

## Know The Facts

- » Most victims of sexual assault are attacked in places they thought were safe and usually by someone they thought they could trust.
- » An individual can be raped by a boyfriend/ girlfriend or significant other. If a person does not want sexual contact, it is his/her decision, even if the individual had willing sexual contact in the past
- » The only person who is ever responsible for a sexual assault is the perpetrator.

## Resources to Help You

Being a victim of a sexually violent attack is not something you must endure alone. There are organizations and resources locally and nationally that exist to help victims of sexual abuse and violence.

**National Sexual Violence Center** — The National Sexual Violence Resource Center serves as the nation's principle information and resource center regarding all aspects of sexual violence. To learn more, see [www.nsvrc.org](http://www.nsvrc.org) or call (877) 739-3895.

**RAINN** — The Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network is the nation's largest anti-sexual assault organization. RAINN operates the National Sexual Assault Hotline at (800) 656-HOPE. To learn more, visit [www.rainn.org](http://www.rainn.org). RAINN's services are free and confidential.

**National Coalition Against Domestic Violence** — NCADV is devoted to the elimination of domestic violence in urban and rural areas, across all racial, religious and economic groups. NCADV identifies and works to eradicate the social conditions that perpetuate or condone domestic violence such as sexism, ageism, heterosexism, and able-bodyism and easy access to guns. To learn more, visit [www.ncadv.org/protectyourself/GettingHelp.php](http://www.ncadv.org/protectyourself/GettingHelp.php) or call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at (800) 799-SAFE (7233).

**National Center for Victims of Crime** — a national victim assistance organization with resources to help victims of crime, information on dating violence, stalking, teen issues, and more. To learn more, visit [www.ncvc.org](http://www.ncvc.org), call (800) FYI-CALL (800-394-2255), or email [gethelp@ncvc.org](mailto:gethelp@ncvc.org).

## Get Involved!

No one individual or agency working alone can prevent crime. It takes police and citizens working in partnership. The District of Columbia's community policing strategy provides many ways for police and communities to work together to prevent crime and build safer neighborhoods. These include regular Police Service Area meetings in your community, citizen patrols and more. To learn more about community policing activities in your neighborhood, call your local police district:

1st District	Main:.....(202) 698-0555..... TTY: 727-8506
	Substation:.....(202) 698-0068..... TTY: 543-2352
2nd District	Main:.....(202) 715-7300..... TTY: 364-3961
3rd District	Main:.....(202) 673-6815..... TTY: 518-0008
	Substation:.....(202) 576-8222..... TTY: 576-9640
4th District	Main:.....(202) 715-7400..... TTY: 722-1791
5th District	Main:.....(202) 698-0150..... TTY: 727-5437
6th District	Main:.....(202) 698-0880..... TTY: 398-5397
	Substation:.....(202) 698-2088..... TTY: 281-3945
7th District	Main:.....(202) 698-1500..... TTY: 889-3574

## Know Something About a Crime? Don't Keep It a Secret

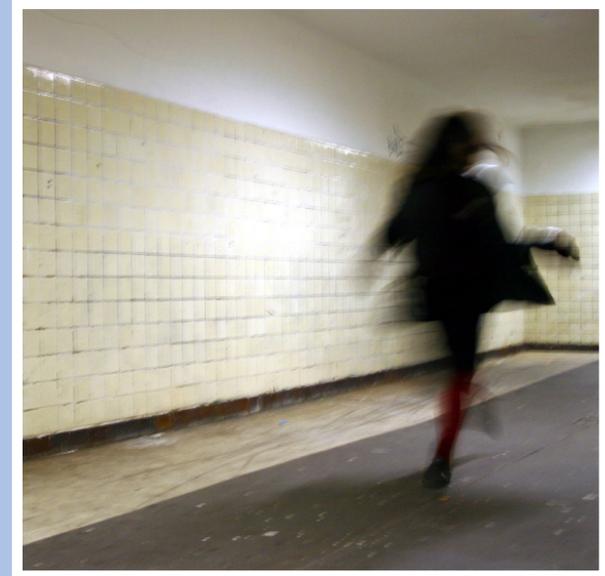
If you have important information to share with the police, the Anonymous Crime Tip Line and Text Tip Line enables you to give MPD vital information anonymously. Just dial (888) 919-2746 (CRIME) or text to 50411 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Your name will not be used, only the information you provide. Your information could lead to a cash reward. For more details, see [www.mpdc.dc.gov/tipline](http://www.mpdc.dc.gov/tipline).



GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
Metropolitan Police Department  
300 Indiana Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20001

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FOR YOUR SAFETY



# Sexual Assault

*Tips for reducing the risk of becoming a victim of sexual assault*



# A sexual assault is about power, anger, and control.

It is an act of violence and an attempt to degrade someone using sex as a weapon.

