



PERSONAL SAFETY AND SECURITY

SDPD Crime Prevention

October 27, 2015

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This paper contains tips on personal safety and security when you are at home and away from home in various situations. They are simple, common sense suggestions that will help keep you from being an easy target for a criminal. Also included are things to do if you are threatened or are a victim of stalking or domestic violence.

Additional tips on home security, cybersecurity, vehicle security, travel safety and security, senior safety and security, preventing crimes against businesses, preventing fraud and identity theft, reporting crime and suspicious activities, reporting suspicious activities for terrorism prevention, reporting disorder and other problems, obtaining crime information, dealing with homeless people, and starting a Neighborhood Watch program can be found in the CRIME PREVENTION AND EDUCATION section of the SDPD website at www.sandiego.gov/police.

AT HOME

The following situations are considered: inside a home, answering the door, answering the phone and talking to strangers, and returning home.

Inside a Home, Apartment, or Condo

- Keep all doors and windows locked, even if you are at home or are just going out “for a minute.”
- Keep your garage door closed.
- Install dead-bolt locks on all doors.
- Install a screen security door for additional ventilation.
- Don’t give maids, babysitters, or others working in your home access to your home keys or alarm codes.
- Re-key or change all locks when moving into a new home.
- List only your last name and initials on your mailbox or in a phone directory.
- Don’t give your name or whereabouts on your answering machine message. Never say you aren’t home. Just ask the caller to leave a message.
- Consider installing a home alarm system that provides monitoring for burglary, fire, and medical emergencies.
- Leave outside lights on after dark or have outside lights controlled by a motion detector. Keep porches and all entrances well lighted. Check bulbs regularly.
- Keep drapes or blinds closed at night but leave some lights on.
- Leave drapes or blinds partially open during the day.
- Never dress in front of windows. Always close the drapes or blinds.
- Know your neighbors and keep their phone numbers handy.
- Have a friend or neighbor check on you daily if you are home alone.
- Try never to be alone in the laundry room or any other common area in an apartment building.
- Call the SDPD CRO (Community Relations Officer) in your neighborhood to arrange for a free home security survey. And ask about starting or joining a Neighborhood Watch program in your area. SDPD division addresses and phone numbers are listed at the end of this paper.
- Call **911** if you hear or see something suspicious. Examples of suspicious activities can be found in a SDPD paper entitled *Reporting and Providing Information about Crimes and Suspicious Activities*. It is on the SDPD website at www.sandiego.gov/police/services/prevention/community/index.shtml.
- Don’t take direct action yourself. An officer will be dispatched to your address even if you cannot speak or hang up.
- Plan an escape route from each room in your home to use in a fire, earthquake, break-in, or other emergency situation.
- Designate a safe room in your home that your family can retreat to and escape potential violence by home invasion robbers. Develop a home security plan for this contingency and make sure all family members know what to do.
- Arm your security system even when you are at home. And have panic alarm buttons installed around your home so they can be used in the event of a home invasion.
- Make sure your street address number is clearly visible from the street and is well lighted at night so the police and other emergency personnel can locate your home easily. Numbers should be at least 4 inches high must be used on individual dwellings and duplexes, and 12 inches high on multiple-unit residential buildings.
- Make sure your unit number (in a multifamily housing development) is clearly visible from paths in the development. A directory or map that shows paths and unit locations should be placed at the main entrance of the development.
- Call your local SDPD Area Station to request YANA (You Are Not Alone) visits to elderly persons or other shut-ins who should be checked on periodically.

Answering the Door

- Don’t open your door at the sound or a knock or bell. Know who’s at your door before opening it. Install a wide-angle peephole in your front door so you can look out without being seen yourself.
- Don’t rely on chain locks for security. They’re only good for privacy.

- Don't open the door to a delivery or service person unless you are expecting a package or a call. Ask for the person's name and the name and phone number of the company. Call it to confirm the visit. Keep the door closed and locked in the meantime.
- Check photo registration card before dealing with any solicitors, peddlers, interviewers, etc. These persons are required to obtain a card from the SDPD and display it on the front of their clothing. They are allowed to solicit only between 9:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. except by appointment. Call their agency to verify their identity.
- Call the SDPD if a solicitor does not have a registration card. Use one of its non-emergency numbers, **(619) 531-2000** or **(858) 484-3154**. And provide the dispatcher with a good description of the person.
- Post a NO SOLICITING sign if you don't want any solicitor to ring your door bell, knock on your door, or make any other sound to attract your attention. Cite San Diego Municipal Code Sec. 33.1407 on the sign.
- Ask for photo identification before letting in anyone you don't know. Check out the identification with the company or agency if you are suspicious.
- Beware of any person who says he or she is from a utility company (water, gas, or electric) and needs to enter your home or yard to investigate a problem. Have the person wait outside while you call the company to confirm the problem and identity of the person at your door. Do not let the person enter your home or yard until you get confirmation.
- Don't give money to solicitors unless you know they are local kids collecting or selling for local causes.
- Before buying anything or making a charitable donation, check out the solicitor's company or organization with the Better Business Bureau (BBB) of San Diego County. Call **(858) 496-2131** or visit its website at **www.sandiego.bbb.org**. The latter also has general consumer information, tips on avoiding various types of fraud, a listing of BBB-accredited businesses, and a way to file a complaint against a business you have had a problem with.
- Beware of magazine sellers, who often say a charity will benefit from your subscription. This is a common scam. The solicitor will take your money and you will never receive any magazines.
- Never let a stranger enter your home to use the telephone. Offer to make the call yourself in an emergency.
- Consider getting a dog that will bark when someone is at the door.
- Call **911** if the person at the door is aggressive in knocking or ringing the doorbell, or is otherwise threatening.
- If you don't want to answer the door and don't want the person there to think that no one is home, say something like "We can't come to the door now," or "We don't open the door to strangers."

