

BE SAFE, BE SECURE

Your practical guide to crime reduction

Other information

This leaflet is also available on audio cassette, in Braille, large print or in any of the following languages: Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Greek, Gujarati, Hindi, Punjabi, Somali, Turkish, Urdu, Vietnamese and Welsh.

For more information, or advice on



This booklet tells you how you can help reduce your risk of being a victim of crime. You can make yourself safer and protect your home, your family and your belongings by following some of these simple suggestions.

It is also important to remember that most crime is against property, not people, and that crime levels are going down in most places. Most crimes are 'spur of the moment' actions, often in response to the opportunity of an open window or valuables on display.

Many of the steps suggested here are common sense, but they can make a real difference. By securing your home and property, you can save yourself the distress and expense of crime, and make your community a safer and better place to live in.

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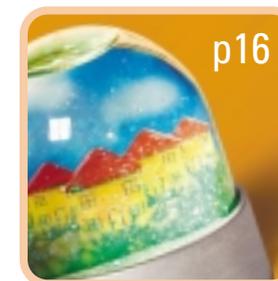
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Your home

Home security is the best way to reduce your chances of being burgled. A lot of burglaries are spur of the moment, as a burglar may see an open window or other easy point of entry and take their chance.

Basic tips

- ① When you go out, always lock the door and close the windows – even if you are just going out for a short time.
- ② Window locks, especially on older windows, will help stop people getting in (and remember, a burglar is less likely to break in if they have to smash a window).
- ③ If you have deadlocks, use them. They make it harder for a thief to get out again. But don't leave the key near the door or in an obvious place.



- ④ Don't leave spare keys outside or in a garage or shed, and put car keys or garage keys out of sight in the house.
- ⑤ Use timers for lights and radios if you need to be away from home overnight. They will create the impression that someone is in.
- ⑥ Visible burglar alarms, good lighting, and carefully directed security lighting can put burglars off. But make sure that lights don't disturb your neighbours, and that alarms turn off after 20 minutes.
- ⑦ Fences at the back of the house may make this area more secure, but walls and solid fencing may let a thief break in without being seen. A good compromise is chain-link fencing, or trellises with prickly shrubs.
- ⑧ Fitting a 'spy hole' allows you to see who is at the door. Having a door chain means that you can open the door a little way to talk to them.

Who can help you do this

Tenants

If you rent your house or flat, your landlord has some responsibility towards its security. If your home is not secure, ask your landlord if they will make necessary improvements. It will be cheaper for them to fit window locks than to mend a broken window.

If you live in social housing or in a block of rented flats, forming a tenants' association might make security easier.

Homeowners

Spending money on security measures can seem daunting, but it is a good investment, will last a long time and can add value to your property.

Contact your council or local police for help. They may be able to advise you on the best measures to protect your property, and may even have grants to help cover the cost.



**For more information**

If you are not sure whether you need to apply for planning permission, you should contact the planning department of your council. You can get an explanatory booklet, 'Planning – A guide for householders', from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) Free Literature on 0870 122 6236 or at www.planning.odpm.gov.uk/householders/index.htm

You can find more information about the planning system, including the control of small-scale development and permitted development rights from the Planning Inspectorate's 'Planning Portal' at www.planningportal.gov.uk

You can also get the following Home Office leaflets.

- 'Your guide to keeping your home secure'
- 'Peace of mind while you're away'
- 'Peace of mind while you move home'

Protecting your property

Planning permission

- There are laws (planning regulations) which govern many of the changes you can make to the outside of your home, including building walls and fences. However, you do not need to apply for planning permission for everything.
- Unless you live in a listed building, or your council has removed your 'permitted development rights' (your rights to carry out limited development without applying for planning permission), you can build a fence or boundary wall up to one metre high where it will be next to a road or footpath, or up to two metres high elsewhere. These height limits would include, as part of the wall or fence, any barbed or razor wire you put up.
- If you use barbed or razor wire, under the Occupiers Liability Act 1984 you must take reasonable precautions to prevent injury to other people caused by dangers on your property. If you are building a wall on the boundary with your neighbour, you may need your neighbour's permission (under the Party Wall Act). If you live somewhere, such as an estate, where there are building restrictions in force, you may need to get special permission.

Personal safety at home

Securing your property will make you safer in your home, and make your home and your belongings safer while you are out.

Here are some guidelines for dealing with different situations you may find yourself in.

① Intruders

- If you think you have an intruder, only you can decide how to deal with the situation. Think about what you might do now – you might not be thinking clearly in a real incident.
- You may respond differently if you are alone in the house, or if there are other people there.
- You could make a noise and hope it puts them off, or keep quiet and hope they don't come into your room.
- You could keep a phone in your bedroom so you can raise the alarm. This may also make you feel safer.
- It is generally best not to challenge an intruder.

② Interrupting burglars

- If you come home and find a broken window or lights on, and you think there may be a burglar inside, you may think it best not to go into the house.
- Go to a neighbour's house and call the police, or ring the doorbell – someone who should be in the house will come to the door, whereas intruders are likely to run away.