Above all, sexual assault is a crime.

## What is Sexual Assault?

Sexual assaults can happen to *anyone* — children, students, wives, mothers, working women, grandmothers, the rich and poor, and boys and men. The assailants can be anyone — classmates, co-workers, a neighbor or delivery person, total strangers, outgoing or shy, often a friend or a family member. These crimes are often committed again and again, until the assailants are caught.

## How You Can Protect Yourself

- » Be alert! Walk with confidence and purpose.
- » Be aware of your surroundings — know who's out there and what's going on.
- » Don't let alcohol or other drugs cloud your judgment.
- » Trust your instincts! If a situation or place makes you feel uncomfortable or uneasy, leave!

## When You're Indoors

- » Make sure all doors (don't forget sliding glass doors) and windows have sturdy, well-installed locks, and use them! Install a wide-angle peephole in the door. Keep entrances well-lit.
- » Never open your door to strangers. Offer to make an emergency call while someone waits outside. Check the identification of sales or service people before letting them in. Don't be embarrassed to phone for verification.
- » Be wary of isolated spots — apartment laundry rooms, underground garages, parking lots, offices after business hours. Walk with a friend, co-worker, or security guard, particularly at night.
- » Know your neighbors, so you have someone to call or go to if you're uncomfortable or frightened.
- » If you come home and see a door or window open, or broken, don't go in. Call the police from a cell phone, public phone or a neighbor's phone.

## When You're Outdoors

- » Avoid walking or jogging alone, especially at night. Stay in well-traveled, well-lit areas.
- » If you do go jogging always keep at least one head phone out, to be aware of your surroundings
- » Be assertive- don't let anyone violate your personal space at anytime
- » Wear clothes and shoes that give you freedom of movement.
- » Be careful if anyone in a car asks you for directions — if you answer, keep your distance from the car.
- » Have your key ready before you reach the door — home, car or office.
- » If you think you're being followed, change direction and head for open stores, restaurants, theaters, or a house with its lights on.

## When You Go Out At Night

- » Go to social gatherings with friends, arrive together, check in with each other, and leave together; always know where you are and who is around you.
- » Never leave your drink unattended — if you do at any point, always get a new one.
- » Don't accept drinks from people you don't know or trust. If you choose to accept a drink, go with the person to the bar, watch it being poured, and carry it yourself. At parties, do not drink from the punch bowls or large common open containers.

## When You're in Your Car

- » Park in areas that will be well-lit and well-traveled when you return.
- » Always lock your car — when you get in and when you get out.
- » Look around and under your car and in the back seat before you get in.
- » If your car breaks down, lift the hood, lock the doors, and turn on your flashers. Call police on a cell phone, or use a "Call Police" banner or flares. If someone stops, roll

the window down slightly and ask the person to call the police or a tow service.

- » Don't hitchhike, ever. Don't ever pick up a hitchhiker.

## If the Unthinkable Happens

How does one handle a sexual assault? It really depends on a number of factors, such as your physical and emotional state, the situation, and the rapist's personality. Just remember, there are no hard and fast rules, no right or wrong answers. Remember — surviving is the goal.

- » Try to escape. **SCREAM.** Be rude. Make noise to discourage your attacker from following.
- » Use a whistle to alert others if you are threatened.
- » Talk, stall for time, and assess your options.
- » If the assailant has a weapon, you may have no choice but to submit. Do whatever it takes to survive.
- » If you decide to fight back, you must be quick, determined and effective. Target the eyes or groin.

## Surviving a Sexual Assault

Remember, **sexual assault is not your fault.** Do not accept blame for being an innocent victim.

- » Go to a hospital emergency room or your own doctor for medical care **IMMEDIATELY.** The Metropolitan Police Department, in conjunction with Washington Hospital Center and the DC Rape Crisis Center, has developed the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) program. What this means for a victim of a sexual assault (over the age of 17) is that you while you are waiting to be seen you will be in a private examination room, your wait will not be more than one hour, and you will be examined by someone specially trained in this area.
- » Don't go alone. Ask a friend or family member to go with you, or call a rape crisis center or school counselor. The DC Rape Crisis Center (**202-333-7273**) has a hotline staffed with caring, concerned individuals who can help.
- » Preserve all physical evidence. **DON'T** shower, bathe, change clothes, douche, or throw any clothing away until the police or counselor say it's okay.
- » Get counseling to help deal with feelings of anger, helplessness, fear, and shame caused by rape. It helps to talk to someone about the assault, whether it happened last night, last week, or years ago.
- » You have been the victim of a crime and you should call the police. The sooner you tell, the greater the chances the rapist will be caught. But if you are uncomfortable about calling the police, contact a rape crisis center.