

Personal Safety and Awareness

Sandy Springs Police Department

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Introduction:

Violent crimes in America is a growing epidemic that can reach any individual regardless of location or statics. The American public is all too familiar with the violence that is increasingly plaguing our communities and families. The idea that it will not happen to me is slowly evaporating from our mindset. Being prepared both physically and mentally will greatly increase ones survivability rate.

Facts to be aware of:

1. Atlanta has a crime rate greater than the national average.
2. Crime rate has risen in the past few years on a national level
3. Violent crime is on the rise
4. Home invasion and personal assaults also show an increase on the national level

STATISTICS

- One rape or sexual assault occurs every two minutes
- One violent crime occurs every five seconds in the United States
- In the year 2000, 2.8 % of college women experienced rape in a six month period (U.S. Department of Justice study).
- 17% of rape or sexual assault victims were victimized by someone they knew

Statistics from: *National Center for Victims of Crime, 2003*

Instincts and Awareness

- Be aware of your surroundings at all times
- Trust your instincts or “gut feelings”
- Look around for people who don’t belong or seem to be predators
- Same face or car in two places may mean you are being followed
- Stay Alert to Stay Alive!

Mental Mindset

- Have a plan.....”Failing to plan is planning to fail”
- Da-Nile is not just a river in Egypt...lose the “It wont happen to me”...it could be you next
- Ask yourself right now, “Do I deserve to be a winner?”

Mental Mindset

- Choose to not become a victim, be a hard target not an easy statistic
- It is your constitutional right to defend your life or the life of another
- “Anyone can learn to fight. Its hard to teach character, desire and toughness.”
George T. Williams

Mental Mindset – AAA

- Awareness – (Stay Alert at all times)
- Accept – never deny you can be a victim
- Act – knowing is not enough you must decide to follow through with your plan and never give up

Home Safety Tips



- Never indicate to anyone times you may be home alone
- Make sure doors and windows are locked
- Close curtains or shades at night and even during the day if you are alone
- Cut back shrubs around windows and doors

Home Safety Tips



- Use peepholes or windows to identify people before opening the door
- Never let strangers inside for any reason especially to use the phone
- Screen phone calls to your home and try to have a male voice on your recorder that sounds like Chuck Norris

Home Safety Tips



- Always have your keys ready for quick entry into your home
- Have a remote panic button installed for your house keys for your home alarm
- Never enter your home with signs of forced entry. Leave and call 911
- Do not discard the boxes of your expensive purchases at home

Home Safety Tips



- Have a plan that includes escape routes and meeting places (rally points)
- If you have the financial means you may want to invest in a “Safe Room”
- Use a timer that will turn various lights and tv or radio units on (talk radio or news)

Vehicle Safety Tips



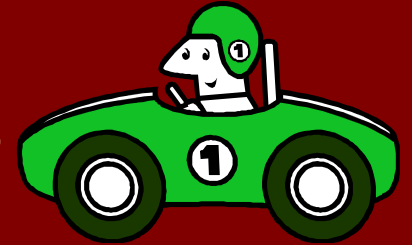
- Have your keys ready and don't "chirp" the alarm until you have located your car
- Look around and inside your vehicle before you get in
- Park only in well lit and high traffic areas
- Avoid desolate "back roads" and short cuts
- Never, ever, ever pick up hitch hikers.

Vehicle Safety Tips



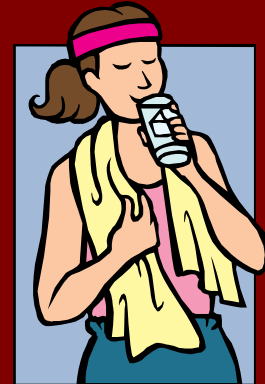
- Keep your car in good repair and always have enough fuel (never below ¼ tank)
- If your car breaks down remain in your vehicle and call 911 if in a remote or dangerous area
- Be aware of people following you, drive to a business or police/fire station
- Leave enough room to drive out of an attack (car jacking)

Vehicle Safety Tips



- For minor accidents at night or in remote locations, call 911 and motion to the other driver that you are going to a secure location
- Don't leave items in plain view inside car
- Take that GPS with you and clean off the suction cup holder mark off the windshield (GPS units are used for burglaries)