3 Abusive phone calls

- If you get an abusive or threatening phone call, do not respond to it. The caller wants a strong reaction from you.
- Put the receiver next to the phone and move away. Return some minutes later and hang up.
- You may want to make a record of when you receive the calls, so you can see if there is a pattern.
- Dialling 1471 may help you see what number the call came from. Some phone companies offer a service which blocks calls from people who have withheld their number.
- At night, unplug your phone or turn the ring off, so you are not disturbed.
- Do not give your name or number when you answer the phone.
- If you are receiving many abusive calls, contact your phone company or the police for help.

4 Bogus callers

- Most people who come to your door will be genuine callers. But it's best to make sure.
- Fitting a door chain or spy hole will help you check who the caller is.
- If you were not expecting someone to call, a genuine caller will not mind waiting outside while you contact their company. Find the phone number in the phone book, or look on your last bill.
- Most companies have a password scheme.
- If you let someone into your home, even if it is someone you know, and you become uncomfortable, make excuses and leave. Go to a neighbour's house, or ask a friend to come back with you.



The law on self-defence

- Under the law you are entitled to use reasonable force in self-defence or to protect another person or your property.
- The force that it is reasonable to use in any situation will depend on the threat that you are facing. For example, the level of force that you can use to defend your life is greater than the force you can use to defend your property.
- What 'reasonable force' is will depend on the circumstances of each case, and is something that only the courts can decide. This does not mean that if you injure a criminal while defending yourself or your property you will necessarily face criminal charges. But if the criminal complains that you have used unreasonable force, the police must investigate.
- In the heat of the moment and in a panic it may be hard for you to assess the level of danger that you face. However, if charges are brought against you, the courts take account of what was reasonable for you in those circumstances – they will make some allowances for 'heat of the moment' panic.
- The courts believe that if you did only what you honestly and instinctively thought necessary to prevent a crime, that would be strong evidence that you used only reasonable force. Generally, the courts use common sense and take account of what it is like to be faced with a violent or possibly violent criminal.
- The law does not allow you to retaliate. Punishing criminals is a matter for the courts and you must not take the law into your own hands by trying to punish an offender for a crime committed against you, your friends or your family.

Students

As a student, you will probably live in shared housing, either in halls or in a shared house. Following the advice on personal safety and property will help keep you safer. These points may also help.

- In halls, be careful about locking your door, even if you are just going down the corridor.
- Make sure that main entrance doors close behind you, and don't let other people in with you.
- In a shared house, follow the security advice given earlier about protecting your property. Your landlord should be able to help.
- Be aware that you are likely to have more electronic goods (stereos, computers and so on) than many households. You should think about getting insurance to cover these in case they are stolen.
- Over Christmas and summer holidays, when it is likely that the house will be empty for a long time, see if anyone will be around to keep an eye on things, and use the security advice earlier in the section. This is particularly important if you live in a student area.



Older people

Older people may feel more vulnerable to some crimes, but are actually less likely to become victims. A few simple steps can also help reduce your risk of crime.

- Think about getting a personal alarm to use if you trip or fall at home.
- Don't keep large amounts of cash at home – use a bank account instead.
- Look after your pension book carefully.
- Ask your landlord to fit door chains and spy holes, or ask the council to help you if you own your home.
- Many councils have security schemes that are aimed at older or more vulnerable people. You could ask them for advice.

See the section on bogus callers.
(Page six)



For more information

Phone the Age Concern
information line on: 0800 00 99 66

Age Concern website:
www.ageconcern.org.uk

You can also get copies of the
Home Office leaflet 'How to beat
the bogus caller'.

Protecting your property Computers

Computers are a popular item to steal. Making sure your home is secure will help guard against this, but there are some extra steps you could take.

Keep your computer in a locked cabinet, or lock the door to the room you keep it in to make it harder to steal.

Use security screws and bolts to make it harder for people without the correct tool to open the casing to steal parts (but check with the manufacturer that this does not affect any guarantee).

Use passwords, make back-up copies on disk and 'watermark' documents. This will help protect your copyright and will mean you have a copy of your work if the computer is stolen.

Be very careful with financial information. For example, don't send your bank details in an e-mail. If you are ordering goods over the internet, make sure the company has a secure server.

If you need to carry a laptop computer with you, try to be discreet about it. Many laptops have distinctive bags, so try to put it in something else, and follow other personal security advice. It may also be useful to carry disks in a different place.



Business and retail

Violence in the workplace covers a wide range of behaviour, from threats and verbal abuse to intimidation and physical assault. It may also include sexual or racial harassment. It can be carried out by customers, suppliers or colleagues.

Your employer has a legal duty to protect you from violence and abuse while you are at work and should have a policy for dealing with the risk of violence to staff.

You can help reduce your personal risk by planning strategies to deal with difficult situations before they happen.

- 1 Check which areas of your organisation's policy on preventing work-related violence are relevant to you and your work.
- 2 Make sure you know which procedures to follow if a violent incident happens.
- 3 Be aware of risk factors and the possible causes of violence arising from the work you are doing.
- 4 If you work alone or away from your workplace, try to make sure someone knows where you are going and when you expect to come back.
- 5 You may feel safer carrying a mobile phone, personal alarm or pager.