Answering the Phone and Talking to Strangers

- Never give your name or number to a person making a wrong-number phone call or to anyone you don't know.
- Hang up if you receive a threatening or harassing phone call. Call the SDPD if these calls are repeated. Use one of its non-emergency numbers, **(619) 531-2000** or **(858) 484-3154**.
- Don't indicate you are home alone to anyone you don't know.
- Install caller ID and an answering machine. Don't pick up a call from a number you don't recognize. Use the answering machine to screen calls. Pick calls up if they are from people you want to talk to.
- Be suspicious of all solicitors, especially if the caller says you have won a prize but asks you to send money first, says you have to act right away, fails to identify the sponsor, uses a variation of an official or nationally-recognized name, e.g., Salvation League instead of Salvation Army, offers to have someone pick up a cash payment from your home, says he or she is a law enforcement officer who will help you for a fee, requires you to attend a sales meeting, directs you to dial a pay-per-call 900 number, delays the delivery of a product or prize, etc.
- List your home and mobile phone numbers on the national Do Not Call (DNC) registry to reduce pre-approved credit offers and telemarketing calls. Call **(888) 382-1222** or register online at **www.donotcall.gov**. It is free. Law-abiding telemarketers check the registry every 31 days so it may take that long before your numbers are removed from their call lists and you can file a complaint. This should stop all but exempt calls from charities, political organizations, survey companies, and companies you have dealt with recently or signed a contract with that gives it permission to call you. If telemarketers ignore the fact that your numbers are on the registry you can file a complaint at the above number or website. For this you'll need to keep a record of their names and the dates of the calls.
- If you receive non-exempt recorded solicitations known as robocalls, also banned by the FTC, you can file a complaint even if your number is not on the DNC registry. This can be done online at **www.ftc.gov** or by phone at **(877) 382-4357**. If your phone system has a feature called "simultaneous ring" it is now possible to

stop non-exempt robocalls by subscribing to a free service at www.nomorobo.com. With simultaneous ring, the call first goes to a Nomorobo number where it's analyzed and terminated if it's not exempt. The call won't even ring on your phone. If you cannot have these calls stopped there are several things you can do minimize their annoyance and keep from becoming a victim of telemarketing fraud. First, don't answer calls from unfamiliar numbers. If you do answer and you hear a recording, hang up immediately. And if you don't hang up, never press any numbers for information or to be put on the DNC registry. You should also get the phone number and file a complaint with the FTC.

- Never give your bank account, credit card, debit card, or Social Security number, or any personal information to an unknown caller. Just say "no" and hang up on anyone who asks for personal information. Don't ever assume a friendly voice belongs to a friend.
- Only give your personal information when you have initiated the call and are sure the other party is legitimate.
- Ask a charity to send written information about its finances and programs before making any commitments.
- Before buying anything or making a charitable donation, check out the solicitor's company or organization with the BBB of San Diego County. Call **(858) 496-2131** or visit its website at www.sandiego.bbb.org. The latter also has general consumer information, tips on avoiding various types of fraud, a listing of BBB-accredited businesses, and a way to file a complaint against a business you have had a problem with.
- For additional information contact the FTC Consumer Response Center at **(877) 382-4357** and www.ftc.gov, Federal Communications Commission Consumer Center at **(888) 225-5322** and www.fcc.gov/ccb/consumer_news/, and California Department of Consumer Affairs Consumer Information Center at **(800) 952-5210** and www.dca.ca.gov/consumer/cic.

Returning Home

- Have the person driving you home wait until you are safely inside.
- Leave outside lights on if you'll return after dark.
- Don't overburden yourself with packages that obstruct your view and make it difficult to react in an emergency.
- Have your key in hand so you can open the door immediately.
- Don't go in or call out if you suspect someone has broken into your home, e.g., if a window or screen is broken, a door is ajar, a strange vehicle is parked in the driveway, or your burglar alarm has gone off. Go to a neighbor's home or use your cell phone to call **911**. Wait for the police to arrive. Enter when they say it is safe to do so.
- Go to a neighbor's house and call **911** if someone is following you on foot or in a vehicle. Or use your cell phone to call, but don't go home while the threat exists.
- Be aware of any people around your home when you return. Go to a neighbor's house if you have any concerns about your safety when opening the garage or other door.
- Keep your headlights on until you are in your garage at night.
- Close the garage door before getting out of your vehicle.

Parking in a Common Gated Garage

Many apartment and condo developments have common gated garages for their residents. Although attacks in these garages are rare, you can do the following to minimize this risk especially late at night.

- Keep your vehicle doors and windows locked when you approach the garage gate.
- Look to see if anyone is near the gate. Don't open it if someone might follow you in on foot.
- If someone does follow you in on foot, turn around and leave the garage, and call **911**.
- Turn on your high beams when you enter the garage so you can see better down the aisles.
- Stop inside the gate and let it close behind you to prevent another vehicle from tailgating, i.e., entering behind you before the gate closes.
- Drive out of the garage if you see anyone who doesn't belong in it. Don't park and get out of your vehicle. Call **911** for help.
- Keep your doors and windows locked until you are ready to leave your vehicle.
- If you have a good friend in the building call him or her when you get to the gate and ask your friend to come down to the garage to escort you to your unit.

AWAY FROM HOME

The following situations are considered: on the street and other places, at work, when completing an online or other purchase, on elevators, when meeting someone new, at night clubs and social functions, when traveling, in a hotel/motel room, while driving, in parking lots and garages, while riding a bus or trolley, when carrying a purse or wallet and what to do if you lose it, when using an ATM, and on a cruise.

