



Campus Safety and Security

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217-825-3042 (on call)

Campus crime is not always preventable. But thinking smart and taking the necessary precautions is the best way to stay safe on your college's campus. By being well-prepared and aware of your surroundings, you will be able to avoid many scary situations and enjoy your experience at the college. Here are some ideas to help keep you safe.

Make sure the door to your residence hall is locked at all times. Yes, this even means when you run down the hall to borrow a book or hop in the shower. You wouldn't just leave the front door to your house open, would you? Do not open your door to strangers without checking credentials. Contact the office who sent the visitor for verification of their purpose. If someone asks to use your phone, offer to make the call while the stranger waits outside the door. Do not open your door to see credentials; instead use the peephole. If you live on the first floor, make sure to lock your windows at night.

Don't let anyone into your hall that you don't know. Not letting someone in doesn't make you look like a jerk. It makes you look like a good neighbor. If you encounter a stranger in your dorm or residence hall, ask them if you can help them. Let them know you are aware of their presence. Ask them to wait outside until you can contact the person they are looking for and lock the door when you go to relay the message. This can be done in a friendly but firm way. Do not allow the stranger to make you feel guilty about taking safety precautions or intimidate you into compromising your safety. Get to know your neighbors and ask them to let you know of anything suspicious.

Be careful with your keys. If you lose your keys, don't depend on your roommate to keep letting you in, thinking that your keys will just "pop up." Pay the fine and get a new set. Do not loan out your key to anyone. Keys may not be copied.

If you have a car, lock it. It seems so easy to remember, yet it's so easy to forget.

If you have a car, check on it. Just because you haven't been using your car very much this semester doesn't mean someone else hasn't!

Get a locking device for your laptop. This may be a physical lock or some kind of electronic tracking or locking device.

Watch your stuff wherever you go. You may need to take a quick run to the vending machines to clear your mind . . . just as someone happens to walk by and see your iPod and laptop unattended.

Put emergency numbers in your cell phone. If your wallet is stolen, will you know what phone number to call to cancel your credit cards? Put important phone numbers in your cell so that you can call the moment you notice something is missing. The last thing you want is someone cashing in on the money you have been budgeting for the rest of the semester.

Use the campus escort service at night. You may feel embarrassed, but it's such a smart idea! If you must be alone at night contact campus security and ask for an escort. When working alone in labs or classrooms at night, lock the doors and contact security to let them know you are alone. Ask for an escort back and forth to your car. If you ever feel in danger do not hesitate to call 9-1-1.

Going out at night? Go with a friend. Male or female, big or small, safe neighborhood or not, this is always a good idea. Avoid isolating yourself by using the buddy system of walking in groups, or at the least in pairs and staying on well-lighted streets. Avoid being alone and keep a working cell phone within reach in case an emergency arises. Carry a whistle or other type of alarm so you can quickly – and loudly – grab someone's attention in case of an emergency.

Make sure someone knows where you are at all times. Heading out? Going out on a date? There's no need to spill all the intimate details, but do let someone (a friend, a roommate, etc.) know where you're going and what time you expect to get back. If you leave campus for the weekend, let a roommate or friend know where you are going and how to reach you.

If you live off campus, call someone when you get home. You're studying for finals with a friend late one night at the library. Make a quick agreement that you'll call him/her when you get home later that evening.

Know the phone number for Campus Security/Safety. You never know: you may need it for yourself or for something you see from far away. Knowing the number off the top of your head (or at least having it in your cell phone) may be the most important thing to remember during an emergency.

Stay Alert. Pay attention to what is going on around you and avoid blocking sounds or using distracting devices such as cell phones. Your ears and eyes are your best defense to being taken by surprise.

Listen to Your Instincts. If you think you are being followed, either on foot or by car, do not ignore the thought. Go to a safe environment. If you feel you are in immediate danger, run, scream, honk your horn, flash your lights - make a scene. Such action could deter a possible attacker from following through with their plans.

Communicate Your Schedule. Communicate your schedule to friends and roommates. Let people know where you plan to be and when you expect to return, but exchange this information discreetly. Avoid leaving notes on the outside of your door or on a friend's car. Only friends, family, employer and school officials should be aware of your schedule.

Keep Personal Information Personal Avoid displaying personal information on mailboxes, key chains, book bags, room doors, etc. Get in the habit of using your first initial and last name. Leave a short, non-descript, computerized voice message on your voice mail. The less information a caller can learn from your message, the better.

Get Background Information If you plan to meet a stranger, for example for a date or a study partner for the first time, meet in a public place like the library or student center. Ask questions before meeting them - such as what activities they are involved in, who their professors are and where they live. Communicate this information to a friend or roommate.

Dating Safety

1. **Tell someone where you're going -- and when you'll be back.** You don't have to spill all the juicy details, but at least let someone know what your plans are.
2. **Drive yourself or agree to meet your date somewhere.** While having your date pick you up may seem nice, it can also leave you stranded if you the date isn't going well and you want to split.
3. **Go with another couple.** If you're not quite sure how interested you are in someone, go out with a bunch of people. You can disguise it ("I'd love to check out this new club with you, and some friends of mine are going on Saturday...") while still making sure you aren't stuck alone.
4. **Go somewhere public.** As romantic as a candlelight dinner at your date's apartment may sound, it's not a good idea if you don't know someone very well. Meet somewhere very public during your first few dates.
5. **Use alcohol responsibly.** If you're old enough to be drinking, you're old enough to handle it like an adult. Don't get yourself into a situation you didn't plan on due to alcohol.
6. **Say "no" when you feel like it.** Don't want to grab drinks after dinner? Don't even want to order dessert? Saying "no" is fine at any point, and you shouldn't worry about sounding rude. There are plenty of ways to say "no" nicely!
7. **Listen to your gut.** If something, or someone, doesn't feel right, listen to that feeling. It's there for a reason.
8. **Watch your drink.** Keeping an eye on your drink -- at all times -- means someone else can't change your plans for the evening without you knowing about it.
9. **Agree to check in with a friend at a certain time.** If you don't want to worry about calling someone at a preset time, have them call you. Decide beforehand language you can use to say if it's going well or not. ("Yes, the food here is fantastic," or "Oh, I'm so sorry to hear you're sick!" won't sound strange to your date, but your friend can pick up on what's going on.) Having your roommate call you because she's "suddenly sick" is a great way to slip out of a bad date early. Just make sure to answer the phone when your friend calls!

Other Helpful Hints

You will be enrolled in the Blackburn emergency notification system. Tests will be run periodically. If you do not receive the test notification, notify the Student Life Section or Campus Safety immediately.

When running or jogging around campus, recruit a friend to run with you. If you listen to music, make sure that you keep your earphones turned down low enough that you can still hear what is going on around you.

When walking, stay on the part of the path that is farthest away from bushes, dark doorways, or alleys.

If you observe any suspicious activity or a crime taking place, call the campus security or the police immediately.

Report obscene, harassing or threatening phone calls, instant messages, or emails to your campus police department immediately.