If you are in a situation that could turn violent:

- try to stay calm;
- be aware of your own body language and the other person's;
- try to keep a safe distance and avoid physical contact if possible;
- if you cannot calm the situation down, call for help or look for opportunities to move away; and
- report all incidents to your employer.

For more information



Ask your union representative for more information.

Contact the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), which publishes guidance for employers on how to prevent and control violence at work (HSE and local authority inspectors are also responsible for inspecting and enforcing health and safety in workplaces).

Phone the HSE information line on: 0870 154 5500; or visit the HSE website: www.hse.gov.uk



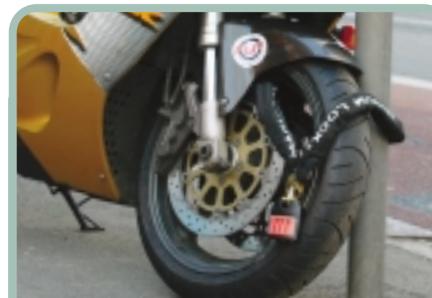
Vehicles

A lot of crime is against cars, motorbikes and bicycles, including the theft of vehicles, and theft from vehicles. Most of it can be prevented.



Bicycles

- Get a good bike lock (D locks or combination locks are best. Look for Sold Secure Ltd approved locks, or ask for a recommendation at a bike shop).
- Lock your bike to something secure – a bike rack or lamppost. If there are no bike racks, you could ask the local council if they can put some in.
- Lock up removable parts (for example, wheels) or take them with you (for example, light fittings).
- Think about having your bike security-marked or engraved.



Motorbikes

- Always lock your bike, and set its alarm if it has one.
- When leaving your bike for some time, try to lock it to something secure. At home, you can fit special attachments to lock your bike to.
- Use a motorbike cover.
- Have the vehicle marked with its vehicle identification number (VIN).

i For more information

You can get copies of the following Home Office leaflets.

- 'Steer clear of car crime'
- 'Steer clear of caravan crime'
- 'Steer clear of bike crime'

Visit the website:
www.secureyourmotor.gov.uk
 for more information

Cars

- Lock the doors and close the windows when you leave the car – for any length of time.
- Don't leave anything on display – even a jacket can seem like an appealing target for a thief.
- Remove the stereo if you can. Also, tuck in wing mirrors and put the aerial down to discourage vandals.
- Never store your car's documents in the car.
- A Thatcham-approved immobiliser or steering lock can help secure older vehicles.
- Think about having the windows etched with the car's vehicle registration number (VRN), and make a note of its chassis number.
- Keep your car keys in a safe place, even in your house, so that someone breaking in cannot steal your car too.



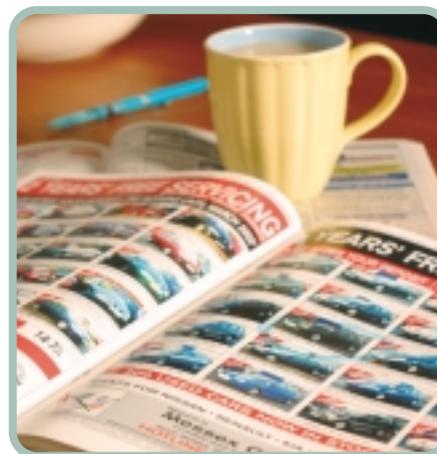
Car-jacking

Car-jacking has become a high-profile crime over recent years, mainly because media attention has made people more aware of it.

You can help prevent yourself being a victim of car-jacking by:

- keeping your doors locked in built-up areas, and trying to keep the windows wound up, especially at traffic lights;
- being aware of what people are doing around you;
- using the middle lane, if there is one, when waiting at junctions or lights, so that your car is harder to get to from the pavement;
- not stopping to help someone who has broken down (if you really want to help, pull over at the next garage or police station and call for help); and
- driving to the next garage or police station and reporting them if someone tries to pull you over for no reason.

Sometimes, car-jackers may 'accidentally' bump into your car, aiming to get you out of the car so they can steal it. If this happens, you may choose not to get out of the car – especially if you do not think it is a genuine accident. Wind the window down a little bit to talk to them if you want to.



Buying a used car

Most car sellers are genuine, whether it is a private sale or through a garage. However, some traders are not genuine and may sell stolen cars.

You can protect yourself by following the advice below.

- 1 Contact an organisation, such as the AA, who will be able to tell you whether the vehicle has been stolen or in a crash.
- 2 Always arrange to meet the person selling the car at their house, not at your house or at another meeting place.
- 3 Check any security etchings to make sure they match and have not been removed.
- 4 Always check the registration documents and service history.