On the Street and Other Places

When going out for a walk:

- Don't go out under the influence of alcohol or drugs. They will impair your judgment and reactions.
- Let someone know where you are going and when you expect to return.
- Walk with a friend, family member, or big dog.
- Don't go out alone at night, venture into unfamiliar or dark places, take shortcuts, talk to or accept rides with strangers, or hitch rides. Don't walk in or near alleys, on deserted streets, near dark doorways or shrubbery.
- Don't approach vehicles even if the occupants say they need directions or assistance.
- Avoid verbal confrontations. They may lead to physical altercations.
- Carry a working cell phone. Otherwise know where phones are located along your route. **911** calls are free but carry charge for other calls for assistance.
- Carry only necessities, i.e., identification (not a Social Security card), medical information, names and phone numbers of people to call in emergencies, some cash, and a credit card.
- Don't carry a gun, knife, club, chemical spray, or other weapon. Some are illegal to carry and all could be used against you.

If you are out running, also:

- Vary your route.
- Don't run on deserted streets or trails.
- Don't run at dusk or at night.
- Run with a partner or a dog.
- Don't wear a headset. Not only won't you hear someone approaching but you may get so distracted by what you're listening to that you won't be aware of your surroundings.

Self-Defense

If you want to learn self-defense, take classes only from licensed instructors. But don't substitute self-defense training for common sense, alertness, and caution. In any case, follow the four **As** of self-defense to avoid becoming a target, and if threatened or attacked, what to do. They are **ATTITUDE**, **AWARENESS**, **ASSESSMENT**, and **ACTION**.

Maintain a confident **ATTITUDE**.

- Know where you are going and walk with confidence.
- Make eye contact with people you pass.
- Speak in a strong assertive voice if someone approaches you in a hostile or suspicious manner. Tell them to stop or back away.

Be **AWARE** of your surroundings and who or what is nearby.

- Listen to your intuition. If something doesn't seem right, it probably isn't.
- Watch your surroundings. Leave any places in which you are uncomfortable. Be especially alert for suspicious persons around banks, ATMs (Automated Teller Machines), stores, your home, etc.
- Be wary of strangers who seem overly friendly, ask a lot of questions, or ask for help.
- Never turn your back to a stranger.

- Be wary if a vehicle pulls up beside you.
- Be especially alert when alone in a dark parking lot or structure or any isolated area.

ASSESS the situation and possible threat if you find yourself in an uncomfortable or potentially dangerous situation.

- Consider your options in the event you are threatened, e.g., scream or blow a whistle to attract attention, escape to a safe area, stay and fight, etc. Decide what you plan to do and practice your responses so you can recall them in a real situation.
- Does the person threatening you have a weapon? What kind?
- Does the person threatening you have an accomplice?

ACT quickly and decisively if you cannot avoid physical actions against an attacker.

- Keep a safe distance from strangers who stop you for directions or conversation.
- Cross the street if you think someone is following you.
- Call **911** and walk into the nearest open business or other safe place if someone is following you.
- Don't let someone get close enough to grab you. Watch their hands and feet for indications of hostile intent.
- Don't let anyone back you up against a wall or other object.
- Try to dodge blows by moving to the side and then behind the attacker.
- Move to the side, not backwards if someone is striking at you.
- Don't struggle or try to pull away if someone grabs you from behind. Use your feet, elbows, fingers, and the base of your hand to disable the attacker and then escape.
- If you fall to the ground, yell and kick.
- Aim for the most vulnerable body parts, i.e., eyes, nose, throat, chin, knee, and groin.
- Objects like umbrellas, keys, and shoulder bags make effective weapons when used against vulnerable body parts.

At Work

- Keep all doors locked during office/business hours except those designated for public use. Some employees or security guards should be located to monitor each public entrance. Post signs to indicate areas that are open to the public and those that are for employee access only. Emergency exits should be alarmed and marked for emergency use only.
- Keep all doors locked if you work after hours. Never open them to any strangers.
- Keep public restrooms locked or under observation.
- Lock up your purse and other valuables when you leave your office or workplace.
- Don't open the office/business alone, if possible. One employee should remain outside while the other checks inside to make sure it is safe to enter. It is also better to have two employees present when the office/business is being closed for the day.
- Don't make bank deposits alone, if possible. Vary deposit time, route, and method of concealing the money. Carry the money in a purse or plain bag; never use a bank bag. Make deposits during the business day, not after closing time.
- Don't take out trash alone, if possible. Check outside first to make sure that there are no suspicious people near the door or trash bin. Keep the area well lighted and clear of any objects that could provide hiding places.
- Be familiar with the emergency procedures and alarms in your office/business.

In any confrontation with a criminal:

- Be calm and follow instructions exactly. Don't make any sudden moves.
- Don't risk your personal safety. Don't resist and try to be a hero.
- Consider all guns as loaded weapons
- Activate alarms and alert co-workers only if you can do so without being detected.
- Observe the criminal's features, clothing, behavior, means of escape, etc. without being obvious about it. Being a good witness is critical in helping the police to locate and arrest the criminal.

When Completing an Online or Other Purchase

Buyers should take the following measures to reduce the risk of being robbed when meeting a seller of items advertised on the Internet, e.g., on Craigslist, newspapers, public bulletin boards, and other media.

- Meet during the day in a public place, e.g., a busy shopping center parking lot, a café, or a police station. Never meet at your home or the seller's home, or at some secluded place or across the border in Mexico.
- Have someone accompany you.
- Tell a friend or family member when and where you are going.
- Try to get as much information as possible about the seller and the item you are buying before you complete the transaction. But don't give out any of your own financial information.
- Be especially careful when buying or selling a high-value item.
- Bring a cashier's check instead of cash.
- Bring a cell phone.
- Trust your instincts. If the deal sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

On Elevators

- Don't get on an elevator with a stranger. If you do, stand near the control panel and be ready to press the alarm button and other controls if you are attacked.

