

## Preventing Assaults

- » Assaults are basically fights — carried out with or without a weapon — at home or in a public space, between strangers, (frequently) among friends, acquaintances or loved ones.
- » The most serious assaults are known as “aggravated assaults,” “assaults with a deadly weapon,” or “assaults with intent to kill.”
- » Less serious offenses are called “simple assaults.” In many cases, simple assaults turn into more serious assaults — or even homicides — if the initial argument or fight is not scaled back or resolved quickly.

While some assaults are unavoidable, here are some tips on making sure simple arguments do not turn violent or deadly:

- » If you are involved in a heated argument that appears to be turning violent, walk away. Staying to fight — “to prove something” — only demonstrates poor judgment in almost every instance.
- » Never carry a firearm, knife or other illegal weapon. A weapon will definitely escalate the situation, and it could ultimately be used to harm innocent people or yourself.
- » Avoid excessive drinking, or if you have been drinking, recognize its impact on your judgment. Alcohol is a contributing factor in many assaults.

If you see an assault in progress — dial 9-1-1 immediately to alert the police. **DO NOT** jump into the fray — unless it is a last resort to prevent more serious injury.

## 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).

## Get More Safety Tips

For tips on other ways to stay safe from crime in your daily life, see the other brochures in this series, available from our Website at [www.mpdc.dc.gov/safety](http://www.mpdc.dc.gov/safety). Or visit your local police district. To find the one nearest you, visit [www.mpdc.dc.gov/districts](http://www.mpdc.dc.gov/districts).



Have information for police?  
**CALL (888) 919-CRIME**  
**TEXT TO 50-411**



GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
Metropolitan Police Department  
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Washington, DC 20001

January 2011

FOR YOUR SAFETY



# Guarding Against Robbery and Assault

*Tips for protecting yourself and your property  
from thieves and pickpockets*



# Know how to protect yourself on the street.

You may not ever be faced with the prospect of a mugger, but it's important to know how to act if you ever encounter such a situation.

The best way to protect yourself from a street robbery, or mugging, is to reduce your exposure to potentially being victimized — stay in groups, walk in well-lit areas, and pay attention to your surroundings. Thieves will look for “easy prey” before they try to attack someone who is prepared.

Robbery and assault are serious crimes. While money is often the motivation, these are considered crimes of violence because they involve the threat or actual use of physical violence. The basic rules of prevention are to be sensible and to be alert.

- » If possible, don't walk alone during late-night hours. Walk in groups whenever you can — there is always safety in numbers.
- » Let a family member or 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. These 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 immedi-

ately to the Metropolitan Police Department at 3-1-1. Or, if it is an emergency, dial 9-1-1.

- » Avoid carrying large sums of cash, or displaying expensive jewelry, etc. in public.
- » If you must carry large sums, divide the cash into smaller quantities and carry in multiple places on your person (wallet, purse, side pocket, etc.)

## 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.
- » 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.



## 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.
- » Self defense measures are most effective when applied as preventive steps—avoiding the crime in the first place. These measures include running away, hiding, screaming, and raising an alarm—remember, more people will respond to someone yelling, “Fire!” than they will to “Help!”

## Safety in Your Vehicle

- » The crime of “carjacking” — which is stealing a car by force — captures headlines across the country. Statistically speaking, however, your chances of being a victim of carjacking are very slim, and taking preventive measures can reduce that risk even more.
- » If the carjacker threatens you with a gun or other weapon, **GIVE UP YOUR CAR!**
- » Don't argue. Your life is definitely worth more than a car!
- » Get away from the area as quickly as possible.
- » Try to remember what the carjacker looked like — sex, race, age, hair and eye color, special features, clothes.
- » Report the crime **IMMEDIATELY** to the police!

## Automated Teller Machine 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!