For more information



Phone the AA on: 0870 600 0371

The AA website:
www.theaa.com/allaboutcars/security

You can also phone the DVLA on:
0870 240 0009

The DVLA website:
www.dvla.gov.uk

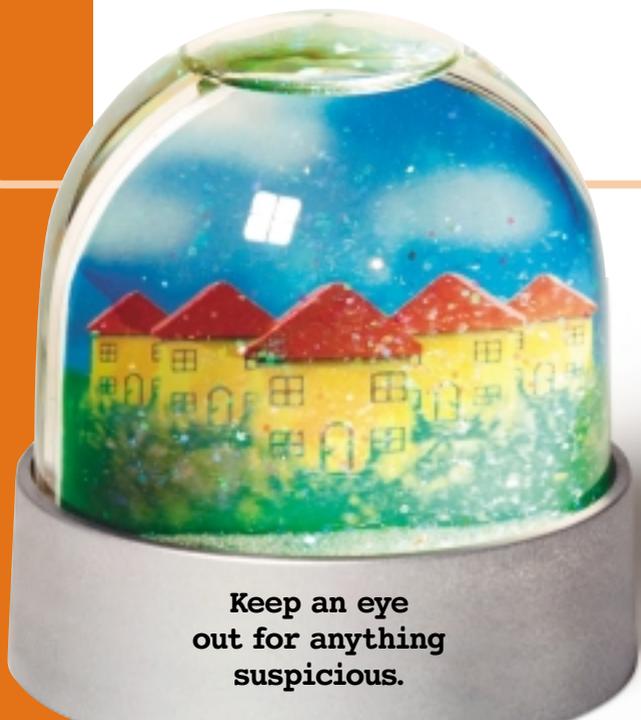


Community

This part of the booklet looks at how you can make your community safer. There are a lot of different things you can do to prevent crime in your street or neighbourhood.

You might like to join a Neighbourhood Watch scheme, or become a Special Constable. Or, you could do some volunteering, perhaps with older people to help them feel safer (for example, by fitting door locks or security chains for them), or with younger people to help them to use their time constructively.

But what works best in making communities safer tends to be a combination of lots of different things. You could ask local organisations, or the police, what **isn't** being done in your area, and try to do that instead.



Keep an eye out for anything suspicious.

① Neighbourhood Watch

This is when all the houses in a certain area (for example, on a street or an estate) agree to look out for one another. You keep an eye out for anything suspicious, and tell one another or the police. Neighbourhood Watch can be a good way to help people feel more secure in their neighbourhoods, but can be hard to set up where they are most needed.

② Special Constables

Special Constables are trained and uniformed police volunteers who patrol in their local community.

③ Neighbourhood wardens and street wardens

A lot of councils are setting up neighbourhood warden schemes, where local people patrol their community looking out for anything suspicious, giving people information and just being a presence on the street.

④ Youth action groups

Youth action groups see young people as part of the solution in tackling crime in the community, not just as part of the problem. They work with young people on issues that interest them, and help them develop their own skills and activities.

Other volunteering

If none of these options suits you, there are a lot of other opportunities to do useful things locally. Your local voluntary services council will be able to tell you what opportunities there are locally. You can get details from the National Association of Councils for Voluntary Service (NACVS), or from your local council. There is also often good information about neighbourhood volunteering opportunities at your local library.

For more information



The Neighbourhood Watch website:
www.neighbourhoodwatch.net

The NACVS website:
www.nacvs.org.uk

The Safer-community website:
www.safer-community.net

Contact your council or local police station for more information on similar schemes.

You can also get copies of the following Home Office leaflets.

- 'Welcome to Neighbourhood Watch'
- 'A problem-solving approach to crime prevention: a guide for Neighbourhood Watch schemes'

Personal safety: out and about

The chances of you or a member of your family becoming a victim of violent crime are low. Violent crimes by strangers in public places are still rare and account for a very small part of recorded crime.



However, you can make yourself even less likely to be the victim of a violent crime – for example, robbery (mugging) or assault – by taking a few sensible precautions. Many are common sense, and may be things that you already do. Making yourself safer doesn't mean changing your entire lifestyle, personality or wardrobe, and it doesn't mean never going out at all.

And although there are different sections in this booklet for men and for women, this doesn't mean that personal safety is just for men or a women's issue. Men and women can experience crime differently and it is important to remember this so you can protect yourself as well as possible. You should find things of interest in both sections.

You should think about how you would act in different situations before you are in them. Think about whether you would stay and defend yourself (using reasonable force), risking further injury, or whether you would give an attacker what they want, to avoid injury. There is nothing wrong with doing either, but you should think about the options – there will be no time to do so if you are attacked.

Some general points

- You will be safest in bright, well-lit and busy areas.
- Try to look and act confident – look like you know where you are going and walk tall.
- You might like to spread your valuables around your body. For example, keep your phone in your bag, your house keys in your trouser pocket and your money in your jacket.
- If someone tries to take something from you, it may be better to let them take it rather than to get into a confrontation and risk injury.
- You can use reasonable force in self-defence. You are allowed to protect yourself with something you are carrying anyway (for example, keys or a can of deodorant), but you may not carry a weapon.
- If you decide to defend yourself, be aware that your attacker might be stronger than you, or may take what you are using in self-defence and use it against you. It is often better just to shout loudly and run away.
- Shout 'fire' rather than 'help' – it can get more results.
- If you use a wheelchair, keep your things beside you rather than at the back of the chair.

For more information



Phone the Suzy Lamplugh Trust information line on:
020 8392 1839

The Suzy Lamplugh Trust website:
www.suzylamplugh.org

- Try not to be conspicuous about the valuables you are carrying. Talking on your mobile phone, carrying a laptop, or showing your friend your new gold ring all show thieves that you are worth robbing.
- When out walking or jogging, you should not listen to a personal stereo through headphones, so you can stay more alert to your surroundings.