When Meeting Someone New

- Exchange phone numbers only, not addresses.
- Let a friend or family member know where you are going on a first date.
- Consider a daytime meeting for a first date.
- Be assertive and honest, not passive or coy.

At Night Clubs and Social Functions

- Go with and stay close to a friend.
- Use prearranged signals to indicate that you need help or want to leave.
- Don't allow alcohol or drugs impair your judgment.
- Watch your drinks and don't give anyone an opportunity to spike them.
- State your personal social standards and limits. Stick to them and don't let anyone change your mind.
- Avoid people who make you nervous or uncomfortable.
- Provide your own transportation when you go out alone. Take enough money for a cab fare if you are going to be out late.

When Traveling on Vacation or Business

- Travel with a friend or in a group when possible. There is safety in numbers.
- Avoid traveling alone, especially after dark.
- Stay sober. Don't let alcohol impair your judgment. Only drink beverages you have seen prepared. Ask that bottled drinks be served unopened. Don't leave your drinks unattended. Someone could slip a drug into one that causes amnesia and sleep.
- Plan your touring. Don't discuss your plans with strangers. Beware of strangers who seem overly anxious to help you. Select guides carefully.
- Get good directions to avoid getting lost.
- Find an open business to get directions if you get lost. Don't appear to be lost by stopping and looking at addresses or street signs.
- Stick to well-lit main streets and public areas. Avoid areas where your personal safety may be at risk. If someone does grab you, make a scene: yell, kick, and try to get away.
- Leave your itinerary with a friend or relative and check in with them periodically.

- Keep track of time and don't be late for appointments or meetings.
- Shop with a friend when possible.
- Don't buy things from people on the street who offer you a great deal, especially if you have to follow them somewhere to get it.
- Don't fight for your purse if someone tries to take it by force.
- Only use authorized taxis. You could be overcharged, robbed, or kidnapped when using "gypsy" taxis. Before getting into a taxi write down its number and the driver's name.
- If you are arrested for any reason, ask to notify the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate.

In a Hotel or Motel

- If the desk clerk says your room number aloud when you check in, ask for a different room and have the number written on your keycard sleeve and discreetly handed to you.
- Avoid rooms with ground-floor windows or sliding-glass doors to pools or beach areas.
- If you feel uncomfortable walking to your room alone, ask the desk clerk to provide an escort.
- Determine the most direct route to and from your room, to fire escapes, stairs, elevators, and phones. Count the number of doors between your room and the exits in case you need to escape in smoke or darkness.
- Keep your door locked when you are in your room. Use both the deadbolt lock and the security bar/chain.
- Keep your windows locked, and blinds and drapes closed for privacy.
- Be sure that sliding glass doors and doors to connecting rooms are locked.
- Safeguard your room key or card at all times.
- Destroy your room card after your stay. Some may be encrypted with your credit card information.
- Use the peephole in the door to identify anyone requesting entry. Open the door only if you are certain it is safe to do so.
- Don't invite strangers into your room.
- If you are worried about being spied on through the peephole in the door cover it with a piece of opaque tape.
- If you haven't requested room service or housekeeping and someone knocks on your door claiming to be a staff member, call the front desk to verify the claim before opening the door.
- If you receive a call about an emergency that requires you to leave your room, hang up and call the front desk to verify it.
- If you receive a call asking for your credit card number to verify a room charge, hang up. It's probably a scam. Call the front desk to see if there's any problem with your account.
- Report any suspicious persons or activities to the front desk.
- Don't stay in a ground-floor room or rooms near stairwells or elevators, especially if you are a woman and traveling alone.
- Don't leave anything on your door knob to indicate that you are not in your room. Call housekeeping to request maid service. Call room service to order food.
- Use valet parking if the garage is dimly lit or the neighborhood has a high crime rate.
- Ask your hotel concierge or desk clerk about dangerous areas and avoid them. Neighborhoods can change a new threats may have emerged since the last time you visited or the guidebook you're using was printed.
- When you go out tell the hotel manager when you expect to return and who to call if you're not back by then.
- Carry a card with your hotel's name, address, and phone number.

While Driving

- Keep your doors locked and your windows closed.
- Know where you are going. Stop and get directions before you get lost.
- Avoid driving alone, especially at night and in dangerous areas.
- Never pick up hitchhikers.
- Drive to the nearest open business and call **911** if anyone is following you. Don't go home.
- Keep your vehicle in gear when stopped for traffic signals or signs. Try to leave room to drive away if threatened. Be alert for anyone approaching your vehicle.
- Keep purses and other valuables out of view when driving alone. Put them in the trunk or on the floor.
- Honk your horn or flash your emergency lights to attract attention if you are threatened while in your vehicle.

- Stay in your vehicle if you stop to aid others. Find out what the problem is and offer to call or drive to the nearest phone and report the situation.
- Keep your vehicle in good mechanical condition so it won't break down and leave you stranded on the road. Also keep enough gas in the tank so you won't run out.
- If your vehicle breaks down or runs out of gas, pull over to the right as far as possible, raise the hood, and call or wait for help. Remain in your vehicle with the doors and windows locked until you can identify any person who comes to help.
- Be wary of minor rear-end collisions, especially at night on dark freeway off-ramps. Remain in your vehicle with the doors and windows locked if you are uneasy or suspicious. Drive to the nearest open business to check the damage and exchange insurance information.
- Control your gestures and other reactions to keep "road-rage" incidents from escalating to violence.

