

A GUIDE TO PERSONAL SAFETY



Advice from Nottinghamshire Police's Pre Crime Unit



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The chances of you or a member of your family becoming a victim of a violent crime, robbery or another crime against the person, are low. Crimes against a person by strangers in public places are still rare and account for a very small part of recorded crime.

However, you can make yourself even less likely to be the victim of a personal crime - by taking a few sensible precautions. Many are common sense, and may be things that you already do. Making yourself safer doesn't mean changing your entire lifestyle, personality or wardrobe, and it doesn't mean never going out at all.

You should think about how you would act in different situations before you are in them. Think about whether you would stay and defend yourself (using reasonable force) or simply get away as quickly as you can. There is nothing wrong with doing either, but you should think about the options.

General personal safety:

- You will be safest in bright, well-lit, busy areas.
- Appear and act confident - look like you know where you're going and walk tall. Concentrate on where you are going, not on your mobile phone or gadgets.
- You might like to spread your valuables around your body. For example, keep your phone in your bag, your house keys in your trouser pocket and your money in your jacket.
- If someone tries to take something from you, it may be better to let them take it rather than get into a confrontation and risk injury.
- You can use reasonable force in self-defence. You are allowed to protect yourself with something you are carrying (for example keys or a personal alarm) but you may not carry a weapon.
- If you decide to defend yourself, be aware that your attacker might be stronger than you or may take what you are using in self-defence and use it against you. It is often better to shout loudly and run away.
- If you use a wheelchair, keep your things beside you rather than at the back of the chair.
- Try not to advertise your valuables such as mobile phones, laptops, notebook, tablet or iPod/MP3 player, jewellery or watch.
- When out walking, be careful not to make your personal items, as mentioned above, an easy target for robbers. Try to keep them hidden.
- Stay alert - your phone is a valuable item. When you are out, be aware of your surroundings and don't use your phone in crowded areas or where you might feel unsafe. Don't be distracted by it!



Theft and robbery

Street robbery is generally known as mugging. It can also cover snatching bags.

Pick-pocketing is slightly different, as you will not be aware of the offence taking place.

Robbery is more likely to take place in quiet or dark areas, and pick-pocketing where it is busy, for example on a busy train in rush hour.

Tips to avoid becoming a victim:

- Remember - be aware of your surroundings. Concentrate on what and who is around you. Don't be distracted by using mobile gadgets and MP3 players. If you are listening to music, use just one headphone so that you are aware of someone approaching you.
- Don't give thieves the chance to take your valuables from you. Don't put them on show.
- Don't leave your bag, wallet, valuable jewellery, mobile phone or MP3 player on display to thieves.
- If someone tries to take something from you by force, it may be best to give it to them. This will help you avoid getting injured.
- Don't leave bags or pockets open or unzipped. It's easier for a thief to dip into an open bag. Purse bells are a great way of further protecting your purse.

Credit and bank cards

- Keep your cards separate from your cheque book.
- If your cards are stolen, call your bank or credit card company as soon as possible. Most banks put the number to call if your cards are stolen on your statement. They are also often shown on cash machines.
- Treat your cards like cash - never let them out of your sight and never keep your PIN number with your cards.

Transport

This section offers some general tips on how to keep yourself safe and secure when making a journey - either catching a bus, taxi or train, or when you're in the car.

Public transport

- As with everything, you are safest where there are other people and where it is well-lit.
- Plan your route.
- Try to wait in busy or well-lit areas.
- Sit near other people, near the driver if you are on a bus or near the guard if you are on a train.
- If someone makes you feel uncomfortable, get up and move away.
- Take extra care at crowded bus stops and on crowded buses and trains. Keep your bag closed and make sure your pockets are not accessible.

Taxis

- If you are going to be out late, try to arrange a lift home or book a taxi in your name.
- Always keep the number of a reliable firm handy. Avoid minicabs or private-hire cars that tout for business and are unlicensed.
- If you can pre-book your taxi, make a note of the company you are using and the phone number and leave it with a friend.
- When the taxi arrives, ask the driver to check it's the one that you booked.
- Always sit behind the driver in the back seat. If you feel uneasy, ask to be let out in a well-lit area where there are plenty of people.
- If in any doubt, don't get in the taxi.

Nottinghamshire Alert

Nottinghamshire Alert is a system which allows Nottinghamshire Police, Neighbourhood Watch in Nottinghamshire and other organisations that work for the public to send community safety messages to you quickly and efficiently.

If you are interested in getting updates on major incidents, advice on crime prevention and community safety and alerts about criminals operating in your area, make sure you are registered with the system.

You can report antisocial behaviour in your area and receive responses from police about the incident you have reported and find out how to join a Neighbourhood Watch scheme or set up your own in your street by registering.

What do I get?

- A totally free service — you can control your message settings and choose to receive alerts via email, text message to your mobile phone or recorded voicemail. You can unsubscribe at any time.
- Information about crime trends, incidents and appeals from authorised police officers and police staff.
- Report suspicious and antisocial behaviour (not crime), receive updates and responses about them.
- Start, manage or request to join a Neighbourhood Watch scheme in your area.
- Configure how, when and which messages you'd like to receive.

If you want to know more about Nottinghamshire Alert, contact Nottinghamshire Police's Pre Crime Unit.

Tel: 101, extension 800 3011

Email: nottinghamshirealert@nottinghamshire.pnn.police.uk

To register for Nottinghamshire Alert, visit www.nottinghamshirealert.co.uk

If you would like a paper copy of the registration form, call **101** or visit your local police station to request one.

For more advice on crime prevention contact

Nottinghamshire Police's Pre Crime Unit
Arrow Centre
Hucknall
Nottinghamshire
NG15 8AY

Tel: **101**

Tell us what priorities you want your local police to focus on with our online survey

www.neighbourhoodprioritysurvey.co.uk

If you have information about criminals operating in your area, call Crimestoppers anonymously on

0800 555 111