Personal safety: theft and robbery

Street robbery is generally known as mugging. It can also cover snatching bags. Pickpocketing is slightly different, as you will not be aware of the offence taking place. Robbery is more likely to take place in quiet or dark areas, and pickpocketing where it is busy, for example, on a busy train in rush hour.

But you can take the following actions to reduce the effects of a theft, if it happens to you.

Young men are most likely to be the victims of robbery, and are typically attacked by other young men.

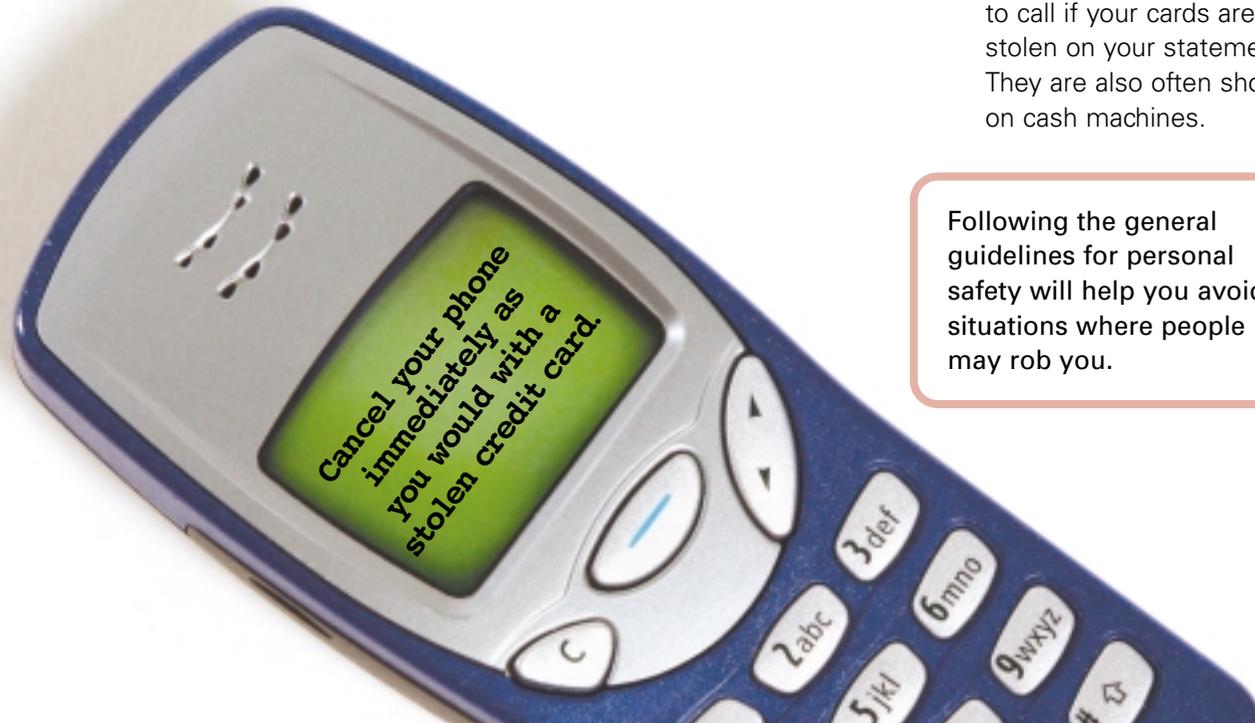
If someone tries to take something from you by force, it may be best to give it to them. This will help you avoid getting injured.



Credit cards

- ① Keep your cards separate from your cheque books.
- ② If your cards are stolen, call your bank or credit-card company as soon as possible. Most banks put the number to call if your cards are stolen on your statement. They are also often shown on cash machines.

Following the general guidelines for personal safety will help you avoid situations where people may rob you.



Mobile phones

If your phone is stolen, report your number to your network and the police – the handset can now be barred on all networks and will be useless to thieves.

Register your phone with your network operator.

Record your registration number (IMEI) and your phone number. Keep these in a safe place separate from your phone. You can get your IMEI number (15-digit serial number) by keying `*#06#` into most phones or by looking behind your phone battery.

Report the number of your stolen phone to your network operator and the police as quickly as you can. It can now be cancelled immediately like a stolen credit card.

Stay alert – your phone is a valuable item. When you are out, be aware of your surroundings and don't use your phone in crowded areas or where you might feel unsafe.

Personal safety: transport

This section offers some general tips on how to keep yourself safe and secure when you're making a journey – either catching a bus or taxi, or when you're in the car.

Public transport

As with everything, you are safest where there are other people, and where it is light or well lit.

- Plan your route.
- Try to wait in busy or well-lit areas.
- Sit near other people, near the driver if you are on a bus, or near the conductor if you are on a train.
- Move if someone makes you feel uncomfortable.

Driving

- 1 Keep your car in good condition and try not to run out of petrol.
- 2 Keep doors locked when driving and keep bags, phones and other valuables out of sight, preferably in the boot.
- 3 Try to park in well-lit or busy areas. If you park during the day, think about what the area will feel like after dark.
- 4 Some car parks have 'Secured car park' accreditation. Find out which ones do locally and try to use them – look out for the 'Secured car park' sign or visit www.securecarparks.com.