In Parking Lots and Garages

- Park in open, well-lighted, and populated areas near your destination. In a garage park where you don't have to use stairs or elevators.
- Never park next to trucks, vans, dumpsters, and other objects that obstruct visibility and provide hiding places. Check that no one is hiding around your vehicle before you get out.
- Avoid parking or walking near strangers loitering or sitting in vehicles.
- Report any lights that are out to the facility operator.
- If you use valet parking, don't leave your home keys on a chain with your vehicle keys. Also, don't leave your garage door opener where it is easily accessible. Keep your vehicle registration, proof of insurance, and any other papers with your home address on them where a criminal is not likely to find them.
- Lock your vehicle and take your keys with you. Make sure the windows are closed and nothing of value is in sight.
- Conceal maps or travel brochures that might indicate you are a tourist.
- Have someone escort you to your vehicle if you are concerned about your safety and are uncomfortable about walking alone. Or wait until there are more people around.
- Remember where you parked so you can return directly to your vehicle. Be alert and walk purposefully.
- Don't overload your arms with packages. Use a cart or make another trip.
- Be aware of your surroundings and the people around you. Don't be distracted while walking to your vehicle. This includes fumbling with your purse or packages, looking for keys, and using a cell phone. Have the key in hand when you approach your vehicle so you can open the door immediately.
- Check that no one is hiding in or around your vehicle before you get in.
- If a van has parked next to your vehicle, enter it on the other side.
- Lock the doors immediately after getting in your vehicle.
- Don't resist or argue with a person who wants to steal your vehicle. Your life is much more valuable than your vehicle. Be especially alert when parking at fast food places, gas stations, ATMs, and shopping areas along suburban highways.

While Riding on a Bus or Trolley

- Wait in a central area near other passengers.
- Have your fare or pass ready when boarding.
- Sit near the operator.
- Keep your handbag and packages on your lap instead of on the floor or seat next to you.
- Change seats and tell the operator if anyone bothers you.
- Avoid using dark or isolated stops at night.
- Stay alert for any possible dangers when exiting.

When Out and About

- Carry only a driver's license, cash, a credit card, and insurance cards. Don't carry blank checks or a checkbook. Don't carry anything with PINs, account numbers, or passwords written on it.
- Don't carry your Social Security card or anything with your SSN on it. Persons with Medicare cards should carry photocopies of the cards with the last four digits of their SSN removed. Keep the card in a safe place at home and bring it if needed for a doctor appointment.
- Make a list of all the cards you carry. Include all account numbers and phone numbers to call to report a lost or stolen card. Also make photocopies of both sides of all the cards. Keep the list and copies in a safe place at home. If you carry a library card, make a copy of it too.
- Don't carry personal information of your family members.
- It's better to leave anything you don't need at home.
- Avoid carrying a purse if possible. Wear a money pouch instead.
- Carry a purse with a shoulder strap if you must. Keep the strap over your shoulder, the flap next to your body, and your hand on the strap. Hang the purse diagonally across your body.
- When wearing a coat and carrying a purse, conceal the strap and purse under the coat.
- Keep a tight grip on your purse. Don't let it hang loose or leave it on a counter in a store.
- Carry your wallet, keys, and other valuables in an inside or front pants pocket, a fanny pack, or other safe place. Don't carry a wallet in a back pocket.
- Never put your purse or wallet on a counter while shopping.
- Don't fight for your purse if someone tries to take it by force. Your safety comes first.

What to Do If Your Purse or Wallet Is Lost or Stolen

- File a police report in the jurisdiction where your wallet was lost or stolen. Also file one in the jurisdiction where you live. Get a copy of the report. You may need to send copies elsewhere.
- Report the loss to one of the three Consumer Credit Reporting Bureaus (CCRBs). Also contact one of the CCRBs to have an initial fraud alert placed on your credit reports. Their phone numbers are: **(800) 525-6285** for Equifax, **(888) 397-3742** for Experian, and **(800) 680-7289** for TransUnion. The CCRB you call is required to notify the other two. Ask to have a fraud alert placed on your credit reports. It will tell creditors to follow certain procedures before they open new accounts in your name or make changes to your existing accounts. In placing a fraud alert you will be entitled to free copies of your credit report from each CCRB. Order them a few weeks after your loss and review them carefully. Look for inquiries from companies you haven't contacted, accounts you didn't open, and debts on your accounts that you can't explain. Fraud alerts are good for 90 days and can be renewed. They are free. This alert may prevent someone from opening a new account in your name but it will not prevent misuse of your existing accounts.
- Alert your banks of the loss and request new account numbers, checks, ATM cards, and PINs. Also provide new passwords and stop payment on any missing checks.
- Contact all your creditors by phone and in writing to inform them of the loss.
- Call your credit card companies and request account number changes. Don't ask to cancel or close your accounts; that can hurt your credit score, especially if you have outstanding balances. Say you want a new number issued so your old numbers will not show up as being "cancelled by consumer" on your credit reports.
- Call the security or fraud departments of each company you have a charge account with to close any accounts that have been tampered with or established fraudulently. Follow up the request in writing and ask for written verification that the accounts have been closed and any fraudulent debts discharged. Keep copies of all documents and records of all conversations about the loss. If you still want a charge account, request a new number.
- Contact the IRS if your Social Security card or any other card with your SSN on it was in your purse or wallet. This will alert the IRS that someone might use your SSN to get a job or file a tax return to receive a refund. Call its Identity Theft toll-free line at **(800) 908-4490**. Also contact the Social Security Administration (SSA) on its Fraud Hotline at **(800) 269-0271** or by e-mail to the Office of the Inspector General at **www.ssa.gov/org**.
- Call the SSA at **(800) 325-0778** if your Medicare card is lost or stolen. And ask for a replacement.
- If your driver license was lost, contact the California DMV Fraud Hotline at **(866) 658-5758** to report the loss, request a replacement license, ask that a stolen/lost warning be placed in your file, and check that another license has not been issued in your name.

