



Be Prepared

A Guide to Safety and Security Away from Home



Office of Temporary
and Disability Assistance

Be Prepared

The best crime prevention is observing crime avoidance. Don't put yourself and your family in a situation where crime will most often occur. **BE PREPARED.** By taking a few simple precautions, you can reduce the risk to yourself and your family by discouraging those who commit crime.

Safety in Transit

If you are working late or reporting in early, try to meet another employee to ride together and enter or leave together.

Make sure you have the most up-to-date schedules for public transportation.

Don't get in elevators with people who look out of place or make you uncomfortable. Report such individuals to security or management.

Don't use the stairs alone. Stairwells can be traps, as well as a way to save time or get exercise. Never enter a stairwell to escape pursuers or potential attackers. Go to a space where there are other people.

Be extra cautious when using restrooms that are in isolated locations, poorly lit or open to the public.



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-lighted areas as much as possible. Carry a small flashlight if out at night.

Walk close to the curb. Avoid doorways, bushes and alleys where someone could hide.

Walk confidently and at a steady pace.

Do not respond to conversation from strangers on the street.

Continue walking.

Waiting for a Bus

Avoid isolated bus stops.

Keep safely away from the curb until the bus arrives.

Don't open your purse or wallet while boarding the bus. Have your pass or money ready in your hand or in an easily accessible pocket. Before you board the bus, keep your purse at your side with your hand clutching it.

Don't invite trouble -- Keep jewelry out of sight; 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. TIP: 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.

If you see suspicious activity, immediately tell the driver.



Parking Lot Sense

Park in well-lit heavily traveled areas. If you know you will be staying late, check for lights when you park in the morning. If you are working late ask someone to walk with you to your car.

Always lock your car and roll up the windows. If you notice any strangers lurking in the parking lot, notify security or the police.

Don't leave anything in plain view in your car.

Leave items home or locked in the trunk. Have your key ready and check the back seat and rear floor before getting in.

Office Security

Keep your purse, wallet or other valuable items with you at all times or locked in a drawer or closet.

Never leave your keys unattended.

Never leave change or cash on the desk or in a top drawer. Instead, place any cash in an envelope and put it in a drawer you can lock.

Check the identification of any strangers who request access to a restricted area. Don't be afraid to call for verification.

If you notice any suspicious persons or vehicles, notify security or the police. Be especially alert in large office buildings and after normal working hours.

When working after hours be sure to lock all exterior doors and windows. If you have an alarm system, set the perimeter alarm.

Report any broken or flickering lights, dimly lit corridors, doors that don't lock properly, broken windows or broken pay phones to management.

Be discreet. Don't advertise your social life or vacation plans and those of your co-workers to others.

Keep the emergency numbers for security, police and fire departments posted near every phone.

It's also a good idea to write the address of the building on or near the phone. People often forget the address of the building they are in when reporting an emergency.

If you are responsible for office keys, don't leave them on your desk or in an unlocked desk drawer where they could be easily copied. Keep them with you or hide them in a secure place. Only give keys to persons who have a legitimate need, and make sure they are returned.

Never write down safe or vault combinations or computer passwords.

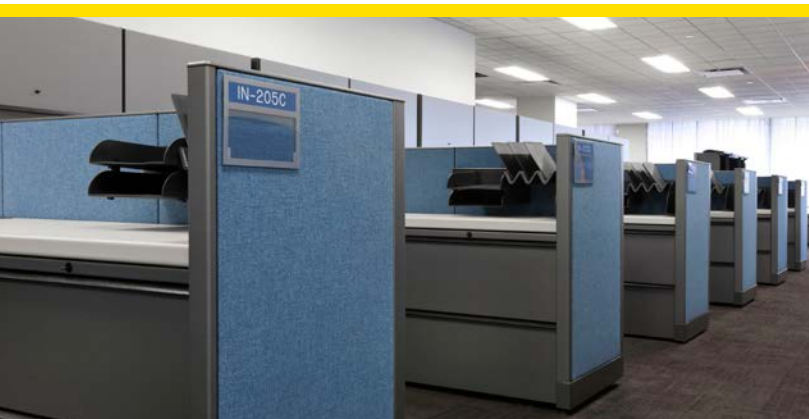
Know your co-workers and look out for each other. Ask a friend to watch your desk while you're in another room or out to lunch and volunteer to do the same. Find someone who leaves at the same time or takes the same bus and walk together.

