



# Parking Lots and Shopping

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As you get out and about shopping and running errands, please use due caution and remember these useful safety tips. There is risk in everything we do in life. Nothing is a guarantee, but these recommendations can help you by reducing the odds/risks of becoming a victim! Predators in the wild will attack the weak and/or the UNPREPARED!! Criminals have the same mentality. Have a plan and always think “what would I do if...”

## **PARKING**

1. Choose well-lighted parking areas and avoid walking alone whenever possible.
2. Look around for loiterers BEFORE getting out of your vehicle...
  - You might not realize it, but criminals may be sizing you up as their next victim. Don't just park and get out. LOOK AROUND to make sure no one is watching or approaching you.
3. Always lock valuables and packages out of sight (under seat, trunk)
4. If you get out of your vehicle, always turn off the ignition, remove the key, and lock your doors, no matter how soon you plan to return (for example, gas stations)
5. Try not to park next to vans, large SUVs, pickup trucks, cars with dark window tint, or other vehicles whose size can provide concealment
6. Exercise particular caution in parking garages. In them, walk in the center aisle, rather than close to the parked cars.
7. If you have the choice, park in areas that have an attendant or heavy pedestrian traffic.
8. When you return to your vehicle, LOOK in the back seat and UNDERNEATH the vehicle! Someone might be hiding and waiting to strike.

## **WALKING TO/FROM THE STORE**

1. Women: If you carry a purse, carry it close to the body, preferably in front. If the purse has a clasp, cover it with your hand. Don't wrap the strap of the purse around your wrist. Never leave a purse unattended.
2. No purse: Carry as little cash as possible and carry credit cards in a concealed coat or chest pocket.
3. If you carry packages and a purse, put the purse between your body and the packages.
4. Avoid carrying a wallet in a back pocket or side pocket.
5. Some people are not comfortable carrying a weapon (gun, mace, knife, etc.) Consider putting a loud whistle or alarm on your keychain so you can use it immediately to draw attention to yourself. Robbers do not want attention.



6. When you walk, carry yourself with **CONFIDENCE**. Appear to be a **tough "mark"**. Keep your head on a swivel, looking around at possible suspects trying to size you up. \*\*\*\*\*Don't have your head down texting or dialing a phone number! Be aware of your surroundings!
7. BE **WARY** of strangers who attempt to start meaningless or odd conversations!!!! This includes people asking for money, someone giving you a sob story about needing money for food or gas. These people usually work in **PAIRS**. Even though you are talking to a seemingly harmless person, the 2<sup>nd</sup> suspect might be coming up from behind you. Walk quickly to the store entrance and call us to investigate.

### **IF A ROBBER ATTEMPTS TO SNATCH YOUR PURSE**

1. Don't resist!
2. Give the robber what he wants.....**PROPERTY CAN BE REPLACED, YOU CAN'T!**
3. Sit down to avoid injury. Many times victims are seriously injured by being thrown to the ground.
4. Observe the robber as closely as possible to get a description for Police.
5. Never pursue the attacker. There have been situations where an unarmed victim chased after the robber and got seriously injured. Remember #2: **YOU CAN'T BE REPLACED**, it's not worth it!
6. After sitting down, make noise by calling for help.
7. Carry a **WHISTLE** and blow it repeatedly

Please share this with your entire family. Everyone needs a refresher every now and then... Print these tips on a sheet of paper and have a sit down discussion with teenagers and seniors alike. Be safe out there and call us if you need us! 911 For Emergencies, (205) 822-5300 for non-emergencies.

Find more Crime Prevention information on our website:

<http://www.hooverpd.com/crime-prevention.php>