

# safety tips



Robbery, theft and assault are serious crimes. The basic rules of prevention are to be sensible and alert. The Washington D.C. Metropolitan Police Department and the GLLU offer the following tips to help reduce the risks:

## Personal Safety Tips on the Street

- If possible, don't walk alone during late-night hours. Walk in groups whenever you can—there is always safety in numbers.
- Let a friend know your destination and your estimated time of arrival or return. That way, the police can be notified as quickly as possible if there is a problem.
- Stay in well-lit areas as much as possible. Avoid alleys, vacant lots, wooded areas, and other short-cuts or secluded areas. They are usually not well-lit or heavily traveled.
- Walk on the sidewalk whenever possible. Walk close to the curb, avoiding doorways, bushes, and other potential hiding places.
- If you have to walk in the street, walk facing traffic. A person walking with traffic can be followed, forced into a car, and abducted more easily than a person walking against traffic.
- Walk confidently, directly, and at a steady pace. Don't stop to talk to strangers.
- Wear clothing and shoes that give you freedom of movement. And don't burden yourself with too many packages or items.
- Always be aware of your surroundings. If you are wearing headphones, don't turn up the volume so high that you cannot hear outside noises.
- Never hitchhike or accept rides from strangers.
- Report any suspicious activity or person immediately to the Metropolitan Police Department at 311. Or, if it is an emergency, dial 911.
- Avoid carrying large sums of cash, or displaying expensive jewelry in public.

## Basic Street Smarts

- Wherever 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 leave.
- Check out the locations of police and fire stations, public telephones, hospitals, and restaurants, or stores that are open late.

## Automated Teller Machine (ATM) Safety Tips

- Try to use machines you are familiar with, and try to use terminals located in banks rather than independent terminals.
- Be aware of your surroundings. Look around before conducting a transaction. If you see anyone or anything suspicious, cancel your transaction and go to another ATM.
- If you must use an ATM after hours, make sure it's well-lit.
- Never walk away from an ATM with cash still in hand. If you are going to count your money, do so at the ATM.
- When making an ATM transaction from your car, be aware of your surroundings. Keep your eyes and ears open, and keep car doors locked.

## If Someone Tries to Rob You

- 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 becoming victims.

## Vehicle Theft

You should always secure your vehicle, even if you're parking for "just a minute." You should:

- Park in a well-lit area
- Remove your keys from the ignition
- Lock all of your doors
- Close all of your windows

Never leave your engine running and vehicle unlocked while you run into any building.

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## GLLU factsheet

### Gay and Lesbian Liaison Unit

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