



The following tips are presented by the Savannah Chatham Metropolitan Police Departments Central Precinct Crime Prevention office with included information from the National Crime Prevention Council and the Montclair Safety and Improvement Council (CA)

## Personal Safety Tips

The following are tips that can help you avoid becoming a victim of a crime when you are out and about or working at your job. Taking a few simple precautions can help reduce the risk to yourself, and maybe even discourage the crime altogether.

Burglars, robbers and petty thieves seek primarily to remove cash or property without harming an individual. **BUT** some are capable of harming people with little provocation. Whether you are working, at home, in your car or going about your daily routine, utilize the following precautions:

### At Home

- **ALWAYS** leave your headlights on when arriving home after dark until you have unlocked the garage door, or unlocked the front door. Most vehicles have this safety feature built in and can be activated with a key remote.
- When driven home by private auto or taxi, ask the driver to wait until you are safely inside. This should not only be done at nighttime but in the daytime as well.
- Have the door key in your hand. While you are sitting in the passenger seat of a car or even walking to the house it is a good idea to have your keys ready. This for immediacy. The keys can also be used as a protective device if held in the hand in a defensive mode.
- If you live alone, list only your first initial and last name on the mailbox or just your initials. In smaller communities/neighborhoods like Savannah, some people actually know their mail delivery or package delivery person.
- When moving into a new apartment or residence, **ALWAYS** have the locks re-keyed, or changed.
- Know who is at your door before opening it. Wide angle door viewers (180 degrees or 190 degrees) enable you to identify the visitor. You do not have to open the door if you feel uncomfortable. This is your home. **DON'T** feel obligated.
- **NEVER** rely on chain locks. They provide privacy, not security. Use Deadbolts; Surface-Mounted Deadbolts or even a Keyless Entry System.

- **NEVER** dress in front of windows. **NEVER** place valuables in front of windows such as TVs, fine art or computers. **ALWAYS** close your drapes when you're not home for the day and especially when going out of town.
- **NEVER** let anyone into your home without proper identification. **DON'T** be afraid to ask for identification. If they refuse to give you the information then you have the right to refuse them entry. Remember it is your home.
- **NEVER** let strangers into your home to use the telephone or cellphone. Make the call for them while they wait outside. While calling lock your door. **DON'T** turn your back and feel the need to leave the door cracked.
- **ALWAYS** leave outside lights on after dark, or use motion lights.
- If you receive a wrong number phone call, don't give out your name or phone number. This is also helpful with dealing with person(s) who, in general ask for any kind of personal information. Remember you are not obligated.
- If you receive an obscene or threatening phone call, hang up and call police. It may just seem like someone pranking you, but always err on the side of cautiousness.
- In an apartment building, **NEVER** be alone in the laundry room, especially if the room is in a basement or closed off area of the complex.
- If you suspect anyone is in your house, **DO NOT GO INSIDE**. Go to a neighbor and call the police or get back in your vehicle and use your cell phone. No property is worth your life or well-being.
- If you see or hear anything suspicious, call the police. **DON'T** underestimate your safety for worry that you are bothering the police. The police are here to protect and assist you in the protection of your property.

**Savannah Chatham Metropolitan Police Department** can be reached by dialing **9-1-1** or by calling the non-emergency line at **912-652-6500**.

**Remember:** When facing imminent danger or in need of a “timely” response call 911 and give as much detail as possible, starting with the location of the emergency.

## **While You Are Out**

- **DON'T** walk or jog early in the morning or late at night when the streets are deserted. After dark, however, lighting is provided around the perimeter of some Savannah parks, including Daffin Park and Forsyth Park. Remember, Savannah's parks close at 9 p.m.
- Try **NOT** to go out alone at night. Invite a friend join you. Avoid unfamiliar areas, if possible.

