

Personal Safety

For Farm Workers, Supervisors and Crew Chiefs

The most serious obstacle to personal safety is the mindset of many people:

Complacency "It can't happen to me"

Or

Fatalism "if it's going to happen, it's going to happen"

A criminal attack against you or your family can take place at any time or place just as can a fire or other disaster. However, you can influence what happens to you by assuming more responsibility for your own security.

Residential security

All entrances, including service doors and gates, should have quality locks--preferably deadbolt. Check your:

- Front Door
- Rear Door
- Garage Door(s)
- Service Door(s)
- Patio Door
- Sliding Glass Door
- Gate
- Swimming Pool Gate
- Guest House Door(s).

Don't leave keys "hidden" outside the home. Leave an extra key with a trusted neighbor or colleague.

Keep doors locked even when you or family members are at home.

Have window locks installed on all windows. Use them.

Lock louvered windows--especially on the ground floor.

Have locks installed on your fuse boxes and external power sources.

- If you have window grilles and bars, review fire safety. Don't block bedroom windows with permanent grilles if the windows may be used for emergency egress.

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- If you have burglar or intrusion alarms, check and use them.
- Keep at least one fire extinguisher on each floor, and be sure to keep one in the kitchen. Show family members and household help how to use them.
- Periodically check smoke detectors and replace batteries when necessary.
- Keep flashlights in several areas in the house. Check the batteries often, especially if you have children in your home. (They love to play with flashlights!)
- A family dog can be a deterrent to criminals. But remember, even the best watch-dog can be controlled by food or poison. Do not install separate "doggy doors" or entrances. They also can admit small intruders.
- Choose a location that offers the most security. The less remote, the safer your home will be, particularly in a neighborhood close to police and fire protection.
- Know your neighbors. Develop a rapport with them and offer to keep an eye on each other's homes, especially during trips.
- If you observe any unusual activity, report it immediately to your RSO.
- Establish safe family living patterns. If you understand the importance of your contribution to the family's overall security, the entire household will be safer.
- While at home, you and your family should rehearse safety drills and be aware of procedures to escape danger and get help.
- Educate family members and domestic help in the proper way to answer the telephone at home.
- Vary daily routines; avoid predictable patterns.
- Know where all family members are at all times.
- Use these same guidelines while on leave or in travel status.

Personal Security to and from work

- Leave contact numbers with appropriate Family.

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- Sit near other people or near aisles or doors. Learn the location of emergency alarms and exits.
- Stay awake and alert when using public transportation.
- Consider purchasing special clothing or accessories to hide your passport, money, or credit cards. Keep the majority of your funds in travelers checks and hidden; carry some in your wallet or handbag. Use a money clip. If you are robbed, you may lose the money in the clip but will retain important credit cards and documents.
- Keep valuables out of sight and luggage close at hand. If carrying a handbag, keep it in front of you, closed, with the fastening toward your body. Keep a wallet in your front pants pocket.
- Let go if your bag is snatched.
- Don't wear excess jewelry. Reduce wallet and purse contents, particularly cards denoting affiliations, memberships, accounts, etc.
- In any crowded situation, be aware of any crowding or jostling, even if it appears innocent. This is often a ploy by pickpockets to distract you.
- Be very careful any time you use a telephone calling card. Fraudulent uses of these cards are on the rise. Look for people observing your card or your fingers as you dial your code. Avoid being heard giving the number to local telephone operators

Security Do's for Children

- Teach children never to admit strangers into the home.
- Teach children local emergency phone numbers, the mission number, and how to use the two-way radio. Make sure younger children know their name, address, and phone number.
- Caution teenagers about "blind dates" or meeting anyone they do not know.
- Teach younger members of your family not to open mail or packages.
- Teach young children how to answer the telephone so that they do not give out personal information, such as home address, absence of adults, etc.
- Teach children how to say no to strangers.

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- Teach children how to exit the house in case of emergency.