- If your library card was lost, contact the library immediately. Otherwise you could be held financially responsible for any material borrowed after the loss.
- If your automobile, homeowners, or health insurance cards were lost, notify the companies ask request replacements.
- If your passport was lost or stolen in the United States, report it to the U. S. Department of State by calling (877) 487-2778. Operators are available from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. ET, weekdays excluding Federal holidays. Or you complete, sign, and submit Form DS-64, Statement Regarding a Lost or Stolen Passport, to the U. S. Department of State, Passport Services, Consular Lost/Stolen Passport Section, 1111 19th St. NW, Ste. 500, Washington DC 20036. If it was lost or stolen overseas contact the nearest U. S. Embassy or Consulate.
- To replace a lost or stolen passport in the United States submit Forms DS-11, Application for a U. S. Passport and DS-64 in person at a Passport Agency or Acceptance Facility. If you are overseas, go to the nearest U. S. Embassy or Consulate to replace it.

Using Wi-Fi, Laptops, and Mobile Devices in Public Places

The following tips are provided by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s Transportation Security Administration.

- Be aware that using Wi-Fi in coffee shops, libraries, airports, hotels, universities, and other public places poses major security risks. While convenient, they’re often not secure. You’re sharing the network with strangers, and some of them may be interested in your personal information. If the hotspot doesn’t require a password, it’s not secure.
- Also be aware that unsecure laptops and mobile devices like smartphones make it easy for a hacker to intercept information to and from the web, including passwords and credit- or debit-card numbers. They are also vulnerable to virus and spyware infections, and to having their contents stolen or destroyed.
- Install the latest operating system in your mobile devices and download all security software updates into your laptops. This will protect you from current viruses, worms, spyware, Trojan horses, spam, and other dangerous malware.
- Before you connect to any public Wi-Fi in a hotel, airport, train/bus station, café, or other place you should confirm the name of the network and its login procedures with an appropriate person to ensure that the network is legitimate.
- Don’t use public Wi-Fi to perform sensitive transactions such as banking and online purchases.
- Always check your surroundings in public places to ensure that no one can view sensitive information on your screen or the keys you use to enter information.
- Never leave your mobile devices, including any USB/external storage devices, unattended in a public place. And if you plan to leave them in your hotel room, make sure they are appropriately secured.
- Make sure you take your mobile devices, including any USB/external storage devices, with you when you leave a public place.
- Turn off a Bluetooth-enabled device when it is not in use to prevent someone from connecting to your device and gaining access to your sensitive information.
- Never connect your mobile devices to any public charging station to prevent malicious software from being installed and/or access to your sensitive information.
- See the SDPD cybersecurity paper at www.sandiego.gov/police/pdf/crimeprevention/CyberSecurity.pdf for steps to take to reduce these risks.

When Using an ATM

- Use ATMs that are inside a store or a bank. If you use an outside ATM, it should be well-lighted, in a busy area, under video surveillance, and have clear lines of sight in all directions, i.e., there should be no nearby building corners, shrubs, signs, etc. that could provide possible hiding places for an attacker.
- Get off your cell phone and be alert when using an ATM.
- Cover the PIN entry and cash output as much as possible.
- Be aware of your surroundings before and during your transaction, especially between dusk and dawn. Return later or use an ATM in a store or bank if you notice anything suspicious, e.g., a person loitering nearby.
- Complete your transaction as fast as possible and leave the facility.

- Don't go alone.
- Park in a well-lighted area as close to the ATM as possible.
- Keep your doors locked and passenger and rear windows rolled up when using a drive-through ATM.
- Put your cash, receipt, and ATM card away promptly. Count your cash later in private. Do not leave your receipt at the ATM site.
- Avoid being too regular. Don't use the same ATM at the same time of day and day of the week.
- Make sure you are not being followed when you leave an ATM location. Drive immediately to a police or fire station, or any well-lighted and crowded location or open business and get help if you are being followed. Flash your lights and sound your horn to attract attention.
- Give up your money or valuables if you are confronted by an armed robber. Any delay can make a robber more nervous and increases the likelihood of violence.

On a Cruise

- Be skeptical. Don't assume you can trust other passengers. Criminals take vacations too.
- Stay sober. Don't let alcohol impair your judgment. Only drink beverages you have seen prepared. Ask that bottled drinks be served unopened. Don't leave drinks unattended. Someone could slip a drug into one that causes amnesia and sleep.
- Set rules for your children and keep an eye on them. Make sure they don't drink. Report any crew members who serve alcohol to minors.
- Meet fellow passengers in public areas, not cabins.
- Use all locks on your cabin door. Never open it to a stranger.
- When you enter your cabin check the bathroom and closet before closing the door.
- Don't socialize with the crew. Make sure your children know that crew areas are off limits.
- Dress down. Leave expensive jewelry and watches at home. They only make you a target for thieves.
- Lock all valuables in a safe and guard your key card as you would a credit card.
- Don't stand or sit on the ship's railing.
- Never go to any isolated areas of the ship alone, especially in the evening and early morning.
- Know where the members of your party are at all times. Report a missing person immediately.
- Attend the ship safety drills and learn its emergency procedures.
- Bring phone numbers of U.S. Embassies or Consulates in the cities on your itinerary so you can contact them if a problem arises. You can get them online at www.usembassy.gov.
- If you are a victim of a crime at sea call the FBI at **(202) 324-3000** from the ship to report the crime. Call the U.S. Embassy or Consulate if you are a victim of a crime on shore. Take photos of the crime scene and any injuries you suffered. Get the names, addresses, and phone numbers of possible witnesses. Take statements. Don't expect the cruise line to take physical evidence. Also notify your family, doctors, lawyers, insurance companies, etc. as appropriate.