- 5 If you break down on the motorway, follow the arrows to the nearest phone. Do not cross the carriageway. Wait outside your car (as far away as possible from the carriageway) unless you feel threatened, in which case you should sit in the passenger seat.
- 6 Do not give lifts to or accept lifts with people you do not know, or do not know well.
- 7 Do not drive if you have been drinking or taking drugs, and do not accept a lift from someone who has.
- 8 You may feel more comfortable carrying a mobile phone with you. Try to keep it out of sight, and do not use it while driving.

See the advice on car-jacking. (Page 14)

Taxis

If you are going to be out late, try to arrange a lift home or book a taxi. Check that the taxi that arrives is the one you ordered.

If you can pre-book your taxi, make a note of the company you are using and the phone number, and leave it with a friend.

Always keep the number of a reliable firm handy. Avoid minicabs or private-hire cars that tout for business and are unlicensed.

Always sit behind the driver in the back seat.

If you feel uneasy, ask to be let out in a well-lit area where there are plenty of people.

If in any doubt, don't get in the taxi.





Personal safety: women

Everyone has the right to live free of unwanted attention, harassment and abuse. You have this right, whoever you are, whatever your race, background, religion or sexuality, and however you dress or act.

No-one has the right to interfere with this, whether they are strangers, colleagues, friends, acquaintances or family.

Minor sexual assault

This is more likely to happen in crowded places. It includes being touched or rubbed against.

It can be hard to know who is doing this, so it is often easier to move away, if this is possible. Try to move to where there are other women.

If you feel confident to do so, a stern 'take your hands off me' may make the person stop. This will also alert other people to their behaviour.

Try to move to where there are other women.

Sexual assault and rape

Despite popular beliefs, rape by a stranger is very uncommon.

Sexual assault and rape are more likely to happen in less busy areas. You can reduce the risk of this type of attack by following the general guidance earlier in this section.

If you are attacked, you must decide whether to defend yourself, which may put you at risk of further injury. Or it may not be possible to defend yourself. Either way, you did not ask to be raped. It is not your fault. You did not deserve it.

If you have been raped, you may or may not want to report it to the police, or to see a nurse or counsellor.

- See the advice on domestic violence (Page 32) for more information about abuse within a relationship.
- See the advice on 'date rape'. (Page 31)
- Also see the advice on hate crime. (Page 27)

For more information



Phone Rape Crisis on:
0115 900 3560

The Rape Crisis website:
www.rapecrisis.co.uk

Phone the Victim Supportline on:
0845 303 0900

The Victim Support website:
www.victimsupport.org.uk

The police are specially trained to work with women who have been sexually assaulted. You will be able to talk to a female police officer, and to a female doctor or nurse if you go to hospital.

If you want to report the crime straightaway, whether you get medical help or go straight to the police, try not to wash or change your clothes. If you want to report the crime at a later date, this is okay too.

If you know someone who has been raped, try to be supportive, but do not be judgemental. It is up to them what they do now.





Personal safety: men

While women are most at risk from men on their own, men are more at risk from groups of men. Most commonly, young men are attacked by groups of other young men.

You can reduce the risk by following the general guidance – for example, trying to stay in well-lit or busy areas.

Another way to avoid violence is to stop a confrontational situation turning into an aggressive one. Think about how you react when you get angry. If you feel yourself getting angry with someone, or if they get angry with you, try to move away.

It takes a brave man to back down from a fight.

If you have been attacked, you may want to go to the police, or to a doctor. The doctor may also ask you what has happened, but if you don't want to tell them, you don't have to.

See the advice on hate crime and alcohol. (Pages 27 and 34)

Your actions towards women

A lot of women's fear of crime comes from men's actions. You can help this by thinking about what you and your friends do. For example:

- don't start conversations with women on their own;
- try not to walk too close behind – they may think you are following them;
- respect women's personal space;
- don't make comments about women who walk past; and
- remember that 'no' means 'no'.

Personal safety: hate crime

Hate crimes are directed against people because of some aspect of who they are, most typically because they are from an ethnic minority or visible religious minority, or because of their sexuality.

Hate crime covers a wide range of behaviour, for example, verbal abuse, racist or homophobic graffiti or physical assault. A crime can be classed as a hate crime if the victim or witness sees it as being so.

If you are the victim of what you think is a hate crime, it is not your fault. You have the right to live your life free from abuse and violence, whoever you are. You do not have to live with hate crime.

Police are trained to deal with hate crime with sensitivity and tact. They will not treat you differently because you are from an ethnic or religious minority, or because of your sexuality. A lot of police forces also provide self-referral forms, so you can report a crime without having to deal directly with the police.

For more information



If you have been a victim of a racist and religiously-motivated hate crime, contact:

- your local police;
- local race equality councils or voluntary groups; or
- the Commission for Racial Equality at www.cre.gov.uk

If you have been a victim of a homophobic hate crime, contact:

- your local police;
- www.rainbownetwork.com; or
- local voluntary or support groups.

