

## Urban Crime Safety

Cities are wonderful and exciting places. Whether you commute daily for work, visit occasionally for cultural events, or actually live inside a metropolitan area, you would most likely agree that the city offers something for everyone.

However, the city can also create an environment that fosters crime. Because metropolitan areas are diverse and highly populated, they offer a great opportunity for all kinds of people to “blend in with the crowd.” While most of those people are honest and hardworking, some of them may be criminals just looking for the next victim. The following are a few tips to help keep you from becoming a victim of urban crime:

### Safety at Your Apartment

- Respect your building’s access control system. Don’t prop open secured doors or let people you don’t know into the building, even if they claim to live there or tell you they are visiting someone.
- Notify your landlord immediately if a light bulb needs to be replaced in the hallway, stairway, storage room, or laundry. Intruders may use the darkness in those remote locations to lie in wait for solitary victims.
- If you must put your name on your mailbox, try to use your first initial only. An attacker may be able to gain access to your building by convincing you or your neighbors he/she knows you and needs to come in for a legitimate reason.
- If an intruder breaks in, try to leave your apartment safely and contact the police from another location. If you cannot leave, lock yourself in a room with a phone and call the police.

### Safety on the Streets

- Don’t present yourself as a victim! Stand straight, walk purposefully, avoid staring at the ground and pay attention to your surroundings.

- Avoid displays of wealth. Try to conceal expensive jewelry by tucking it into your clothing and don’t pull out a roll of cash (or full wallet) when paying for items.
- Try to visit ATMs during the day or when there are other people in the area. Remote cash machines attract thieves.
- Be suspicious of anyone walking toward you with only one hand in their pocket. Studies have shown that people tend to have both hands in their pockets or hanging freely at their sides unless they are trying to conceal something, possibly a weapon.
- While choosing to fight an attacker is a personal decision, most self-defense experts would encourage you to give in to an attacker with a weapon. Material possessions can be replaced, but YOU can’t!

### Safety in a Restaurant/Club

- Pay attention to the location of ALL exits. If a fire or threat occurs in a facility, most people are injured because they ignore alternative escape routes and try to leave the same way they entered, causing an impassable crowding at the main door.
- Don’t get involved in arguments or fights. If you think that someone may get injured, notify security. Often, people who mean well get involved to help a victim only to find that both parties turn on him/her. If you witness an argument, get out of the way or better yet, leave the location completely.



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