- **DON'T take shortcuts. Do not walk in or near alleys or on deserted streets.**
- **Carry only the money needed for your outing. Use ATM/ Credit or Debit cards. DON'T carry large amounts of cash. The first rule is to limit your losses.**
- **DON'T display cash, cell phones, hand-held electronic games and devices, expensive jewelry or clothing. Such items can be viewed as inviting targets for criminals.**
- **DON'T let your purse hang loosely in your hand. DON'T carry lethal weapons inside of your purse that could be used against you. DON'T fight. Surrender your purse.**
- **Use caution in parking lots. DON'T walk in poorly lighted areas, dark doorways, or near shrubbery. If you parked your vehicle in an area well-populated during the day that became isolated after dark, you can call the police for a safety assist. Your life IS worth a phone call.**
- **DON'T accept rides from strangers, and don't respond to comments from strangers on the street. Keep walking or make your way to a populated area.**
- **DON'T get into an empty elevator with a stranger. If you do ride with another person, stand near the control panel. If attacked, press as many of the control buttons as possible.**
- **DON'T catch a ride with someone you don't know. If someone suspicious is following you, cross the street and walk into an open business. Let someone at the business know of your situation if you feel uneasy.**
- **Watch your surroundings and be alert for suspicious persons, especially around banks, stores and on vacant streets. Always check the mirrors on your car before getting out.**
- **If you are alone at work after business hours, keep the door locked. If someone is begging to get in cause it's only two minutes after closing time...weigh the situation. If they need help call the police for them. DON'T open the door. If you are working late, ask the security guard or a co-worker to walk you to your car.**
- **When meeting a new friend, exchange phone numbers only, not addresses. On a first date, let family and friends know where you are going. Consider a daytime meeting rather than a night meeting, for a first date, and meet in a public place.**
- **DON'T allow alcohol or drugs to impair your judgment. DON'T allow an overly aggressive pursuer to change your mind. DON'T let people influence your judgment when it comes to personal safety.**

## **In Your Automobile**

- **NEVER** pickup hitchhikers.
- **DON'T** park in the dark.
- **NEVER** leave your keys in the car.
- **ALWAYS** lock your car, even in your own driveway. Never leave your motor running.
  
- **NEVER** allow another vehicle to follow you home. If you feel you are being followed drive to a populated area, hotel or gas station. In some cases such as SCMPD's jurisdiction, there are five precincts throughout the area. SCMPD Headquarters is at 201 Habersham Street.
  
- When walking to your vehicle **ALWAYS** have your keys in hand so you can open the vehicle doors without delay. Most vehicles' today have keyless remotes with a panic button. **ALWAYS** have it ready. **DON'T** dig into a pocket book; jacket pocket or pants pocket at your vehicle if you don't have to. Be ready to get in and go.
  
- **ALWAYS** keep your car in gear when stopped at a traffic signal or stop sign. If threatened you can quickly drive away.
  
- **ALWAYS** check the back seat of your car before getting in. If you have tinted side or back windows the Georgia Law requires the tint to be at least 32% so that you can somewhat see inside. If you have a keyless remote activate the light inside. Keep your interior lights set to auto.
  
- If you stop to aid others, do not get out of the car. Ask what the problem is and offer to call the police for them. Even when it's raining, use your best judgment when offering assistance. Remember, your personal safety and that of your family or whoever is riding with you is most important.
  
- **ALWAYS** lock your doors while driving.
  
- Be aware of open windows at stop signs or traffic lights.
  
- Be Aware of vehicles that are tailgating you. Some individuals may attempt to bump you at red lights or stop signs in order to make you get out of your vehicle. This can be a legitimate bad driver (accident), but may also be a scam or an attempt to get you out of the car so they take the vehicle or attempt to rob you.
  
- Be Aware of flyers or paper stuck to your windows. If you have already driven off and the paper or flyer is not interfering with your vision, leave it there until you get home or to a populated area. This can be an attempt to make you stop and get out of your vehicle, thus, creating a perfect opportunity for an individual to rob you, take your car or pursue other criminal acts including kidnapping.

## **Riding the Bus**

- **During off hours, ride as near the operator as possible.**
- **If you are going to be out late, make sure you have cab fare.**
- **If someone on the bus bothers you, change seats and tell the operator.**
- **Have your fare or pass ready in hand when boarding the bus.**
- **At night avoid dark and isolated intersections or stops.**
- **Look around when getting off the bus or trolley, and be aware of people around you.**
- **It is safe to tell the driver you don't feel comfortable and ride further than to jeopardize your personal safety.**

## **Preventing a Kidnapping or Abduction**

**(Savannah Chatham Metro Police, Crime Prevention Office and Stark County Sheriff's Office)**

- **Run away from danger, never towards it. Danger is anyone or anything that invades personal space. YELL LOUDLY when it comes to personal safety.**
- **If you are ever followed by a car while walking turn around and run the other direction. Get to a populated area. If you are in a neighborhood bang on doors and continue to yell key words or phrases words such as: help, stop, I'm being followed; I'm being kidnapped; or Call the police."**
- **Never go to places alone, and if you have children always supervise them or make sure there is a trusted adult present to supervise them if you cannot. At all times know where your children are and who they are with.**
- **Remind children never to take anything or respond in any way if approached by someone they do not know. Teach them to run away as quickly as they can to you or trusted adult such as the police.**
- **Talk openly to your children about safety and encourage them to tell you or a trusted adult if anyone or anything makes them feel frightened, confused, or uncomfortable.**
- **Know your children's friends and their families. Pay attention to your children and listen to them. If you do not, there is always someone else who will.**
- **Practice or think about "what if" scenarios. How would you react to certain situations? Do you think you could pull through if you were put into a certain situation such as being tied up or the actual attacked itself.**
- **Learn to fight. Sign up for self-defense courses. Be self-aware.**
- **Consider varying your daily routines and habits. DON'T take the same routes or go at the same time on your regular errands. If you take your children to school change**

