

Safety Tips for Women



There have been a rash of sexual assaults and purse snatching in New Bedford this summer. The following safety tips were provided by Downtown Community Police Officer Gary Sarmento.

- **BE ON THE ALERT.** Be aware of your surroundings.
- **LOOK CONFIDENT.** Walk with confidence and with your head up.
- **LISTEN TO YOUR GUT.** If something doesn't look or feel right, change your behavior. Go back and ask someone to walk with you. Cross the street. It's OK to be paranoid when it keeps you safe.
- **BE WARY OF STRANGERS** just like when you were a child. Some of the most notorious serial killers and rapists were intelligent, articulate, well-dressed males who would engage women in conversation to gain their confidence.
- **DON'T WALK & TALK ON A CELLPHONE.** When you talk on the phone, you are not focused on your surroundings. Although the conversation may make you feel safer, the person on the phone cannot help you if you are suddenly in danger. Avoid distractions. **PRETEND** to talk on the phone if you believe it will be a deterrent.
- **HAVE YOUR KEYS IN HAND.** Retrieve your keys and have them in your hand **BEFORE** you begin walking to your car. Don't wait

until you are at your car door to begin digging through your purse. You are putting yourself in a vulnerable position.

– **USE YOUR PANIC ALARM.** Most newer vehicles have alarms, but have you ever tested that little RED PANIC BUTTON on your remote? Carry your keys and be aware of the panic button if you find yourself in danger. It will draw attention and often scare the attacker away.

– **LOCK YOUR CAR DOORS.** We all lock our car doors to protect the valuables we leave inside, but you should also lock them when YOU are inside. If you're going to sit in your vehicle to talk on the phone, apply make-up, or balance your checkbook, LOCK THE DOORS so you don't get any unwanted visitors.

– **DO NOT ACCOMPANY AN ATTACKER ANYWHERE UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.** Scream. Fight. Knee. Scratch. Gouge. RUN!! Do whatever it takes, but do not allow yourself to be taken away from the scene. Once an attacker gets you alone and isolated, there may be no way to escape and it could mean your life.

– **HAVE A PLAN.** Go over the "what if's" in your mind and prepare yourself mentally and physically for an attack/assault. Don't ever assume it won't happen to you. Your attacker has a plan. He is counting on the fact that you don't and that you will react a certain way. Have a plan and your response and defense will become second nature.