

# Safety in the U.S.

Life in the U.S., especially in urban areas, is often perceived by people outside the U.S. as dangerous. The international media plays a large role in generating such a perception by reporting violent incidents, which actually occur very infrequently. While you should not live in fear during your time in the U.S. and in Boston, **you should remain vigilant and aware of your surroundings as well as available emergency services and protocol** (this is the most important thing to remember).

Below are some safety tips that are good to think about during your stay. The following advice is applicable for travelers and residents of all urban areas across the globe (this list is not exhaustive, but we have tried to highlight what we see as the most important things to remember):

- Familiarize yourself with your neighborhood and campus during the daylight hours.
- Ask fellow students, friends, staff and faculty about areas in the city and on-campus you should avoid, especially at night.
- Make sure you know the numbers to call in case of an emergency—on-campus as well as off-campus. “911” is the general emergency number in the U.S. Wellesley's Campus Police has two numbers: 781-239-5555 for emergencies and 781-283-2121 for non-emergencies.
- Do not walk alone at night. In the U.S., we say, “there’s safety in numbers,” so walk with at least one other person.
- Locate the police station that serves your neighborhood (and the Campus Police office on campus).
- Identify the hospital emergency room nearest to your home and know what to do in case of an accident.
- When using public transportation and when you are in the city remain aware of yourself and your belongings, to avoid being the “target” of a pickpocket. Do not leave any of your bags unattended or display any objects of value.
- Do not be afraid to report anything suspicious or out of the ordinary, or any crime or emergency that you witness or experience.

## Safety on Campus

The Wellesley community, including staff, faculty, and students, work together to try to ensure that Wellesley College is a safe place to live and study. As a Wellesley student, you should never hesitate to make use of the safety resources available to you, including Campus Police and the Dean of Students Office.

The Wellesley College Campus Police provides law enforcement, security and emergency services for all property owned by the College 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You can visit or contact this office at 781-239-2121. There are a number of well-marked emergency phones around campus that can be used to report a criminal incident, a fire, or any other type of emergency, or to request an escort from Campus Police. Campus Police dispatch is staffed 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The Campus Police staff can also assist you in reporting off-campus incidents to local police departments.

In addition to Campus Police staff and officers, members of the Residential Life staff, including 9 professional staff members, live on-campus. You should feel free to discuss community concerns and issues of security and safety with these staff members, who may then relay the information to Campus Police when appropriate.

The most common crime on-campus is theft of property left unattended or in an unlocked room or car. More serious crimes, such as drug dealing, assault, or rape, can also occur. Again, without constantly feeling afraid, it is important to exercise caution on-campus, with your belongings as well as yourself. Do not leave your belongings unattended and keep your dorm room locked whenever you are away. Make sure you lock up your bike if you have one. Do not hesitate to contact the Campus Police for an escort if you need to walk across campus alone at night.

For more information about safety on-campus, please visit <http://www.wellesley.edu/Police/>.

# Emergency Numbers and Dialing "911"

If you are ever in an emergency situation, dial 911 from any telephone. The call is always free, even from a payphone. A 911 call should be made with discretion. It is appropriate to call 911 when a crime is in progress, when someone is seriously injured, or when there is a situation involving death or near death. You should not use "911" for reporting a crime after the fact, such as an apartment or car break-in.

## Emergency numbers

### On-campus

Office of Public Safety      781-239-5555

*\*\*dial 5555 from any campus phone*

### Off-campus (general)

Police      911

Ambulance      911

Fire      911

*\*\*Calling 911 is always free*

### Near campus

Wellesley Police Dept.      781-235-1212

Needham Police Dept.      781-455-7570

## Personal Safety While Walking

- Stick to well-lighted, well traveled streets. Avoid short cuts through wooded areas, parking lots, and alleys.
- Don't flash large amounts of cash or other tempting targets like expensive jewelry or clothing.
- Carry a purse or bag close to your body, not dangling by the straps. Put a wallet in an inside coat or front pant pockets, not a back pocket.
- Send the message that you are calm, confident, and know where you are going.
- Don't wear shoes or clothing that restricts your movements.
- Have your car or house key in hand before you reach the door.
- If you think someone is following you, switch directions or cross the street. Walk to an open store, restaurant or anyplace else with groups of people. If you are afraid, yell for help.
- Trust your instincts. If something or someone makes you uneasy, get away from that situation as quickly as possible any way you can.

