



Sexual Assault Response Services

of Southern Maine

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Safety Precautions

General Precautions

- Observe your environment and be alert
- Know your neighborhood and neighbors
- Take note of unlit or sparsely traveled areas and avoid them when possible
- TRUST YOUR GUT FEELING. If someone looks suspicious to you, get to a safe place and call the police. It is better to be embarrassed than to be hurt.
- Never hitchhike, and do not accept rides from strangers.
- Always carry enough money for an emergency phone call or a taxi ride.

Precautions at Home

- Always ask a repairperson for identification before opening the door.
- If someone wants to use your phone, offer to make the call rather than letting the person into your home, or just say no.
- Keep your curtains drawn at night to keep from being observed.
- Do not reveal to strangers that you are at home alone.
- Use initials on your mailbox
- If you need to call for help, yell "Fire!" (It gets more response than screams for "Help!")
- Report lewd or obscene phone calls.
- Be aware of others while entering an elevator. If someone makes you uncomfortable, wait for the next elevator. Notice where the emergency button is located.
- Insist that your apartment manager keep hallways, entrances and surrounding grounds well lit. Insist that there be a secure lock on apartment doors.
- Do not open apartment lobby doors for people you don't know.
- Have your keys ready when entering your house or apartment.
- When being driven home, ask the person to wait until you are safely inside.

Precautions with Acquaintances

- Trust your feelings.
- Let someone know where you are and when you expect to return.
- Don't leave a party or event with someone you just met. Do not depend on someone you just met to take you home.
- Limit alcohol consumption so that you can make clear decisions and protect yourself.
- Communicate expectations and limits.
- Be aware of how other people treat you. Someone who dominates, ignores, or controls you in public may act the same way, or more so, in a more intimate setting.

Help, Hope, and Healing

Precautions on the Street

- Know where you are going and do not look lost. Get clear directions ahead of time and the phone number of your exact destination.
- Walk briskly, confidently and be aware of your surroundings.
- Choose well-lit streets.
- If you get the feeling you are being followed, turn around and look. If anyone looks suspicious, cross the street and walk in the opposite direction.
- If you are walking and being followed by a car, cross the street and/or change directions and go the nearest open store, neighbor's home, etc.
- If you are approached or grabbed on the street, make a scene and try to run. Scream, yell, throw a rock, whatever you can do that will call attention.
- Always try to walk with a friend. **Buddy-up.**

Precautions in the Car

- Always keep car doors locked.
- Look into your back seat before you get into it.
- Carry a road flare to signal when you have car trouble
- If you have car trouble and need to pull over, keep your doors locked and your windows up. If no one is nearby, get out and raise the hood and get back into the car and lock it. If someone stops and offers to help, ask them to call the police or garage. **DO NOT OPEN YOUR DOOR.**
- Do not stop to help a motorist. Think of your safety first and be a "Good Samaritan" by stopping at the nearest phone and calling for help.
- When leaving your car for repair work, always separate your house keys from your car keys.
- Do not label your keys with your name or address.
- Never pick up a hitchhiker.
- If you believe another car is following you, do not pull into your driveway. If the car continues to follow you, drive to the nearest police department or fire station. Do not leave your car until you are sure that it is safe.

Precautions on the Bus or Subway

- If you are waiting for the subway alone, keep your back against a wall in a well-lit section.
- Stand near the change booth or near a group of people. Do not wander off by yourself.
- If the bus is nearly empty, sit near the driver. If someone bothers you on the bus or subways, do not get off at your normal stop unless it is well lit and well populated. Inform the driver of the trouble.