

# Awareness

The effectiveness of any security program depends on the degree of cooperation and support it receives from those it is designed to protect. Gaining knowledge is an important first step. However, it is essential to follow up this knowledge with action. You can make a difference, and the best place to begin is with yourself and your immediate environment.

- [Trust Your Instincts](#)
- [A Show of Strength](#)
- [Assertiveness](#)
- [Face-to-Face](#)
- [Safe Home Game Plan](#)
- [Identity Theft](#)
- [Terrorism Awareness](#)

## Trust Your Instincts

Trusting your instincts--that "gut" feeling that something is wrong--can be one of the most effective weapons you have to prevent a crime.

Don't be concerned about feeling foolish--or being rude. It is far better to feel foolish than to be hurt, and far better to offend than risk being placed in jeopardy. If you are alert and recognize the warning signals, you will be better prepared to act appropriately--whether the situation calls for getting away, surrounding help, or assertive confrontation. Trust your instincts, evaluate the situation, and take extra precautions. It is often in your power to avoid becoming a victim.

## A Show of Strength

It is important to emphasize that nothing you do gives an assailant the right to hurt you--it is not your fault if you are attacked. Since many assailants choose victims who will be most vulnerable to an attack, it is critical that you appear confident, capable and in control.

Body language--your walk, the way you stand, the manner in which you sit--tells much about you. If you look tired, timid or lost, you may be unwittingly setting yourself up as a target for attack. Be conscious of your body language and work on a strong, self-confident, and outward appearance.

- **Eye Contact:** Make eye contact with people you meet. It is a powerful way of saying "I am in control of myself and my environment, I belong here." It can also say "I see you and I'm not afraid of you."
- **Personal Space:** You have the right to decide who will touch you and when. If someone is too close to you and making you feel uncomfortable or touching you in a way you don't like, you have the right to move away and tell them to stop - no matter who they are.
- **Clothing:** We know about dressing for success but it is also important to dress for personal safety. Clogs or extremely high-heeled shoes as well as tight, restricting garments can impede an escape. Select shoe, shirts, and pants that allow you to run or strike back.
- **Immediate Action:** If you feel threatened or scared, or if you think you might be in danger, don't pretend that danger will go away if you ignore it. Your chances of handling a threatening situation are much better if you act immediately.
- **Environmental Awareness:** Notice your environment. Where could you go for help? Where are the exits located? Who is available to assist you? Be aware of the people around you. Who is in front of you? In back? Use peripheral vision to notice what is happening all around you.

## Assertiveness

Assertiveness is behavior which enables a person to act in their own best interests. An assertive verbal response to a threatening situation should contradict or disagree. Be concise, keep your voice under control and at a medium volume, and your facial expressions calm and controlled.

It is important to be able to say an unconditional "No" without feeling guilty. It is your right to refuse a request--no matter how reasonable it may seem. You are not being rude or over-reacting when you say "no." Instead you are being cautious and safety smart.

Make a scene. Use your voice if you feel trouble. Many of us are embarrassed or afraid to make a scene, but if you are assaulted, make noise. Get bystanders involved by giving them specific directions about how they can help you.

## Face-to-Face

When despite your precautions, trouble cannot be avoided, you will respond more effectively if you consider all your options and determine the best solution for the particular situation. Whether you cooperate, resist, fight back or run should depend on several considerations:

**Your strength and experience in self-defense:** Have you practiced self-defense often enough to feel confident about its use? How fast can you run?

**Your assessment of the assailant:** What does he or she want from you? What is his/her mental state - angry, nervous, high on drugs? Is a weapon involved? Is the attacker acting alone or as part of a group? If the attacker is carrying a weapon, do not fight unless absolutely necessary.

There are circumstances when it is impossible to resist and there is little to do until after the attack. Unfortunately, no strategy can guarantee your safety and each involves a certain amount of risk, but exercising good judgment, developing a plan of action, and following through with commitment are your best insurance.

