

SAFETY TIPS

ADVANCE DETERRENCE for possible car jackings:

- Take your insurance card out of your car – it has your home address on it. Instead, take a picture of it and have it on your phone.
- Have car keys and house keys always separate. If they take your car – they cannot get into your home. If they take your house keys consider changing your locks at home.
- Have a small alarm that you carry – some folks like <https://www.shesbirdie.com/>
- Take your garage door opener out of your car and bring it inside with you.
- Lock up your spare keys – house and car keys – inside your home. At least don't keep them in the junk drawer in the kitchen or hanging beside the back door – most obvious places.
- Put lights and motion detectors on your house and install a camera, (i.e. a Ring doorbell).
- If car jacked, give them your keys and walk away.

PERSONAL SAFETY:

- Everyday things we should be doing are as simple as making sure you are not being followed, or not “looking like a victim”. That means just be aware.
- Before you get out of your car check your mirrors for people walking up to it.
- Do not let your kids undo their seatbelt until you are stepping out of the car. That way if you see something bad, you can take off and not worry about one of them half hanging out.
- Keep the doors to your car locked when you're inside. This prevents someone from opening your door to grab you, or a bag or phone from inside.
- Be aware of your surroundings, look at who and what is around you and take note of anyone approaching you or your car. A person “heads down” looking at their phone is much easier to take by surprise.
- Be aware of what's happening to others around you and call 911 if you see signs that someone is being threatened or assaulted. Try to pass along any license plate information as well as vehicle and suspect descriptions so responding officers know who or what they are looking for.
- Never leave your car running while unattended and never leave a key inside a parked vehicle.
- Keep some distance between yourself and a stranger who approaches you. Staying more than arm's length away means someone can't grab your bag or you, as easily.
- Be alert if someone approaches you to ask a question like what time it is or if you have a light.
- Don't carry your cell phone in your hand. Keep it out of sight in an inside pocket or zipped in a bag.
- Don't give your cell phone to anyone who approaches asking if they can use it to make a call. This is a common ruse used by a thief who runs off with it.
- If you carry a purse, consider a cross body bag, fanny pack or travel-style money belt. Don't hang a purse on the back of a chair in restaurants, bars or coffee shops but keep it in your lap or between your feet beneath the table – out of reach of passers-by.
- Don't carry more documents, credit cards or valuables with you than needed. The loss of a social security card, birth certificate or passport can create identity theft complications.
- Take a self-defense class to increase your confidence and decrease fear.
- Consider the usefulness of self-defense tools carefully before purchasing. To be effective, the tool must be available when needed (not in a bag, under the car seat or in the glove compartment) and you must know how to use it properly. Seek reputable advice and be prepared to practice.

- Some items to think about getting and learning to use:
 1. Personal alarm
 2. Whistle
 3. Airhorn
 4. Flashlight (not a plastic one) preferably with a strobe feature
 5. Mace or pepper spray
 6. Monkey fist (my wife and I both carry one so if you want to know about them come visit)
 7. Taser (most times just the sound will make people back away)

These are all less than lethal items. They are also things easily found at the store.

Lastly, think about what you would do if you find yourself in a dangerous situation.

What are you going to do? Are you going to run away, attack or freeze? Will you yell? Where is your whistle, mace, car alarm? Picturing what you will do will help you to take that action.

And when it is over what should you do? First thing is to take a deep breath. You are alive, and it's time to slow down so you can give all the information you can. Try to remember everything as any small detail could help.

You can file a police report online for incidents like theft, lost property or damage to property online here:

<https://www.minneapolismn.gov/report-an-issue/theft-lost-property-or-damaged-property/>.

If you are in immediate danger, contact 911.

To file online, all of the following should be true:

- This is not an emergency situation.
- You are not reporting the loss or theft of a firearm.
- The incident happened within Minneapolis city limits.
- There are no known suspects or information about the crime that can be followed up on.
- No weapon was used.
- No one was injured.

If you have questions about reporting a crime, [contact 311](#).