

a guide to personal safety

STREET LIFE



a partnership between the CST and Maccabi GB



BEFORE YOU GO ANYWHERE

ASK YOURSELF

- Where am I going?
- How am I going to get there?
- How am I getting back?
- Am I prepared in case my plans change?
- Does someone know where I am?





There are lots of stories in the papers and on television about people going missing, being attacked or being mugged. This can sometimes leave us feeling at risk, uneasy and even frightened. However, these stories do not make up the full picture.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

- **Violent crimes get loads of media coverage but they are quite rare.**
- **Violent crimes involving strangers are even less common.**
- **There are lots of things you can do to prevent yourself becoming a victim.**

Stay in Control

Being safe is about being in control. This means thinking about what you are doing and trusting your instincts.

Prepare
Look confident

Avoid risk

Never assume it won't happen to you

- Always tell someone where you are going and when you expect to return.
- Don't keep all your valuables in one place. Carry your keys, phone and some money for the journey home in your pockets.
- Watch out for pickpockets. Keep your valuables secure and out of sight.
- If you are going to drink, know your limit. Be aware that both alcohol and drugs stop you being in control.
- Trust your instincts – they are there to warn you of danger.
- It is not weak to walk away from trouble.



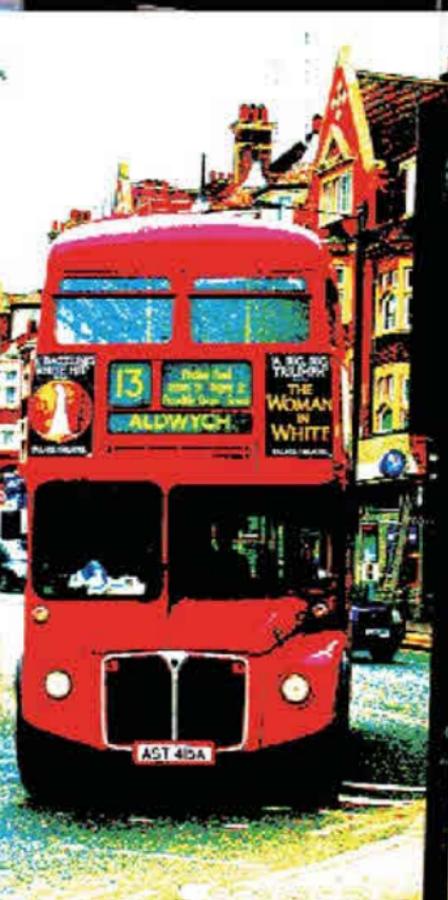
Travelling on Foot or Bicycle

If you're walking or cycling, especially when it's dark, stay safe.

- Look confident and pay attention to what's going on around you.
- Try not to walk alone. Stay with a friend or group of friends.
- Plan your route in advance. Keep to well-lit busy roads wherever possible and avoid alleyways and subways.
- Walk facing oncoming traffic to avoid kerb crawlers.
- Avoid passing parked cars with their engines running and people sitting in them.
- Never accept a lift from a stranger, or someone you don't trust.
- If a vehicle pulls up next to you, turn and walk in the opposite direction – you can turn faster than a car.
- Remember if you are chatting on your phone or listening to a personal stereo you might not hear people coming up behind you.



Buses & Trains



Public transport is usually very safe, but there are things you should always remember

- When waiting for a bus or train always stand in a well-lit area.
- If you are travelling alone, try to arrange for someone to meet you when you arrive at your destination.
- Sit near the driver or guard, or in a busy carriage.
- If you feel uncomfortable, don't be too embarrassed to get up and move away. It isn't stupid to do something that makes you feel safer.
- Look to see where the nearest alarm is.

Taxis

Only black cabs can be hailed in the street. Never get into a car cruising the streets – they are illegal and can be dangerous.

- Always use a registered taxi or minicab – carry the number of a trusted company.
- Always book in advance rather than hail from the street.
- Confirm the driver's details when they arrive – is it the taxi or minicab you ordered?
- Try to share a taxi or minicab with a friend.
- Sit in the back if you are on your own.

Driving

- Know where you are going and how to get there, make sure you have a map.
- Always check there is enough petrol in your car.
- Park in a well-lit area.
- Keep valuables out of sight.
- Always lock your car, even if you only leave it briefly.
- Avoid eye contact with other drivers at traffic lights or junctions.
- If you feel threatened when driving, keep calm. Make sure your doors are locked and your windows are closed. Drive to a busy place and use a mobile phone to call the Police. Sound your horn to attract attention.



Internet

The Internet is a good place to find information about loads of stuff. However, any information you put on the Internet about yourself can be seen and read by other people.

- Don't give out personal information, eg. your full name, address or telephone number.
- Be careful when posting a profile in a chat room.
- Be aware that online friends might not be who they say they are.
- If you do want to meet people you have talked to over the internet, make sure you let other people know what you are planning to do.

Mobile Phones

- Always ask yourself, 'Is it safe to answer my phone right now?' Remember you can switch off your ring tone, use the vibrate alert and check your messages later.
- Be aware that when talking on your phone you might not hear trouble coming.
- Keep your mobile separate from your purse, bag or wallet.
- Be careful that you are not overheard giving personal information such as your address or details of your plans.



Groups & Aggression

Being part of a group can make you feel safer and more confident but remember

- Don't let your friends pressure you into stupid or offensive behaviour.
- If you see another group or gang and think there might be trouble, then avoid a confrontation.
- Keep calm and don't let yourself be provoked.
- If you respond aggressively you might end up in a situation you cannot handle.

Going out with Friends

Going out with friends often means staying out late but with planning, this needn't be a problem.

- Stay as a group. Don't split up, or leave someone to get home alone.
- Organise transport home before you leave. If your plans change, work out a new way to get home safely.
- Put money aside for the journey home – don't spend it on something else.
- If you have to use a cash machine get a friend to stand beside you. Be aware of people around you. Remember you can always cancel the transaction.
- If you know you will be home later than you planned, let someone know.

When you're out take care

- Always watch your drink (alcoholic or non-alcoholic) while it is being poured.
- Never accept a drink from a stranger, if you haven't seen it being poured.
- Keep a close watch on your drink. If you have to leave it, then ask a trusted friend to make sure nothing is added to it.
- If you feel pressured into drinking more than you want, taking drugs or having sex – stop and think. What are you comfortable with? Will you be putting your personal safety at risk? Don't be afraid to say, **'No.'**

Remember that alcohol and drugs alter your perceptions and you may not be as in control as you feel.

Take Action

If you feel you are in danger, there are simple steps you can take.

- Move away from the situation towards a public place as quickly as possible, eg. a shop, garage or cafe.
- Make as much noise as you can, your voice can be your best defence. Shout a specific instruction like 'Call the police'.
- Consider carrying a personal shriek alarm. Know how to use it to shock and disorientate your attacker, giving you time to get away.
- Try not to panic. Remember, if you stay in control, you are more likely to stay safe.
- Don't try to fight or be a hero. Hand over your wallet or bag if threatened.
- Call 999 (it's free) and ask for the police. Give them the information they ask for and stay on the line.



The **SUZY LAMPLUGH** Trust
The Leading Authority on Personal Safety

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STREET WISE



Streetwise offers a range of projects, courses and workshops around personal safety and personal development. For more information please contact us.

t 020 8457 2331

w www.streetwisegb.org

e info@streetwisegb.org



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