Avoiding Trouble in a Foreign Country

- Beware of new acquaintances who probe you for personal information or attempt to get you involved in a possibly compromising situation.
- Avoid civil disturbances. If you come on a demonstration or rally you might be arrested or detained even though you are a bystander.
- Obey local laws. In many countries it is unlawful to speak derogatorily of the government and its leaders or take pictures of train stations, government buildings, military installations, and other public places.
- Avoid actions that are illegal, improper, or indiscreet. Don't do any of the following:
 - Accept offers of sexual companionship
 - Attempt to keep up with your hosts in social drinking
 - Engage in black market activities
 - Sell your possessions
 - Buy illegal drugs or pornography
 - Seek out political or religious dissidents

- Accept packages or letters for delivery to another place
- Gossip about character flaws, financial problems, emotional difficulties, or other problems of your fellow Americans or yourself
- Keep a low profile and shun publicity. Don't discuss personal or business information with the local media and be careful what you say to foreigners. They may have been directed to obtain information to hurt you or your business.
- Be aware of your surroundings and alert to the possibility of anyone following you. Report any surveillance to the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate.
- Avoid large chain hotels or ones near U.S. Embassies or Consulates, landmarks, religious centers, or places where demonstrations have occurred. Choose a small hotel in a quiet neighborhood.
- Consider the following in choosing a hotel and reserving a room.
 - Has its staff had security and emergency management training in the past year?
 - Does it have an emergency evacuation plan?
 - Are background checks done on all members of its staff?
 - Are there sprinklers in every room?
 - Is security on duty 24/7?
 - Does it have electronic key-card access? Do its elevators require key cards?
 - If rooms are directly over the lobby, reserve a room located between the third and seventh floors. They are within reach of most fire-department ladders.
- Do the following if you are trapped in your hotel by armed assailants:
 - Double-lock your door and barricade it with heavy furniture.
 - Drag a mattress to the center of the room and hunker down under it.
 - Stuff wet towels under the door if there is smoke.
 - Keep quiet so you don't alert attackers to your presence.
 - Avoid windows, a blast outside can be lethal.
- Visit major attractions at less-busy hours.
- Avoid restaurants and clubs frequented by Americans.
- Register with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate or do it online at <https://travelregistration.state.gov> so you can be contacted in the event of a crisis or emergency.
- Other safety and security measures for business travel outside the U. S. are contained in a FBI brochure at www.fbi.gov/about-us/investigate/counterintelligence/business-brochure.

IF YOU ARE A CRIME VICTIM

For reporting purposes, crimes and suspicious activities are considered as either emergencies or non-emergencies. Situations in which you, a member of your family, or a person in your care are attacked or threatened are considered as emergencies and should be reported by calling **911**. Be sure to tell the dispatcher about your current medical condition and the need for immediate medical assistance.

Non-emergencies are crimes in which: (1) there is no serious personal injury, property damage, or property loss; (2) there is no possibility that the suspect is still at the scene or is likely to return to the scene; and (3) an immediate response is not needed. These situations and suspicious activities should be reported to the SDPD by calling **(619) 531-2000** or **(858) 484-3154**. The details of reporting crimes and suspicious activities can be found in a paper entitled *Reporting and Providing Information about Crimes and Suspicious Activities*. It is on the SDPD website at www.sandiego.gov/police/services/prevention/community/index.shtml. It also includes the names and phone numbers of those SDPD units and other law enforcement and government agencies that deal with special situations and problems.

Other things to do if you are threatened, stalked, or a victim of domestic violence are listed below:

Threat of Attack

There is no sure way to respond if you are threatened. Attackers are different. What may deter one might aggravate another. In any case try not to panic. Some options to consider are listed below:

- Try to talk your way out of the situation.
- Scream loudly to attract attention.
- Run toward people or open businesses.
- Run and hide.
- Bide your time and look for an opportunity to escape.
- Get a good physical description of the attacker.
- Call **911** to report the attack and provide a description of the attacker as soon as possible.

Stalking

- Call **911** if anyone maliciously, willfully, and repeatedly follows or harasses you, or makes a credible threat that places you in fear of your safety. File a crime report and get a case number. A detective will contact you about the case.
- Get a TRO (Temporary Restraining Order) or have a police officer get an EPO (Emergency Protective Order) for you. Have the stalker served with a copy of the order. Keep a copy and give copies to your friends, relatives, co-workers, and employer.
- If you live in rental housing also give a copy to the landlord along with a picture of the offender. California law prohibits landlords from terminating a tenancy or refusing to renew a lease of protected tenants based on an act of stalking. However, the landlord may terminate a tenancy if the protected tenant has allowed the perpetrator back into the unit.
- Alert your friends, relatives, co-workers and employer about your case. Have them file a police report if they are also victimized.
- Keep a record of all stalking incidents. Keep it in a secure place.
- Report all stalking incidents to the detective in charge of your case.
- Keep an emergency bag packed with clothes, money, emergency phone numbers, toys for your children, etc.
- Show a picture of the stalker to your neighbors.
- Alert your neighbors with a prearranged code or signal if the stalker is at or near your home.
- Move to a temporary safe house or shelter as a last resort. Keep new location secret. Get a U.S. Post Office or private mailbox for your mail.

