

**High Pedestrian Traffic Areas:** Criminals do not want witnesses. Being in view of a well-traveled, vehicular street is good but having people on the path with you is better.

**Open Areas:** Paths lined with bushes and trees are pleasant for walking but afford many hiding places for criminals.

**Deterrents:** Strangers are not out to attack YOU. It is nothing personal; they are just looking for a target of opportunity. Your goal, therefore, is to look like somebody who will be too much trouble to bother. They also want to make you a victim without attracting attention from others.

**Attitude:** Keep your head up and stride purposefully. Look aware of your surroundings and be aware of them. Headphones may give the impression that you are less aware.

**Companions:** Walking with a friend or group reduces your chance of attack significantly.

**Dog:** Walking with a dog, even a little ankle-biter, will greatly reduce the chance of attack. Obey all licensing and leash laws, and local ordinances.

**Stick:** Why mess with somebody with a walking stick when there are lots of people without one?

**Alarm:** A whistle is also a good signal device.

**Pepper Spray:** Carrying pepper spray in your hand, visibly displaying it, may be a deterrent.

**Cell Phones:** You can call 9-1-1, but if accosted, don't waste a split second with a phone. Attempt to flee from the danger, first! Even if you were able to call law enforcement and they responded immediately, most attacks take less than five minutes to complete, and your attacker would be long gone before help arrived. It would be far better to use the phone to report to the deputy after having effectively stopped the attack by screaming, running, and hitting, if necessary.



BILL BROWN  
Sheriff-Coroner

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**PERSONAL SECURITY**



Make Life Harder for Criminals

This brochure is full of tips that can help you avoid becoming a victim of a crime no matter where you are.

By taking few simple precautions, you can reduce the risk to yourself and discourage those who commit crime.

# PERSONAL SECURITY

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## Be Prepared

- Always be alert and aware of the people around you.
- Educate yourself concerning prevention tactics.
- Be aware of locations and situations which would make you vulnerable to crime, such as alleys and dark parking lots.

## Street Precautions

- Be alert to your surroundings and the people around you, especially if you are alone or it is dark.
- Whenever possible, travel with a friend.
- Stay in well-lit areas as much as possible.
- Walk close to the curb. Avoid doorways, bushes, and alleys where someone could hide.
- Walk confidently and at a steady pace.
- Make eye contact with people when walking.
- Do not respond to conversation from strangers on the street; continue walking.
- If you carry a purse, hold it securely between your arm and your body.

## Car Safety

- Always lock car doors after entering or leaving your car.
- Park in well-lit areas.
- Have your car keys in your hand so you don't have to linger before entering your car.
- Check the back seat before entering your car.

- If you think you are being followed, drive to a public place.
- If your car breaks down, open the hood, and attach a white cloth to the car antenna. If someone stops to help, stay in the locked car, roll down the window a little, and ask him/her to call a tow service.
- Do not stop to aid motorists stopped on the side of the road. Go to a phone and request help for them.

## Waiting for a Bus

- Avoid isolated bus stops.
- Stand away from the curb until the bus arrives.
- Don't open your purse or wallet while boarding the bus. Have your pass or money already in your hand.
- Don't invite trouble—keep gold chains out of sight; don't flash your jewelry; turn your rings around so the stones don't show.

## On the Bus

- During off-hours, sit as close to the bus driver as possible. Stay alert—and be aware of the people around you.
- If someone bothers you, change seats and/or tell the driver.
- Carry your wallet inside your coat or in a front pocket. A comb, placed horizontally in the fold of your wallet, will alert you if someone tries to remove it from your pocket.
- Keep your handbag in front of you and hold it close to your body with both hands. Check your purse or wallet if someone is jostling, crowding, or pushing you.

## Office Security

- Never leave your purse or wallet in plain view or in the pocket of a jacket hanging on a door.
- Personal property should be marked with your driver's license number (preceded with the letters 'CA').
- Don't leave cash or valuables at the office.
- If you work alone or before/after normal business hours, keep the office door locked.
- If you work late, try to find another worker or a security guard to walk out with you.
- If you are in an elevator with another person, stand near the control panel. If you are attacked, press the alarm and as many of the control buttons as possible.
- Report any suspicious persons and/or activities to the proper authorities; i.e., office manager, building security, law enforcement.
- Be aware of escape routes for emergencies, and post the phone numbers of the police or sheriff and fire department near telephones. Call 9-1-1 if the situation is life-threatening.

## Stranger Danger Safety Tips for Walkers:

Many walkers fear being attacked or mugged by a stranger. If you think you are being followed: SCREAM, RUN, and REPORT.

**Prevention:** There is no technique or tip or weapon to guarantee you will not be attacked. The criminals unfortunately have surprise on their side, and even the best martial arts expert can become a target. If it happens to you, don't agonize over "coulda-shoulda-woulda."

**Choice of Walking Routes:** Treadmills are an option for those who do not have a safe place to walk.