## Safe Home Game Plan

For a small investment of time and money, you can greatly reduce your chances of being a victim. A home that looks lived-in, well lighted shrubs trimmed away from doors and windows, a car in the drive, and a clean yard all deter burglars. So do watchful neighbors who will call the police when they spot something suspicious. Good locks discourage thieves, and an alarm system not only deters burglars, but tells you and the police if someone succeeds, in breaking into your home.

### Check Your Locks

Door and window locks in most homes today might keep out someone who just rattles the knob, but won't stop a determined burglar. Many people don't even use the locks they have. In over 40% of all residential burglaries, the thieves just walked in through an unlocked door or crawled in an unlocked window.

Every exterior door should have a dead bolt lock with a one inch throw. If you have a key-in-the-knob lock, install an auxiliary lock, a vertical bolt, cylinder dead-bolt, or horizontal bolt model.

If you've just moved into a new house or apartment, consider re-keying the locks. You never know who may have keys. Don't hide the keys to your locks in mailboxes, planter, or under door-mats. Give a duplicate key to a trusted neighbor instead.

Ask your local police or sheriff's department for a free home security survey.

### Check Your Doors

Locks lose their effectiveness if they are installed in cheap, flimsy doors. Make sure outside doors, including the one between your house and the garage, are solid, 1 3/4 inch metal or hard wood.

Doors should fit tightly in their frames and hinges should be on the inside.

Install a peephole or wide-angle viewer in all entry doors so you can see who is outside without opening the door.

# Identity Theft

Identity theft is the unlawful use of another person's personal information, such as name and date of birth, credit card numbers, Social Security number, or driver's license information, for the purpose of committing fraud or some other form of deception. It is one of the fastest growing forms of criminal conduct in the United States.

Although the unauthorized use of another person's identity is in itself a crime under federal and Massachusetts law, it is almost always a means of committing other crimes, such as bank fraud, check fraud, credit card fraud, internet fraud, the fraudulent obtaining of loans, utilities, or medical treatment, or the avoidance of criminal prosecution.

The first step in the compromising of a person's identity may be the theft of trash, the skimming of a credit card, the obtaining of information via the internet, or some other technique that may not even be detected by the victim. In other cases, the theft of an identity may begin with the theft of a wallet or purse, or the interception of mail. Early detection of identity theft can minimize the amount of financial loss and the extent of damage done to the victim's credit.

[Visit the FTC website for more info.](#)

# Terrorism Awareness

The "If You See Something, Say Something™" campaign was originally implemented by the New York City's Metropolitan Transportation Authority and now licensed to DHS for a nationwide campaign. It is a simple and effective program to engage the public to identify and report indicators of terrorism, crime and other threats to law enforcement authorities.

Certain activities, especially those at or near sensitive facilities including government, military or other high profile sites or places where large numbers of people congregate, may indicate terrorist planning phases. Suspicious activities of interest that should be reported to law enforcement are commonly referred to as the 7 Signs of Terrorism.

1. Surveillance: Recording or monitoring activities. May include drawing diagrams, note taking, use of cameras, binoculars or other vision-enhancing devices or possessing floor plans or blueprints of key facilities.
2. Elicitation: Attempts to obtain operation, security and personnel-related information regarding a key facility. May be made by mail, fax, e-mail, telephone or in person.
3. Tests of Security: Attempts to measure reaction times to security breaches or to penetrate physical security barriers or procedures in order to assess strengths and weaknesses.
4. Acquiring Supplies: Attempts to improperly acquire items that could be used in a terrorist act. May include the acquisition of explosives, weapons, harmful chemicals, flight manuals, law enforcement or military equipment, uniforms, identification badges or the equipment to manufacture false identification.
5. Suspicious Persons: Someone who does not appear to belong in a workplace, neighborhood or business establishment due to their behavior, including unusual questions or statements they make.

6. Dry Runs/Trial Runs: Behavior that appears to be preparation for a terrorist act without actually committing the act. Activity could include mapping out routes and determining the timing of traffic lights and flow.

7. Deploying Assets: Placing people, equipment and supplies into position to commit the act. This is the last opportunity to alert authorities before the terrorist act occurs.

**Report any threats to the WPI Police: 508-831-5433.** Visit the [United States Department of Homeland Security](#) for more information.