Carjacking

- When in your car, always keep the doors locked. Any time you drive through areas containing stoplights, stop signs, or anything that significantly reduces vehicular speed, keep your windows up.
- Leave ample maneuvering space between your vehicle and the one in front of you. If you are approached by suspicious persons while you are stopped, do not roll down windows; drive away quickly.
- If you are being followed or harassed by another driver, try to find the nearest police station, hotel, or other public facility. Once you find a place of safety, don't worry about using a legal parking space. Park as close as you can, and get inside fast.
- If another driver tries to force you to pull over or to cut you off, keep driving and try to get away. Try to note the license plate number of the car and a description of the car and driver. If this effort places you in danger, don't do it. The information is not as important as your safety.
- If you are being followed, never lead the person back to your home or stop and get out. Drive to the nearest police station, public facility, or U.S. mission. (You could verify surveillance by going completely around an arbitrarily chosen block.) Always report these incidents to the RSO or PSO.
- If you are traveling alone and a car "bumps" into you, don't stop to exchange accident information. Go to the nearest service station or other public place to call the police. (Check with your RSO or PSO to see if this advice is appropriate for your post.)
- Never, ever pick up hitchhikers!
- When you park, look for a spot that offers good lighting and is close to a location where there are a lot of people. Lock valuables in the trunk, and lock all doors.

Shopping

- Extra precautions are necessary when shopping. If you take packages out to lock them in your trunk, then plan to return to the stores to do more shopping, it may be a good idea to move your car to another section of the parking lot or street. The criminal knows that you will be coming back and can wait to ambush you. By moving your car, you give the

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impression you're leaving. If you think you are being followed, do not go back to your car. Return to the safety of the occupied shopping area or office building and contact the authorities.

Car Trouble

- If you have car trouble on the road, raise your hood. If you have a radio antenna, place a handkerchief or other flag there. When people stop to help, don't get out of the car unless you know them or it's the police. Ask the "good samaritan" to stop at the nearest service station and report your problem.
- If you are in a parking lot or parked on the street and have trouble, be wary of personal assistance from strangers. Go to the nearest telephone and call a repair service or friend for assistance. If you feel threatened by the presence of nearby strangers, lock yourself in your car and blow the horn to attract attention of others

If you suspect you are being followed

- **If you suspect that you are being followed**, drive to the nearest police station, fire station, or the U.S. mission. Note the license numbers, color and make of the vehicle, and any information printed on its sides that may be useful in tracing the vehicle or its occupants.
- Don't wait to verify surveillance before you report it.
- Be alert to people disguised as public utility crews, road workers, vendors, etc., who might station themselves near your home or office.
- Whenever possible, leave your car in a secured parking area. Be especially alert in underground parking areas.
- Always check your vehicle inside and out before entering it. If you notice anything unusual, do not enter the vehicle.

Sexual Assault Prevention

- Be alert. Don't assume that you are always safe. Think about your safety everywhere. Your best protection is avoiding dangerous situations.
- Trust your instincts. If you feel uncomfortable in any situation, leave.
- Always walk, drive, and park your car in well-lit areas.
- Walk confidently at a steady pace on the side of the street facing traffic.
- Walk close to the curb. Avoid doorways, bushes, and alleys.
- Wear clothes and shoes that allow freedom of movement.
- Walk to your car with keys in your hand.

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- If you have car trouble, raise the hood and stay inside your car. If a stranger wants to help, have him or her call for help. Don't leave your car.
- Keep your car doors locked and never pick up hitchhikers.
- Make sure all windows and doors in your home are locked, especially if you are home alone.
- Never give the impression that you are home alone if strangers telephone or come to the door.
- If a stranger asks to use your phone, have him wait outside while you make the call.
- If you come home and find a door or window open or signs of forced entry, don't go in. call the local law enforcement authorities.

Materials adapted for this document from:

U.S. Department of State and the Bureau of Diplomatic Security

<http://www.state.gov/m/ds/rls/rpt/19773.htm#>

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