Sexual assault

Women are not the only victims of sexual assaults. Men are also sexually assaulted, or experience violent relationships in their lives. If you or a friend are a victim of sexual assault or domestic violence, follow the information given in the sections on sexual assault and domestic violence. (Pages 24, 25 and 32)



Your family: young children (under 11)

Children are more likely to be the victims of abuse in the home, or from someone else they know, and can be as traumatised witnessing domestic violence as children who are physically abused themselves.



For more information

For more information on bullying:

- www.kidscape.org.uk
- www.dfes.gov.uk/bullying

If you are being bullied, you can phone ChildLine on: 0800 11 11 or visit their website at www.childline.org.uk for advice

Bullying

Children are also at risk from other children, most commonly in the form of bullying, although they can also be bullied by an adult.

Kidscape guide

Kidscape is a national charity working to prevent bullying and child sexual abuse. This is what they recommend to help you keep your children safe.

- 1 To be safe** Tell your children they have the right to be safe. No-one can take that away.
- 2 To protect their own bodies** Children must know that their bodies belong to them, especially the private parts covered by their swimsuits.
- 3 To say no** Tell your children that it's all right to say 'no' if someone tries to hurt them. A lot of children are told to always do what grown-ups tell them.
- 4 To get help against bullies** Bullies pick on younger, more vulnerable children. Tell children to get friends to help them, and to say no without fighting. Make sure they tell a grown-up. Tell them to give up something a bully wants, such as a bike, if they are going to get hurt. Tell them that you will not be angry if they come home without it.
- 5 To tell** Tell your children that they must always tell you what has happened and that you will not be angry with them.
- 6 To be believed** If your child wants your help, they need to know they will be believed and supported. This is especially true in the case of sexual assault, as children rarely lie about it.
- 7 Try not to have secrets** Child molesters that the child knows often say that a kiss or a touch is 'our secret'. Tell your children that some secrets should never be kept, even if they said they wouldn't tell.
- 8 To refuse touches** Tell your children they can say no to touching or kissing if they don't like it. If someone touches them and tells them to keep it a secret, they must tell you. Never force your child to hug or kiss anyone.
- 9 Try not to talk to strangers** Most well-meaning adults will not approach a child who is on their own, unless the child is obviously lost or distressed. Tell your children never to talk to strangers, and to politely ignore any approach from a stranger. Get them to tell you if a stranger tries to talk to them.
- 10 To break rules** Tell your children that they can break rules to stay safe. They can run away, scream, lie or kick to get away from danger.





The internet

The internet is very much a part of our lives these days, and provides a useful educational tool for adults and children.

But there is adult material on the internet which is not suitable for children. Your Internet Service Provider (ISP) may be able to advise you on filters which prevent children accessing adult or unsuitable material.

When they use chat rooms, encourage your children to:

- never give out personal information or their e-mail address;
- arrange to meet someone in the chat room if they get on well with them, rather than contacting them direct; and
- use a 'moderated' chat room where someone 'referees' – this protects them from abusive people.

Keeping computers in family areas (not in a child's bedroom) also gives you some level of surveillance over how they are using the internet.

Chat rooms are often a fun way for children to gain social skills, 'meet' new friends and improve their computer and literacy skills. But they can be misused, and this can pose a threat.

If they become so friendly with someone they chat to on-line that they want to meet in person, you should always go with them. Arrange to meet in a public place where there are lots of people around. Children and teenagers should never arrange to meet anyone they have met on-line without a responsible adult being with them.

i For more information

Helpful websites:

- www.wiseuptothenet.co.uk
- www.thinkyouknow.co.uk

You can also get a copy of the Home Office leaflet 'Keeping your child safe on the internet'

Your family: teenagers and young people

The same rules apply to teenagers and young people as to other people about staying safe when they are out and about.

Helping your children to be independent is a vital part of growing up, but they must also know how to look after themselves.

Young people are more likely to be the victims of theft and assault than any other age group. They are also the least likely to report a crime against them. Being honest with your children, and encouraging them to be honest with you, will help. You should ask them to tell you if they are in trouble, or if they have experienced any crime. Talk to them about ways to stay safe when they are out and about.

Make sure they know the risks of what they are doing – taking drugs or drinking, going out and meeting new people.



'Date rape'

Being open with teenagers about relationships and sex can be difficult – for you and them. But an open relationship will make things better for both of you if something does go wrong.

There are a lot of pressures to become sexually active, and it is important that young people know they do not have to do anything they are not happy with.

Most rape happens between people who already know each other – it is rare to be raped by a stranger.

Sometimes, drugs are used to make people easier to rape. This is usually through 'spiking' drinks with a pharmaceutical-type drug or with stronger alcohol. The best way to guard against this is to keep your drink with you, drink out of a bottle and make sure that you take your drink straight from the bar staff.

See the advice on rape for what to do if you (or a member of your family) are raped. (Page 25)

Your family: domestic violence

Unfortunately, women are more likely to be at risk in the home than outside it, and statistics show that one in four women experiences domestic violence in their lifetime.

Men also experience violence at home, and the same advice applies to them. The Women's Aid Helpline will be able to refer you to services for men experiencing domestic violence.

It is not your fault, and you do not deserve it.