Walking Safety Tips



- Be aware of your surroundings
- Avoid walking alone if possible groups are a hard target
- Walk with confidence
- If you think you are being followed turn and go the other direction, if that is not an option confront the person in a loud and vocal manner

Walking Safety Tips



- If a vehicle stops for directions avoid getting near the car (common ploy)
- Carry a whistle and a flashlight (day and night)
- If you are in trouble shout out and call for help . Shout out “Fire”
- Walk with a larger size dog if possible

Walking Safety Tips



- Don't wear a headset on both ears because you lose your focus and can't hear someone coming up from behind
- Try to avoid areas that are remote or isolated
- Walk with Chuck Norris

ID/ Computer Fraud



- Don't give out credit card numbers to web sites that you are unsure of
- Make a photo copy of wallet contents for you and your loved ones (contact SSPD)
- Write "Ask for ID" on all your cards in the signature slot
- Get Fraud details from your bank on reporting

Shopping Safety Tips

- Park in well lit areas and have your keys ready for quick entry into your car
- Use the “cross body” method in carrying your purse
- Never leave your purse unattended – (cases of house keys removed and ID taken)

Shopping Safety Tips

- Report suspicious activity to store security and 911
- Never use ATM machines at night or in remote areas, get “cash back” inside the store
- Have security or an employee escort you to your car

Shopping Safety Tips

- Make time to unload high dollar purchases at home the trunk is no longer safe, they are watching you
- Have the store hold your purchase and drive up closer to the door to avoid snatch thefts while your arms are full
- Shop with Chuck Norris

Travel Tips



- Have a GPS or map with several routes planned out
- If you check into a hotel, request a room on the same floor as the check in or near the elevators
- If you are staying several days change rooms

Travel Tips



- If going outside the CONUS check the State Department Travel advisory for the region you are going to
- Make a color photo of your passport ID page and never lose sight of your passport
- Only exchange money at busy currency centers (e.g. airport, hotel...etc)

Travel Tips



- Use a dependable cab driver that is suggested by the hotel
- Pick Pockets in Europe are world class thieves, use a neck holder for your passport and money or a “travel belt”
- Research the American Embassy locations in your travel area

If you are attacked....

- Nothing works 100% of the time....
- There are several ways to respond...
- If you can talk your way out of an attack try to calm the person and persuade them not to carry out the attack....
- The goal is to keep talking as you start walking.....

If you are attacked....

- Tell the attacker that you are terminally ill, pregnant or have an STD
- Pretend to faint, cry or act insane
- Say that your spouse, friend or room mate will be back soon
- A more active decision may be made to fight....start yelling which can make you a harder target from the attention you draw

If you are attacked....

- Once the decision to fight has been made, fight as if you are the third monkey on the ramp to Noah's Ark...
- Struggling and fighting back will surprise your attacker and improve your chances
- The goal is to distract or injure your attacker for your opportunity to escape

If you are attacked....

- Any strike delivered will be at 100% power and to a vulnerable area (eyes, groin etc.)
- If you train in a martial arts system make sure you practice enough to become proficient (keep it real, your hair will be pulled by the attacker)
- Have the mindset of accepting that fighting back will injure the attacker but also may injure you

Weapons

- Consult your legal counsel before making any decisions about defensive weapons
- If you choose to carry a weapon, train with what you carry because it may get used against you
- Train the way you will fight because you will fight the way that you train

Conclusion

- Whatever decision you make, do it 100%
- Never leave the scene of an attack with an attacker it greatly lowers survivability rates
- If you submit to an attack, don't feel guilty
- Stay Alert...Stay Alive!
- Think escape, escape, escape...

Remember to.....

- Escape!
- Stay Alive!
- Memorize details that will assist police..
- Seek medical attention if raped
- Report the assault immediately to the police (do not delay)
- Do not shower, bathe, douche or change clothes

Special Thanks

- Detective T Davis – Sandy Springs Police
- Officer L Jacobs – Sandy Springs Police
- Chuck Norris – As President Roosevelt once said, “We have nothing to fear but fear itself...and of course Chuck Norris”