

Preventing Assaults

Assaults can happen to anyone at any time and any place. There are several things you can do to reduce your chances of being attacked.

At Home

- Keep your home securely locked and well lit.
- Install a peephole in the door and use it.
- Beware of unexpected service calls or sales calls.
- Check identification before letting someone you don't know into your house.
- Offer to make a phone call for a stranger who wants to use your phone.
- If you come home and see signs of forced entry, go to a neighbor's house and call the police to make sure nobody remains inside your home.

While Driving

- Keep your car in good working order and the gas tank at least half full.
- Park in well-lit areas and lock the doors, even if you'll only be gone a short time.
- Have your key ready before you reach your car, but check the front and rear seats before you get in.
- Drive with your doors locked no matter what area you are in.
- Keep valuables, such as purses and packages, out of sight.
- If you think you are being followed, don't drive home. Drive to an open gas station or business where you can call the police. If you can do so safely, get a tag number and description of the car.
- If an unmarked police car attempts to stop you, signal to the officer that you see him and proceed to the nearest open business where there will be other people to watch. An assailant will usually go on when you involve witnesses.

While Walking

- Be alert to your surroundings and the people around you.
- Stay in well lit areas as much as possible.
- Walk confidently and at a steady pace.
- Walk close to the curb. Avoid doorways, bushes and alleys.
- Try not to walk alone, especially at night, and always avoid areas where there are few people. The more people who see you walking, the less likely the assailant will want to make you his victim.
- Be careful when people stop you for directions. Always reply from a distance and never get too close to the car.
- If you are in trouble, attract help any way you can. Scream for help or yell "fire" to attract attention.

If You Are Attacked

- Keep your head. Stay as calm as possible, think rationally and evaluate your resources and options.
- Keep assessing your situation as it is happening. If one strategy does not work, try another. Possible options are negotiating, stalling for time, distracting the assailant, and fleeing to a safe place.

Do You Need a Weapon?

- Beware of the false security mace, pepper spray, electronic stun guns, or handguns may give you. Weapons that are intended to hurt an assailant are often taken away and used against you.
- Carry a personal body alarm that makes a piercing noise and draws attention to your situation.