that route as well. If your children walk to school have them take one known, alternative and safe route to break it up.

- Be discreet about your possessions and family's personal habits and information.
- Report any suspicious persons or activities to law enforcement. If you feel that you or your children have been targeted or are being stalked, report this information to law-enforcement authorities immediately. **DO NOT WAIT.**

## **If You Are Attacked**

- Use common sense. Try to talk your way out of it.
- Try to negotiate.
- Stall for time.
- Be verbally assertive.
- Distract or divert the assailant, then flee. Run toward an open business or a group of people. Hide if you get the opportunity.
- Scream loudly and keep it up to attract attention and help from people nearby.
- If the attacker threatens you with a deadly weapon, and you come out of it alive, you took the proper course of action. During an armed attack, you must decide the proper course of action. There is no hard and fast rule as to self-defense. You must consider your physical capabilities, your location, and your perceived chances of success. If you cannot escape, bide your time and look for another opportunity, a half-hearted attempt could be worse than no attempt at all.
- Notify the police immediately. If there are witnesses, ask them to stay until police arrive.
- It is not advisable to carry guns, clubs, knives, or chemical sprays. It is illegal to carry some of these weapons, and they could be used against you.

## **Could You Describe an Assailant?**

“No one ever thinks they will be the victim of a crime, but supplying the police with an accurate description of an assailant could mean the return of your property and the arrest of the criminal. It's not unusual for the victim to be so stunned or frightened that they don't notice what the attacker looks like.”

**The next time you're walking down the street or heading into the grocery store, glance at a person walking towards you, and then look away. Guess their height and weight. Now look at them again as they pass you. Compare their size to your own. How close was your guess?**

Without looking at them again, **can you describe their clothes?** Now turn-around and see how accurate you were. What did you miss? Practice describing the people you see every day, and as you get better, add more details.

**What shape are their face, nose, and eyes? What color is their hair? Do they have any tattoos? Are they wearing any particular jewelry? Do you notice multiple**

earrings, nose rings or some possible “stand out blemish” such as a birth mark or even a burn mark?

## **Can you describe from head to toe?**

“Learning to notice and describe people will help you give a good description of an assailant if you're ever the victim, or witness of a crime.”

## **And Finally**

“If a crime occurs, report it. When you report a crime and all the facts about it, it helps the police to assign officers in the places where crimes are occurring or where they are most likely to occur. If you don't report a crime, this allows the criminal to operate without interference. Tell police what you know. No fact is too trivial.”

There are a lot of “don'ts and never's” listed as you can see. This biggest “do” is to Be Safe and Protect Yourself. Always know your surroundings; know the people you invite into your life and have a plan B to any situation.

**For Crime Prevention inquiry's Call**

**Central Precinct at**

**912-651-6931**

**or anonymously report a crime to CRIME STOPPERS at 912-234-2020**

**APO Barry Lewis**

**Crime Prevention Officer; Central Precinct**

**[Blewis01@savannahga.gov](mailto:Blewis01@savannahga.gov)**

**Savannah Chatham Metropolitan Police Department**

**912-525-3114**

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**Savannah Chatham Metropolitan Police Department**

**912-525-3114**

The National Crime Prevention Council's mission is to be the nation's leader in helping people keeps themselves, their families, and their communities safe from crime. To achieve this, NCPC produces tools that communities can use to learn crime prevention strategies, engage community members, and coordinate with local agencies, including:

- Publications and teaching materials on a variety of topics

- **Programs that can be implemented in communities and schools**
- **Local, regional, and national trainings**
- **Public service announcements broadcast nationwide starring McGruff the Crime Dog**
- **Support for a national coalition of crime prevention practitioners**

**The Montclair Safety and Improvement Council (MSIC) is a volunteer community advisory group to the City of Oakland, CA, whose purpose is to improve the quality of life in the greater Montclair area by promoting a variety of safety and lifestyle enhancements.**