Always let someone know where you'll be, whether it's coming in late, working late, going to the computer room, going out to lunch or to a meeting. If you have an accident, they will know where you are and eventually come looking for you.

Workplace Violence

Be aware of potentially violent employees and take note of signs of stress that could erupt into violence. Report unusual or worrisome behavior.

Create a supportive, harmonious environment with a culture of mutual respect.



All incidents that occur in your workplace related to your health and safety should be reported. An Incident Report (4503EL) should be completed and submitted to the OTDA Bureau of Management Services (518-474-9489) immediately following any incident. Incidents include accidents, medical incidents (injuries, illness), assaults, fires, explosions, bomb threats, suspicious packages, flooding/water damage, vandalism, burglary, chemical accidents or leaks, and weather-related incidents. You should also report any threats of violence, whether they come from outside the agency or from within, and whether they are received in person, by telephone or through the mail.

If you are injured at work, you should call 1-888-800-0029, toll-free, Monday through Friday 8–5. This is the number for the New York State Accident Reporting System, and this call helps determine your workers' compensation benefits. Your accident report will be taken quickly and confidentially.

Car Safety

Theft Prevention Tips

- **Lock your car.** Most thieves will try multiple car doors to look for one that is unlocked.
- **Don't hide a second set of keys in your car.** They don't serve a purpose and if a thief gets in your car they could steal it.
- **Park in well-lighted areas.**
- **Park in attended lots.** Auto thieves do not like witnesses and prefer unattended lots.
- **Close your car windows when parking.** Don't make it easier for the thief to enter your vehicle.
- **Hide your valuables.** Don't make your car a more desirable target for thieves by leaving valuables in plain sight.
- **Make the interior of your car look the same way it did when you bought it.** Clean out the visible change in the center console and anything else that is in plain view from the outside of the car. One dollar in change is enough for a thief to break into your car.
- **Plug auxiliary power outlets.** Thieves will think that there are electronic devices in the car if they see open power outlets.
- **Report suspicious activity.** People looking into or trying the door handles on vehicles.

Anti-Theft Devices

- **Remote Car Starter.** Allows the owner to safely start a vehicle and leave the motor running to pre-heat the interior.
- **Alarm Systems.** Security systems that make loud warning sounds and flash the vehicle's lights to attract attention to the vehicle.
- **Ignition Kill Switch.** Disables the power to the starter of a vehicle until a hidden switch is activated.
- **Fuel Kill Switch.** A valve that cuts off the fuel supply to the vehicle.
- **Visible Steering Wheel Lock.** Prevents the steering wheel from being turned.
- **Floorboard Locks.** Devices that disable the gas or brake pedal.
- **Gearshift Locks.** Disables shifting of the transmission.
- **Tire/Wheel Locks.** Prevents the vehicle from moving.
- **Hood Locks.** Prevents thieves from gaining access to your security system and battery.
- **Locking Wheel Lug Nuts.** They are inexpensive and can deter a thief from stealing your wheels. You only need one per wheel. Don't leave the key visible in your car.
- **Removable Face Stereo Unit.** The control panel of the stereo comes off to be taken with you. This makes the stereo inoperable without it.
- **Locking Fuel Cap.** The high price of fuel has made it a hot commodity.
- **VIN-Etching.** Have all the glass in your vehicle etched with the VIN number to deter car stripping

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- **Keep your gas tank at least half full.** This could prevent you from breaking down in an undesirable area.
- **Have an emergency kit in your trunk.**
- **Don't abandon your vehicle.** If you break down and have to leave your vehicle on the side of the road don't leave it for a long time.

