

Staying Safe

Here are some important safety tips for different situations



Going out

- Plan how you will get home – plan ahead, particularly if you're going to a part of town you don't know. Keep the number of a reputable taxi firm with you
- Don't go out alone late at night.
- Eat before you go out and drink plenty of water. Drinking a glass of water or a soft drink between alcoholic drinks will help you not to get too drunk.
- Do carry a personal alarm with you. If, like some people with Asperger Syndrome or High Functioning Autism, you have hyper acute hearing, you may find it preferable to carry UV spray instead, such as that at <http://www.eightriverssecurity.co.uk/>
- Let someone know where you're going and what time you expect to be back.
- Ensure your mobile phone is charged and is in credit.
- Keep the money you need to get home separate, so that you don't spend it.
- Watch how much you drink. It is much easier to do something risky or foolish when you're drunk; and you're much more likely to lose your keys, cash or phone when you've had too much to drink.

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- Drinks do get spiked with drugs, so do not leave your drink unattended or accept a drink from a stranger.
- Always leave a club or pub with a trusted friend or a group of friends.
- If you use public transport to get home, sit near the driver on a bus or a tram, and in an occupied carriage on a train or the underground.
- Pre-book a licensed taxi, or know the locations of official taxi ranks.
- Walking may not be the best option, but if you have to, do not walk home alone in the dark. Keep to well-lit, busy streets, main roads and footpaths. Avoid badly lit areas, parks, alleyways and underpasses.
- Don't accept lifts from strangers.
- Do not approach strangers

Protecting your belongings:

- Ensure you have adequate contents insurance.
- Mark your possessions with a UV pen
- Do make sure outside doors are fitted with a Yale type lock and five lever mortise deadlock. Fit any vulnerable downstairs windows with key-operated locks. If you are out during the day, you can give the



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impression of being at home by using timer switches on lights and radios.

- Do not leave cash or jewellery lying around the house and keep valuables out of sight, and where possible in a secure place.
- Dial *#06# for your unique mobile registration (IMEI) number – the first thing the police will check for when recovering stolen property.
- Register your mobile's IMEI and all the serial numbers of your electronic equipment on www.immobilise.com. Immobilise.com is a free UK-wide national property register, supported by the UK police forces and used by them, insurers and the second-hand trade. As well as electronic products, you can also register your bike and other valuable items.
- Avoid using your phone in isolated places. Remember that texting can distract you from what is happening around you. When you are out and about switch your mobile to vibrate mode rather than a ring tone
- Invest in a good quality bicycle lock and use it. Always leave your bike in a designated bike park, or a well-lit, public place and lock it to something immovable. Remember to lock your bike at home too. Taking a photograph of your bike and the frame number is a good idea.
- Immobilise your car whenever you leave it even for a few minutes. Think about where you park. Stealing from vehicles is a major problem and you should routinely remove your CD player and sat nav and store them in a safe place.

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Keep your personal information safe

- Be suspicious of e-mails, texts or phone calls requesting personal information, passwords, PIN numbers or account details. Do not give out such information unless you are sure of the validity of the request. Banks and other organisations will not ask you to confirm personal information online or via a text.
- Carefully destroy papers carrying bank or credit card details. Always keep your receipts and destroy them too.
- When you move house or flat, take the trouble to inform all the organisations you deal with of your new address and arrange for the post office to forward your mail. You don't want a bank statement, new credit card or any other personal mail to be sent to an address you no longer live at, where anyone could take and open your post.
- Keep a record somewhere safe of plastic card, driving licence and passport details. Some banks and credit card companies offer a registration service but it is often chargeable. If you lose your card or suspect it has been stolen, contact the bank or credit card company immediately. When destroying old cards, cut through the chip and magnetic strip.
- Always check a cash machine for signs of interference before you use it. Never accept a stranger's offer of help when using a cash machine. Do be aware of people crowding around you when using a cash machine and preferably draw out money during the day.

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- Never let your bank or credit card out of your sight in shops and restaurants to prevent copying or cloning.
- When shopping on the internet, check that the website shows a padlock or unbroken key icon. When you check out make sure that 'https:' starts the web address; this means that a secure, encrypted connection is in place between your computer's browser and the website. If you don't see the final 's' when you come to checkout, stop the transaction immediately. The VeriSignTrust seal means that the website company's identity has been verified and that the website has passed a daily malware scan.
- Internet Shopping is Safe (ISIS) is run by the e-retail industry body Internet Media Retail Group (IMRG) and shows that the retailer has registered with the programme and has its website and service reviewed and monitored by IMRG. You can click on the ISIS logo to get verification of the retailer's accreditation.
- Install security software on your laptop (and desktop computer) and always carry it hidden inside a sports bag rather than in its own obvious case.

Staying safe at Home

- Keep doors locked. Never leave your door open.
- Keep windows locked when you are out of the house, even if it is only for a few minutes.



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- Consider installing an alarm or outdoor light.
- Keep your ladder, garden tools and general tools locked away
- If you have a shared entrance, never buzz someone in unless you know who they are.
- Be confident saying 'no' to doorstep traders. If in doubt, don't answer the door or speak to them. If they refuse to leave, call the police.
- Put a chain on your door or install a spy-hole so that you can check who is outside your door before you open it. If in doubt, don't let the person in.
- Ask for an identity card and examine it carefully.
- Check who they are by phoning the company they represent – get the number from a bill or your phone book rather than calling a number they give you, which may be that of an accomplice.

In the Street

- Plan your route before you go and stick to busy, well-lit areas.
- Spread your money and valuables around your body. For example, keep your keys in your coat pocket and your money in a closely carried bag.
- Keep valuables out of sight.
- Don't carry large sums of money.



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- Before you use a cash machine, check that there is no one hovering about. Always safeguard your Personal Identification Number (PIN). Don't count your money in the middle of the street.
- If you use a wheelchair, keep your belongings beside you rather than hanging them on the back of the chair.
- If you think you are being followed, keep moving and head for a busy area; tell someone what is happening or call the police.
- Keep your handbag in sight all the time, not slung on your back like a rucksack.
- Shout loudly to get attention in an emergency.
- If someone tries to snatch your bag it may be best to let them take it.
- If someone shouts bullying or abusive words at you, inform the police.

On Public Transport

- Try to wait for public transport in busy, well-lit areas.
- Do not travel alone late at night.
- You may feel safer if you sit near other people. If you are on the bus or train and there are not many people about, sit near the driver. Try to be near the bell or emergency alarm.
- If someone makes you feel uncomfortable, move away.
- If you feel unsafe, call the transport police on 0800 40 50 40. In an emergency call 999.

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Safety in taxis

- Keep the number of a reliable licensed taxi company handy. Find a company you trust and feel comfortable with and use them each time.
- Book a taxi before you go out. When it arrives, check it is the one you ordered before you get in. If you're in any doubt ask the driver to tell you the name of the person who booked the taxi but don't tell them your name.
- Sit behind the driver on the back seat and if you feel uneasy, ask to be dropped off somewhere you know that is busy and well-lit.



Safety when driving

- Before setting off, plan your route and make sure you have enough petrol. Tell someone where you are going and how long you expect the journey to take.
- Think about what you would do if you broke down. For example, do you carry a mobile phone to use in an emergency? If it is cold, it is a good idea to have a blanket and some warm clothes in case you have to wait for help to come.
- Try to park in busy, well-lit areas. If you park in the daytime, think about what the area will be like after dark.
- Keep valuables and personal possessions out of sight and doors locked. When you leave the car, make sure you remove any valuables and lock the doors.

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