## Safety Using the ATM

- Try to use the automated teller machine (ATM) during the daytime. Have your card in hand and don't approach the machine if you are uneasy about people nearby.
- Always watch for suspicious persons or activity around the ATM. If you notice anything strange, leave and find another machine. If you feel uneasy during your transaction, cancel it and leave.

- If you do use ATM after dark—don't go alone. Park close by and lock your car. If the lights are out, leave and find another machine; report the situation to the bank.
- Stand close to the machine so that no one else can see your access codes.
- Take all of your transaction receipts with you. Don't throw them away at the ATM.
- Never accept help from strangers at the ATM. Ask the bank for assistance later.
- If you use a drive-up ATM, keep your vehicle doors locked and other windows up.
- Memorize your ATM access code. Don't write it down or carry it with you.
- Don't use an access code that's the same as other words or numbers in your wallet.
- Never tell your access code to anyone.
- Never lend your ATM card to anyone. Treat it like cash or a credit card.
- If you lose your ATM card, notify your bank or credit union immediately.

## Safety in Taxis

- Always order a licensed taxi so that the driver can be traced.
- Always be sure that the taxi is marked with the company name and telephone number and make mental note of the company's name.
- Always check the identification of the driver (usually located near the visor) and ensure that it matches the driver.
- Remember "safety in numbers"; travel with friends.

## Safety in Motor Vehicles

- Always approach your vehicle with keys ready.
- Keep your car in good running condition. Check the gas gauge before you leave to make sure you have more than enough fuel to get where you are going and back.
- Windows should be up and doors locked when driving.
- Always roll up the windows and lock the car doors when you park the car, even if you are coming right back.
- Always check your car's interior and exterior before you get in and drive away. Avoid parking in isolated areas. Be especially alert in parking lots and parking garages. Attackers have been known to lie in wait for such an opportunity.
- Never pull your car over on a quiet road even if someone drives alongside your car pointing at the tires, etc. Always continue driving to a well-lit and crowded area before exiting your car. The problem might be a bluff and the other driver may want you to stop at the side of the road to "help" you without a reason.
- If you think someone is following you, don't go home. Drive to the nearest police or fire station. If you can't find either of these, drive to a gas station or other open business, and ask for help.
- Never pick up hitchhikers – strangers on the side of the road who ask for rides.

## What To Do if a Police Officer Stops Your Car

- When you see the flashing lights behind you, stop your car on the side of the road as soon as it is safe.
- **Do not get out of your car.** Wait for the officer to come to your car. Then lower the window.
- The police officer will ask to see your driver's license and your automobile registration.
- Let the officer tell you why you were stopped.
- Cooperate and be courteous.
- Do not try to pay your fine in cash to the police officer. If the officer misunderstands you, they may think you are trying to bribe him. Pay all fines by mail or to the clerk of a court.

## Alcohol and Other Illegal/Controlled Substances

The legal drinking age in the United States is 21. It is important to be aware that, although alcohol consumption might be more common in your country and it might be legal for you to

drink alcoholic beverages at home, police (both on and off-campus) are *very* strict about enforcing U.S. drinking laws. If you are over 21, it is also illegal to provide alcohol to minors (those under 21).

Wellesley College must also comply with state and federal laws regarding the use of nonprescription drugs. The use, possession, sale, or distribution of drugs or drug paraphernalia is strictly prohibited and could result in removal from housing, separation from the College, other sanctions as deemed appropriate, and referral for criminal prosecution.

For more on Wellesley's drug and alcohol policies, refer to the Student Handbook on Campus Life Policies:

<http://www.wellesley.edu/DeanStudent/Handbook/cl.html><http://www.wellesley.edu/DeanStudent/alcoholpolicy.html>.