation seems "wrong" can be the best personal safety tool you have. Pay attention to it and don't be afraid to act on it! A moment of embarrassment if you are incorrect is far less important than your overall safety.

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

IF YOU ARE CONFRONTED:

Do whatever you can to protect yourself. It is not worth a fight to keep property.

It may seem like a good idea to tell a robber that you have no money, but this technique may actually backfire. It is safer to give up a few dollars. Carry a little money separate from your other funds in an accessible place.

If someone demands your property and displays or implies that they have a weapon, don't resist. You have a greater chance of getting hurt if you do, and usually the robber will get your property anyway.

If someone tries to grab you, make a scene. Scream, kick, fight . . . do what you can to get away and attract attention.

REPORT THE INCIDENT TO THE POLICE:

In an emergency: **CALL 9-1-1**

To report a crime that is not an emergency:

non-emergency # **(727) 893-7780**

ST. PETERSBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT
CRIME PREVENTION UNIT
727-893-7128

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PERSONAL SAFETY

How to Protect Yourself from Crime



PREVENTING THEFT

MINIMIZE WHAT CAN BE LOST: Carry only what you need, small amounts of cash, and only the credit cards you plan to use. Try not to carry anything that is irreplaceable or of sentimental value. If you **MUST** carry a lot of cash or valuables, store them in a pocket or pouch inside your jacket.

PURSES/BAGS: Should be closed, carried in front of the body with an arm held loosely across it. Many people carry a bag out of habit, but if you don't really need it, travel without one.

BACKPACKS: Make sure to zip and secure all pockets and to check on your backpack periodically. When in crowded situation, on public transportation and at street corners, bring your backpack around to your front and hold your arm loosely across it.

SEPARATE ESSENTIALS: If you keep everything in one place, and a thief takes your bag, they now have **EVERYTHING** - your keys, your money, and your ID with your home address. Consider keeping small essentials, such as your keys, ID, cellphone and a small amount of money separate in a coat or pants pocket.

SAFETY IN YOUR VEHICLE

Park in well-lighted areas so you can see your car and it's surroundings from as far away as possible.

Have your keys already in hand as you leave the building.

Be alert when approaching your car. Look around at the cars parked nearby as parked cars can provide good hiding places (inside and out).

If someone is loitering near your car, do not approach it. Go back inside and wait or have someone accompany you to the car.

Enter your car quickly and lock the door first thing once inside. Keep your doors locked whenever you are driving. Keep the windows rolled up enough so that an arm cannot be inserted through the window opening.

If you are followed, drive to a public place and honk to attract attention.

Always leave your car locked and empty of possessions, even small change.

Keep your purse on the floor or under the seat so it is out of view of any passerby when you are stopped at a traffic light.

SAFETY ON THE STREET

WALK WITH PURPOSE: Project an assertive image that conveys you know where you are going (even if you are lost - pretend).

AVOID ISOLATION: Avoid uninhabited parks, parking lots, garages and alleyways; stick to well-lit, high-traffic areas.

KEEP A DISTANCE: Don't let people get too close, even if they appear to have a reason, such as asking for the time.

DRESS SO YOU CAN MOVE WITH EASE: Consider wearing clothing and shoes you can move quickly in.

PACK LIGHT: Take only what you need, overloading yourself can make you appear vulnerable.

BEING FOLLOWED BY A PERSON: If you think you are being followed, switch direction or cross the street. Walk toward an open store, lighted house or an area with other people. Don't be embarrassed to yell for help.

BEING FOLLOWED BY A CAR: If a car follows you, slows down, or calls to you while walking, do not approach it. Turn around and quickly walk in the opposite direction.

HAVE YOUR PHONE READY: Keep your phone on and in your hand or pocket so if you need to call police you don't have to fumble around to find your phone.

TALKING ON THE PHONE: If you talk on the phone while walking, don't get lost in conversation. Pay attention to traffic, people around you and where you are going. **STAY ALERT!**

WALK ON THE STREET FACING TRAFFIC: This will prevent a vehicle from sneaking up on you

AVOID JEWELRY AND CASH: Avoid displaying large amounts of cash or expensive jewelry

