

STREET SENSE: IT'S COMMON SENSE

Basic Street Sense

- Whenever you are on the street, in an office building or shopping mall, driving, waiting for a bus or subway, stay alert and tuned in to your surroundings.
- Send the message that you're calm, confident, and know where you're going.
- Trust your instincts. If something or someone makes you uneasy, avoid the person or place or leave.
- Know the neighborhoods where you live and work. Check out the locations of police and fire stations, public telephones, hospitals, restaurants, or stores that are open early and late.

On Foot – Day and Night

- Stick to well-lighted, well-traveled streets. Avoid shortcuts through wooded areas, parking lots, or alleys.
- Don't flash large amounts of cash or other tempting targets like expensive jewelry or clothing.
- Carry a purse close to your body, not dangling by the straps. Put a wallet in an inside coat or front pants pocket, not a back pocket.
- Try to use automated teller machines in the daytime. Have your card in hand and don't approach the machine if you're uneasy about people nearby. Use drive up ATM's or ones located inside stores.
- Don't wear shoes or clothing that restrict your movements.
- Have your car or house key in hand before you reach the door.
- If you think someone is following you, switch direction or cross the street. Walk toward an open store, restaurant, or lighted house. If you're scared, yell for help.
- Have to work late? Make sure there are others in the building, and ask someone – a colleague or security guard – to walk or drive you to your car or transit stop.

On Wheels

- Keep your car in good running condition. Make sure there's enough gas to get where you're going and back.
- Always roll up the windows and lock car doors when you drive and when you park, even if you're coming right back. Check inside and outside the car before getting in.
- Avoid parking in isolated areas. Be especially alert in lots and underground parking garages. Note the location of exits or emergency phones.
- If you think someone is following you, don't head home. Drive to the nearest police or fire station, gas station or other open business to get help.
- Don't pick up hitchhikers. Don't hitchhike. Period.
- Leave enough space to pull around the vehicle in front of you when you're stopped at a light or stop sign. If anyone approaches your vehicle in a threatening manner, pull away.
- Beware of the "bump and rob". It works like this: A car rear ends or bumps you in traffic. You get out to check the damage and the driver or one of the passengers

jumps into your car and drives off. Look around before you get out; make sure other cars are around. If you are uneasy, stay in the car and insist on moving to a busy place or police station.

Road Rage

People are losing their lives on the highway every day because of “road rage”. A majority of drivers get angry when someone cuts them off or tailgates them. About 70 percent of drivers get angry at slow drivers. Violent incidents on the roads recorded by police have increased 51 percent over the past five years.

- Don't allow someone to draw you into a test of wills on the highway. If someone is tailgating you, pull into the slow lane and let them pass. Don't tailgate others or cut them off in traffic. Don't drive in the passing lane.
- Don't take traffic problems personally.
- Avoid eye contact with an aggressive driver.
- Don't make obscene gestures. Use your horn sparingly, as a warning, not an outburst.
- Reduce stress by allowing ample time for your trip and creating a relaxing environment in your car.
- Driving is a cooperative activity. If you're aggressive, you may find other drivers trying to slow you down or get in your way.
- If you witness aggressive driving, stay out of the way and contact authorities when you can. Consider carrying a cellular phone in your car to contact police in the event of an encounter with an aggressive driver.

On Buses and Subways

- Use well lighted, busy stops.
- Stay alert! Don't doze or daydream.
- If someone harasses you, don't be embarrassed. Loudly say “Leave me alone”. If that doesn't work, hit the emergency device.
- Watch who gets off with you. If you feel uneasy, walk directly to a place where there are other people.

If Someone Tries to Rob You or Take Your Car

- Don't resist. Give up your property; don't give up your life.
- Report the crime to the police. Try to describe the attacker accurately. Your actions can help prevent others from being victims.

Information Provided by the National Crime Prevention Council, Washington, DC