

# Personal Security

Safe City Factsheet Series Issue 4: Personal Security

By international standards Sydney is a safe city and you can play an important role in maintaining the safety of yourself and your property.



Justice & Attorney General



For emergency assistance:  
Dial 000 from mobile phones, even if locked

## Five Fast Facts

1. Personal crimes include; assault, sexual assault, threats, robbery, theft and rape.\*
2. Personal crime offenders target people that they perceive as being vulnerable or fearful.\*
3. Most offenders hope to avoid confrontation and being caught.
4. You can dial “000” for emergencies even if your mobile phone is locked.
5. Males aged 15-24 years are the most common victims of assault, though the likelihood is still relatively low. \*\*

\* Australian Institute of Criminology, 2005  
\*\* Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2004

## Tips for personal security

1. **Avoid walking alone at night**  
Try to walk with other people at night. If alone, walk in well-lit areas or catch a taxi even if you’re only going a short distance.
2. **Protect your bag or briefcase**  
Carry your bag or briefcase securely on the side furthest from the road to reduce the risk of bag snatching. Make sure your bag is zipped up and not easily accessible.
3. **Be cautious when using ATMs**  
Be alert when withdrawing cash and don’t count money in view of other people. Be cautious when using ATMs in isolated areas or dark locations.
4. **Be aware of your surroundings**  
Be alert and aware of what’s going on around you. Wearing headphones, or texting/talking on your mobile can reduce your alertness and can make you more vulnerable to personal crime.
5. **Be confident and assertive**  
Walking with confidence, using strong body language and making eye contact with others will reduce your risk of being targeted.
6. **Isolated areas are a risk**  
Try to keep to populated areas with lots of activity whether you’re exercising, or just out and about, especially at night.
7. **Don’t carry large amounts of cash**  
Never carry more cash than you need.
8. **Keep your purse or wallet secure**  
Always keep your purse or wallet in a secure place close to your body, such as in a money belt or an inaccessible pocket.
9. **Alcohol consumption can be a risk**  
Excessive alcohol consumption may result in increased risk of danger. When leaving premises be careful on the footpath and roads and watch out for each other.
10. **Carry your mobile phone or phone card with you**  
When you’re out and about, even if jogging or exercising, always carry your mobile phone or a phone card with you in case of an incident. Make sure you list key contact numbers under “ICE Numbers” (In Case of an Emergency) on your phone or phone card.

For more information visit [www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/community/safety](http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/community/safety)

## Vary your routine

Taking precautions when you're out and about will reduce your risk of being a target for personal crime.

- ✓ **Walk in groups**  
If you're going out alone tell someone where you are going.
- ✓ **Carry a personal alarm**  
Consider carrying a personal safety alarm in case of an incident.
- ✓ **Develop a personal safety plan**  
Plan what to do in different situations where your safety might be threatened.
- ✓ **Never accept lifts**  
Never accept a lift from somebody you don't know.
- ✓ **Don't use shortcuts or back lanes**  
Even though it can be tempting to save time, avoid isolated short-cuts especially at night time.
- ✓ **Vary your route for regular activity**  
For routine activities such as exercise or walking to and from work, school or university, try to vary your route.

## Take action in a crisis

- ✓ **Secure your bag or briefcase**  
At cafes, pubs or theatres, don't put your bag on the floor, or hang it over your chair. Keep it in front of you or on your lap.
- ✓ **Don't leave valuables unattended**  
Don't leave your valuables in an unattended trolley when grocery shopping or at a table when ordering food or drinks.



- ✓ **Carry valuables securely**  
Keep valuables that you carry with you to a minimum and avoid carrying them all in one place. For example: Don't keep your mobile, wallet, ID, iPod or camera all in your bag or briefcase.

The City of Sydney Council, the Department of Justice and Attorney General and the NSW Police Force provide this information as general advice only. Readers should exercise their own skill and care in use of the information.

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## Dealing with confrontation

Committing to your personal safety when you're threatened is essential.

- ✓ **Trust your instincts**  
Trust your instincts when deciding the best way to respond to a threat – whether it's to scream, run away, physically defend yourself or negotiate with your attacker. Try and assess the motives of the offender when determining your strategy.
- ✓ **Attract attention**  
Attract attention if possible - offenders don't want to be caught in the act. Scream for assistance, call "Help".
- ✓ **Don't put up a fight for your belongings**  
Your safety is more important than your belongings. If an offender wants your bag, wallet or money, hand them over.
- ✓ **Remove yourself from the threat**  
If possible, run away or use reasonable force to remove yourself from danger.
- ✓ **Don't give up**  
If one strategy doesn't work, keep trying different ones. This sends the message to an offender that you are not vulnerable or an easy target.
- ✓ **Being followed**  
If you think you're being followed, go to the nearest police station or occupied place.
- ✓ **Call for help**  
If nobody else is around, try to call for help on your mobile or public telephone.
- ✓ **Ignore verbal harassment**  
In cases involving verbal harassment, ignore it and move on. If you're alone, head straight to the nearest police station or occupied area.

## Help and assist

Assisting others in need is essential.

- ✓ **Respond to calls for assistance**  
Responding to a call for help is essential. Don't just assume someone else will help. Giving assistance may prevent an assault or violent crime and/or suspicious activity, but make sure you don't put yourself at risk by doing so.
- ✓ **Call the Police**  
Always call 000 for police assistance in case of an emergency.
- ✓ **Report crime**  
All personal crime should be reported directly to your local police station. Suspicious activity can also be reported directly to your local police station.