

Personal Safety Guidance

Minimising the Risk



The chances of anything happening are VERY rare but this guide is designed to help keep you safe. You will also be provided with a risk assessment for all events.

Taking Responsibility

Take responsibility for your own personal safety and if a situation has too many potential hazards do not go.

Never assume it won't happen to you. Take every precaution you can think of to safeguard your safety.

Never ignore your gut feeling or instinct that something isn't right. Leave or get away as quickly as possible.

Never assume people are what they appear to be. Clothing and appearances can be deceptive.

Look confident. Hold your head up and walk tall. A confident person is much less likely to be attacked.

Always carry small change in case your mobile doesn't work and make sure it is fully charged.

Be aware at all times of your surroundings e.g. don't wear headphones as this will keep you off your guard.

Make sure you have the address and contact details of where you are travelling.

Dress Appropriately

Wear comfortable and easy to wear shoes in case you need to make a quick getaway.

Only carry essential items and do not carry lots of bags. Try to always keep one hand free.

Travelling

Walking

Avoid deviating from your route even if you are in a hurry and want to take a short cut.

In crowds keep your ears and eyes alert.

Do not accept lifts from strangers.

Walk down the middle of the road after dark (if no traffic) – otherwise keep to well-lit streets and walk facing oncoming traffic.

Avoid potentially dangerous spots and avoid underground car parks, subways or dark areas.

At night, do not use a torch unless absolutely essential e.g. rural areas with limited or no street lighting. It is better to let your eyes become accustomed to the dark. A torch could indicate your presence to a potential assailant.

If returning home or to the office consider calling someone to let them know you are walking back and what time you expect to arrive.

If you think you are being followed, trust your instincts and take action. As confidently as you can, cross the road, turning as you do, to see who is behind you. If they cross too, re-cross again and again. Keep moving and make for a busy area.

If a vehicle pulls up suddenly alongside you, turn and walk in the opposite direction – you can turn much faster than a car.

Beware of a stranger who warns you of walking alone and then offers to accompany you.

If you are attacked, use your voice: shout a positive instruction such as 'Phone the Police'. Be prepared to give up your bag or briefcase if it snatched.

Taxis

Always have the number of a reputable local taxi firm on your work mobile phone – Radio Taxis are the University approved taxi firm – 02380 666666.

Give them your name and destination and when they come to pick you up ask them who they are collecting and where they are going. If in doubt do not get in.

If travelling late at night consider using a taxi if public transport is patchy.

Always sit in the back and do not divulge personal information to the taxi driver.

Have your house keys ready before arriving home and ask the taxi driver to wait until you are inside.

Trains/Buses

Always wait in the best lit area, near people you do not feel threatened by.

It is safer to sit with other people. Sit near the driver on a bus.

Always have your ticket or money ready when travelling by public transport.

Car

Vehicles should be in good working order with adequate fuel and oil.

Carry in the car a map, a torch and if possible a mobile phone.

Always lock your car and boot when parking.

If possible avoid multi-storey car parks; don't park near columns and try to park near an exit on a well-lit floor.

When returning to your car check no one is in it, taking note of the rear seats. Have your keys ready.

If someone tries to force the doors while you are in the car, flash the lights and sound the horn.

Always reverse into your parking position so you can get away quickly.

Ensure you are a member of an automobile rescue service.

If you breakdown on a motorway it is generally safer not to stay in a vehicle. If you do, sit in the front passenger seat as this helps to create the impression that you are not alone.

When the emergency service arrives consider asking for identification.

If someone stops to offer help, do not open the doors/window. Ask them to call the emergency services.

Do not stop to pick anybody up and if another car signals they are in difficulty do not stop. Register that you have seen them and keep going until it is safe to pull over and call the police.

Drive with the doors locked and never leave valuable or attractive possessions on display.

If you think someone in a car is trying to follow or intimidate you keep driving until you reach a public place.

If a car travels alongside you at the same speed, slow down and allow them to pass. If you remain concerned drive to a Police station or other very public area and phone the Police.

If anyone in a passing car tries to get your attention avoid eye contact, however be aware that they may also be trying to point out that you have a problem.