- Avoid parking in poorly lighted and/or isolated areas. When using a parking garage, try to park in well-lighted, frequently-traveled areas or near the entrances or exits.
- Always make sure your vehicle has enough fuel and is operating properly before traveling. Plan to have emergency cash available.
- If you believe you are being followed, **do not** drive home. Go to the nearest police or fire station, or open business. If you are unable to get out of your vehicle, use the horn to get someone's attention.
- Make sure you know the route you are driving and don't deviate from it. Telephone a family member or friend and tell them when you are leaving, the route and the estimated time of arrival. Contact them upon your arrival to let them know you are safe.
- **Do not** pick up hitchhikers. Call the police when it is safe to do so. Never hitchhike yourself.
- If your vehicle breaks down, raise the hood, use the emergency flashers or flares, place a "Help - Call Police" placard in a window or tie a white cloth to the antenna or door handle. Stay in your car, lock the doors and roll the window down only enough to speak to someone who has stopped to offer assistance. Ask them to contact emergency road assistance for you and provide the telephone number if you belong to a motor club. Carry a cell phone for emergencies.

On Elevators

- Always look into the elevator before getting on. Look down both sides of the hall before getting off.
- Stand near the control panel. If you feel threatened or are attacked in the elevator, hit the emergency button and as many floor buttons as possible.
- Get off the elevator if someone suspicious enters. If you are concerned about someone who is waiting for the elevator with you, pretend you forgot something and don't get on.

If You Are Attacked

- Remain calm. Try not to panic or show any signs of anger or confusion.
- If the attacker is only after your purse, wallet, keys or other valuables, don't resist. You don't want to escalate a property crime into a violent physical confrontation. Your property can be replaced.
- Make a conscious effort to get an accurate description of the suspect, such as age, race, complexion, body build, height, weight, type and color of clothing. Remember to get a good look at the face for positive identification.
- Call the police immediately, providing your name and location. Remain until help arrives.

Bloomington, Illinois Police Department 2007

PERSONAL SAFETY

Bloomington Police Department
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(309) 434-2534
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How Do I Become "Streetwise?"

It's easy! It's really just using common sense and thinking ahead. You should develop a positive, realistic attitude and take practical actions to prevent and avoid crime. **Most criminals tend to pick easy targets.** If you take precautions, criminals will be less likely to victimize you. Don't be an easy target!

Remember Three Basic Rules

1. Trust Your Instincts

If you feel uncomfortable in any situation, leave and go to a place of safety.

2. Stay Alert

Always be aware of your surroundings -- the location, who's in front of you and behind you. Don't allow yourself to be distracted.

3. Walk With Confidence

Physically communicate the message that you are calm, collected, confident and know where you are going. When someone approaches you, sweep your gaze across them and then over their head. This projects a strong, secure self image. It also sends the message you are aware of their presence. Don't look down at your feet while walking.

When Walking or Jogging

- Stay on well-lighted, highly-traveled streets, and walk facing traffic so you can see approaching vehicles.
- Walk close to the curb, away from shrubbery, buildings and other dark places where a would-be attacker could be hidden.
- Avoid taking shortcuts through wooded areas, unfamiliar neighborhoods, parking lots or alleys.
- If you must carry a purse, hold it close to your body. Don't allow the straps to dangle, and don't wrap the straps around your neck. Carry in your purse only what you will need for this activity.
- If you carry a wallet, place it in your front pants pocket, inside a coat pocket and not in your back pants pocket.
- Don't carry or flash around a lot of cash, expensive jewelry or electronics.
- Don't allow someone to distract you, as criminals sometimes work in pairs. One may ask you for directions, fake an injury or beg for money. The other one may be out of your sight, but ready to overpower you. Always be aware of who is behind you.
- If you believe someone is following you, immediately cross the street or switch direction. Walk toward or into an open business and if provoked, scream for help.
- Don't wear clothing or shoes that will restrict your movements.

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- Keep your keys in your pocket or in your hand, not in your purse or briefcase. Have your car or house key in your hand as you approach the door.
- Always have emergency money for cab, bus or train fares or a public telephone.
- When using a public telephone, stay alert to what's happening around you.
- If you need to use an automated teller machine, try to use it during the daytime and have your card in your hand. Don't approach the machine if you're uneasy about the people nearby. Block the key board and screen with your body, to protect the personal identification number from being seen. Always be aware of your surroundings.
- Don't wear stereo headphones. You will be distracted from hearing what's around and behind you.
- Consider carrying a whistle, some type of personal alarm or approved chemical protection aerosol spray. However, know that these devices have limitations.

When Driving

- Always roll up the windows and lock the doors when leaving the vehicle. Look inside before entering the vehicle.
- Never leave valuables visible in the passenger area, even when you're in the vehicle. When leaving the vehicle, secure the items in the trunk or other concealed area.

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