You (and your children) have the right to live free from fear and harm. This is true whatever your race, age, background or religion and whether you are married or living with your partner. In some cases, the violence continues (and gets worse) after the relationship has ended.

Domestic violence is a crime.



There are many different ways to experience domestic violence.

- **Physically** (being hit)
- **Sexually** (rape or degrading treatment)
- **Emotionally or psychologically** (being told you are a bad person, or that you are worthless)
- **Financially** (having money withheld, or being forbidden from getting a job)
- **Socially** (not being allowed to see friends and family or go out)

However you experience domestic violence, it almost always gets worse over time.

What you can do

- If you are experiencing domestic violence, you may feel like you have nowhere to go, or no-one to turn to. This is not true. There are a lot of organisations who can help you.
- You may report your partner to the police, and try to have them kept away from you, your children or your house.
- You may decide to leave the house and go to a friend's or relative's house, or to a refuge or hostel for women.
- If you decide to leave, try to take things like passports or other identification, your children's birth certificates, and bank and benefit details.

For more information



Phone the Women's Aid Helpline on: 0845 702 3468

The Women's Aid website: www.womensaid.org.uk



Your family: alcohol

Alcohol is part of British life (particularly British social life) and is not generally considered harmful in moderation. But alcohol can lead to problems.

Drinking a lot of alcohol can be bad for your health.

Drinking can also lead to other crimes. Drinking and driving causes many deaths every year.

Drunkness can lead to disorder and violence, both in public and at home. Fifty times more people die from drinking every year than from all illegal drugs put together.

Alcohol and young people

It is illegal to buy alcohol if you are under 18, and drinking can cause health problems in young people.

But there is a lot of social pressure to drink.

Discuss drinking with your children, but be aware that they will see you as a role model too.

Try to set a good example with how you use alcohol.

Your family: drugs

Most drugs are illegal, and so taking or possessing them is a crime.

But drugs can lead to other crimes too, for example, stealing money to pay for drugs, crimes committed while on drugs (for example, driving under the influence of drugs, or antisocial behaviour), and supplying other people with drugs (dealing).

It is important to know that the penalties for dealing in drugs are much more severe than the penalties for possessing small amounts of that drug for personal use.

Solvents

Solvents are things like glue and aerosols. They are not illegal and can make you 'high'. However, shopkeepers may not sell solvents to people under 18 if they believe they may inhale them. They are also very dangerous. If you suspect someone has been using solvents, and it is an emergency, follow the same steps as for drugs.

For more information on any drugs, or if you or someone you know has a problem; phone the National Drugs Helpline.



Young people and drugs

Talk to your children about drugs from an early age. It is important that they know they can be honest with you. If they tell you they are taking drugs, do not panic. One sort of drug use does not necessarily lead to another, or to a life of crime. Research shows that most young people grow out of taking drugs after a while.



For more information

The alcohol concern website:
www.alcoholconcern.org.uk

Your local doctor will also be able to help.



For more information

Phone the National Drugs Helpline on: 0800 77 66 00

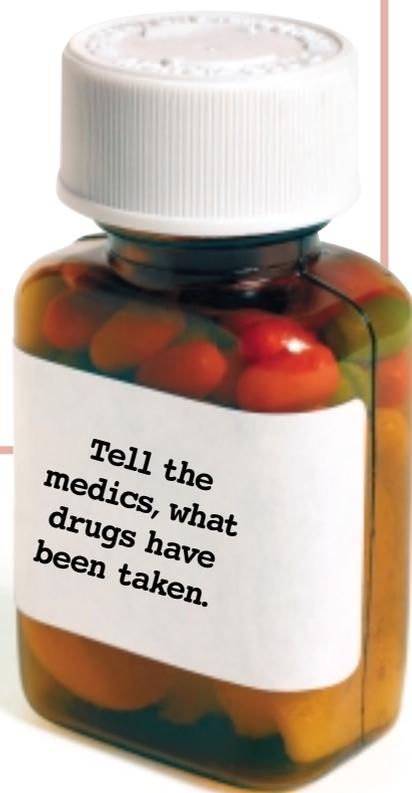
The National Drugs Helpline website: www.ndh.org.uk



In an emergency

If you suspect someone has taken an overdose:

- 1 If they are unconscious or vomiting a lot, phone 999 for an ambulance.
- 2 Put them in the recovery position if they are unconscious (lie them on one side with a cushion behind them, bring their knees forward and point their head downward).
- 3 Make sure there is good ventilation in the room, and that there are no obstructions in their mouth.
- 4 Speak calmly and reassuringly to them, telling them that help is on the way.
- 5 When the ambulance arrives, tell them what has happened and what drugs they have taken, if you know. Neither you nor the person who has overdosed will get in trouble for telling them this.



Useful contact numbers



AA: 0870 600 0371

Age Concern: 0800 00 99 66

ChildLine: 0800 11 11

DVLA: 0870 240 0009

Health and Safety Executive (HSE):
0870 154 5500

National Drugs Helpline:
0800 77 66 00

Rape Crisis: 0115 900 3560

Suzy Lamplugh Trust:
020 8392 1839

Victim Supportline: 0845 303 0900

Women's Aid Helpline:
0845 702 3468