

General Safety Tips – for sisters

1. Always be aware of your surroundings

This applies whether you are traveling alone or in groups. Don't just focus inwardly on your thoughts if you are alone, or your friends if you are together. Keep one eye out for your environment, looking out for suspicious characters, possible danger, etc.

Also, don't assume that because your area has been "safe" thus far, that it will continue to be so.

2. Travel in groups

"There is safety in numbers" is not just a cliché. It's true. Make a point of traveling together with other sisters, whether it's on public transportation, on campus, in cars, etc.

3. Change the route you normally travel by

If you've taken the same bus, train or highway to get to work or school, change your route. Even if it takes you a little longer, your safety is more important. By changing your route, you can avert possible attacks or harassment from those who know your schedule, method and route of travel well. Please note though that you should avoid short cuts that take you through unfamiliar or unsafe areas.

4. Look confident

Walk with a straight posture and your arms swinging by your sides. Avoid slouching or walking like a victim. This makes you an easy target for attackers.

5. When riding by public transportation choose the right seat

If you are riding by bus or train, do not sit on the window seat as you may be "blocked in" by a potential assailant. Always select the seat next to the aisle so that you can quickly leave if necessary.

If you are taking public transportation alone after peak hours, sit as close to the driver as possible and/or choose the section of the bus/train that is most crowded. Try to get a seat near the exit as well.

6. If you are driving alone

Don't think that if you are in a car, you're safe. Windows should be up and doors locked even when driving to avoid unwanted passengers at intersections. When you are walking to your car, always have your keys ready, so that you can quickly get into your car.

But don't just get in right away. Always check your car before entering, especially the back, for any intruders.

7. Never leave your car door unlocked

Even if it means for one minute to drop something off in the mailbox that's a few feet away. Attackers have been known to lie in wait for such an opportunity.

8. Be careful in parking lots

Always be alert in parking lots, especially when it's dark. Ask someone to escort you to your car. Between cars and inside cars, it's easy for someone to hide and wait until an unalert person comes along.

9. If you are traveling by taxi

Always check the identification of the driver (usually located near the visor) and ensure that it matches the driver. Once inside, don't sit behind the driver as it may be easy for the driver to lock the rear passenger door. Always choose the adjacent seat .

In addition, avoid flagging taxis. Always order taxis so the driver can be traced if something happens.

10. Don't use a Music player etc

If you're used to listening to your Music Player while outside, drop this habit, especially in isolated areas. With your Music Player on, you cannot hear the approach of a possible attacker.

11. Note "safe houses" along your route

Mentally note houses at intervals on each route you take that can be used as "safe houses" if you are attacked, such as shops or houses that you know to be occupied by a friend or acquaintance.

12. When you make a call from a phone box

After dialing the number you wish to call always turn around so that you have your back to the phone and may see who or what is coming your way. You will then be able to tell the person to whom you are speaking that you may be in trouble and you may be able to use the weight of the phone as a weapon. The door of a telephone box could be used to wedge in the limbs of the attacker.

13. Do not open the door of your home without checking

DO NOT open the door to your home without first checking from a window, peephole or by asking and verifying who it is. Instruct children to do the same.

14. Report any suspicious activity around your home

If you see people loitering on the streets near your house, call the police on a non emergency number and report it.

15. Invest in a mobile phone

This is an invaluable safety device. Keep it with you at all times and keep emergency numbers on it. Also, keep it next to your bed before you go to bed at night.

16. Parking tips

Avoid parking in areas that are not well lit. Where possible, park close to a school or work entrance or in a parking garage that has an attendant.

If you see a suspicious person approaching or hanging around near your parked car, turn around and go back to an area where there are other people. Try to get an escort to your car through the campus or job security or local police.

17. Tell others about your whereabouts

Parents, spouses and friends should know where you are going and when you will be back, so that your absence will be noticed. Arrange a call in system with a friend if you live alone, whereby you call when you arrive home.

18. Trust your instincts

If you are walking somewhere and feel strange or scared, don't ignore this feeling. Take extra precautions by walking a little faster to get to a more populated or well-lit area or change the route you've been driving on.

19. If you think you are being followed, change your route and activity.

You can cross the street, change directions, or enter a populated building or store. Do whatever is necessary to avoid being alone with the person who is following you. Inform a police officer or security official about the follower.

20. Attract attention if you are in a dangerous situation.

Get others' to pay attention to what's happening to you if you are under attack or being harassed. You can alert others by honking a car horn or loudly describing what is happening.

21. NEVER admit that you are alone

If someone calls your home and asks if you are alone, NEVER admit it. Ask who the caller is. If they refuse to identify themselves, calmly hangup. Keep the radio on in the house so that callers will get the impression that others are in the home too. Instruct children to do the same when they pick up the phone.

22. Obscene phone calls

If you receive an obscene call or a crank call, do not talk to the caller. Hang up if the caller doesn't say anything, or as soon as s/he shouts obscenities. Hang up the phone calmly and do not slam it down. Note down the date and time of the calls. If they are persistent, inform local police.

23. If you are a student

Avoid studying in isolated classrooms in parts of the college campus that are not regularly patrolled by the school's security officers.

24. In large buildings take the elevator, not the stairwell

Stairwells are usually quiet and dark. Most people take the elevator. But if someone creepy gets on, don't hesitate to get off at the same time. Or, if someone is already on the elevator who you feel strange about, do not get on and wait for the next elevator.

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