

# Street Smarts

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## Test Your "Street Smarts" IQ: Do you...

- Jog or walk by yourself early in the morning or late at night when the streets are quiet and deserted?
- Stuff your purse with cash, keys, credit cards, checkbook - and then leave it wide open on a counter, your desk, the floor?
- Put your wallet in a jacket, which you then hang up or throw over a chair?
- Let your mind wander - thinking about your job, or all the things you have to do - when walking or driving?
- Think it's a waste of time to lock your car when you'll be back in a few minutes?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, you need to change a few habits. Even if you answered "no" and made a perfect score, read on. Spend a few minutes now to prevent trouble later.

## Basic Street Sense

- 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.
- Know the neighborhoods where you live and work. Check out the locations of police and fire stations, public telephones, hospitals, and restaurants, or stores that are open late.

## On Foot

- Stick to well-traveled streets. Avoid shortcuts through wooded areas, parking lots, or alleys.
- Don't flash large amounts of cash or other tempting targets like expensive jewelry or clothing.
- Carry a purse close to your body, not dangling by the straps.
- Put a wallet in an inside coat or front pants pocket, not a back pocket.
- Try to use automated teller machines in the daytime. Have your card in hand and don't approach the machine if you're uneasy about people nearby.
- Don't wear shoes or clothing that restricts your movements.
- Have your car or house key in hand before you reach the door.
- If you think someone is following you, switch direction or cross the street. Walk toward an open store, restaurant, or lighted house. If you're scared, yell for help.
- Have to work late? Make sure there are others in the building, and ask someone - a colleague or security guard - to walk you to your car or transit stop.

## Learn more about auto theft and carjacking.

- Keep your car in good running condition. Make sure there's enough gas to get where you're going and back.
- Always roll up the windows and lock car doors, even if you're coming right back. Check inside and out before getting in.
- Avoid parking in isolated areas. Be especially alert in lots and underground parking garages.
- If you think someone is following you, don't head home.
- Drive to the nearest police or fire station, gas station, or other open business to get help.
- Don't pick up hitchhikers. Don't hitchhike.

## On Buses and Subways

- Use well lit, busy stops.
- Stay alert! Don't doze or daydream.
- If someone harasses you, don't be embarrassed. Loudly say, "Leave me alone!" If that doesn't work, hit the emergency device.
- Watch who gets off with you. If you feel uneasy, walk directly to a place where there are other people.

## **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.

## **Learn more about things you can do and things kids can do.**

- Take a Stand
- Make your neighborhood and workplace safer by reporting broken street lights, cleaning up parks and vacant lots, and lobbying local government for better lighting in public places.
- Join a Neighborhood, Apartment, or Office Watch to look out for each other and help the police. Or find out how you can organize a neighborhood watch.
- Help out a friend or co-worker who's been a victim of crime.
- Cook a meal, baby-sit, find the number for victim services or a crisis hotline.
- Listen, sympathize, and don't blame.
- Look at the root causes.
- Work for better drug treatment services, crime and drug abuse prevention education, and job and recreational opportunities for young people in your community.