In addition to the other personal security measures listed in this paper you should consider doing the following:

- Change your unit locks. If you are renting and the perpetrator is not a tenant of your unit, a landlord must change your locks and give you a key to them within 24 hours after a request if you provide the landlord with a copy of a TRO or EPO issued within the last 180 days, or police report stating that the resident or household member is a victim of stalking. If the perpetrator is a tenant, the restraining order must exclude the perpetrator from the unit.
- If you are renting, move to another location. Tenants who are victims of stalking can terminate a tenancy by giving a 30-day notice and providing the landlord with a copy of a TRO or EPO issued within the last 180 days, a police report stating that the resident or household member is a victim of stalking, or documentation from a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or other qualified third party acting in a professional capacity that the victim is seeking assistance for physical or mental injuries from the stalking. Tenants still have to pay rent for 30 days after the notice to terminate. If the victim allows the person against whom the TRO or EPO has been issued to enter the unit, the notice to terminate is invalidated.
- Never walk alone.
- Avoid public places.
- Vary your schedule and route when you drive. Know where nearby police and fire stations are located.
- Install a locking gas-tank cap in your vehicle.
- Be alert for vehicles following you.

Domestic Violence

- File a crime report and get a case number. A detective will contact you about the case.
- Get a TRO or have a police officer get an EPO for you. Have the offender served with a copy of the order. Keep a copy and give copies to your friends, relatives, co-workers, and employer.

- If you live in rental housing also give a copy to the landlord along with a picture of the offender. California law prohibits landlords from terminating a tenancy or refusing to renew a lease of protected tenants based on an act of domestic violence. However, the landlord may terminate a tenancy if the protected tenant has allowed the perpetrator back into the unit.
- To obtain a domestic violence TRO you must have a current or past romantic relationship with the abuser such as marriage, living together, dating, engagement, or having a child with the person. And the abuse must have occurred within 30 days.
- The order can include the following: restraints on behavior, removal from the home, and stay away from the victim's home, work, or school.
- Keep a record of all violations of the terms of the TRO or EPO. Keep it in a secure place. Report all violations to the detective in charge of your case.
- Pack an emergency bag with clothes, money, emergency phone numbers, toys for your children, etc. and leave it with a friend.

In addition to the other personal security measures listed in this paper you should consider doing the following:

- Change your unit locks. If you are renting and the perpetrator is not a tenant of your unit, a landlord must change your locks and give you a key to them within 24 hours after a request if you provide the landlord with a copy of a TRO or EPO issued within the last 180 days, or police report stating that the resident or household member is a victim of domestic violence. If the perpetrator is a tenant, the restraining order must exclude the perpetrator from the unit.
- If you are renting, move to another location. Tenants who are victims of domestic violence can terminate a tenancy by giving a 30-day notice and providing the landlord with a copy of a TRO or EPO issued within the last 180 days, a police report stating that the resident or household member is a victim of domestic violence, or documentation from a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or other qualified third party acting in a professional capacity that the victim is seeking assistance for physical or mental injuries from an act of domestic violence. Tenants still have to pay rent for 30 days after the notice to terminate. If the victim allows the person against whom the TRO or EPO has been issued to enter the unit, the notice to terminate is invalidated.
- Consider getting a dog.
- Get an unlisted phone number. Tell your family and friends not to give out the number to anyone else.
- Hide an extra set of vehicle and house keys outside.
- Keep a list of emergency phone numbers hidden.
- Have a bank account in your name with money in it.
- Plan an escape route and practice it.
- Gather the following for you and your children: birth certificates, Social Security cards, driver's license, keys, passports, green card/work permit, welfare identification, money, checkbook, credit cards, school registration, restraining orders, etc.

Answers to many questions about domestic violence are contained in a consumer education pamphlet entitled *Can the Law Help Protect Me from Domestic Violence?* published by the State Bar of California. The text in English and Spanish is available on the State Bar's website at www.calbar.ca.gov by clicking on Consumer Education in the left-hand menu and then on Legal Information, Family, and then its title.

Obtaining a TRO

- Answers to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about TROs are available on the San Diego Superior Court website at www.sdcourt.ca.gov. For civil harassment TROs click on Harassment Restraining Order under Civil. For domestic violence TROs click on Restraining Orders under Family.

- Requests for TROs can be filled out and requested at the following Court locations. You can call the phone numbers listed below for assistance in obtaining a TRO. No fee is required and free legal assistance is available.

| | | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|-------------|-------|-----------------------|
| Central Dist. Civil | 330 W. Broadway | San Diego | 92101 | (619) 450-7275 |
| East County Dist. | 250 E. Main St. | El Cajon | 92020 | (619) 456-4100 |
| North County Dist. | 325 S. Melrose Dr. | Vista | 92083 | (760) 201-8600 |
| South County Dist. | 500 3rd Ave. | Chula Vista | 91910 | (619) 746-6200 |

- Get the TRO approved by a judge. This can take four to six hours at the Court.
- Have the TRO served by a law enforcement official or someone you appoint. The server must be older than 18 years. You cannot serve it yourself.
- Keep a copy of the TRO with you at all times. Call **911** if a violation occurs.
- Call **911** if the restrained party has not yet been served but harasses you. The police can serve the TRO on the spot or over the phone.
- Go to the Sheriff's Department Restraining/Protective Order website at www.sdsheriff.net/tro to see if the TRO has been served. You will have to enter the Case Number and the restrained person's last name to access this online database.

SDPD AREA STATIONS

| | | |
|--------------|---------------------------------|----------------|
| Central | 2501 Imperial Ave. SD 92102 | (619) 744-9500 |
| Eastern | 9225 Aero Dr. SD 92123 | (858) 495-7900 |
| Mid-City | 4310 Landis St. SD 92105 | (619) 516-3000 |
| Northeastern | 13396 Salmon River Rd. SD 92129 | (858) 538-8000 |
| Northern | 4275 Eastgate Mall SD 92037 | (858) 552-1700 |
| Northwestern | 12592 El Camino Real SD 92130 | (858) 523-7000 |
| Southeastern | 7222 Skyline Dr. SD 92114 | (619) 527-3500 |
| Southern | 1120 27th St. SD 92154 | (619) 424-0400 |
| Western | 5215 Gaines St. SD 92110 | (619) 692-4800 |
