

WOMEN'S PERSONAL SAFETY

☺ Panhandling/Stalking/Muggings in Urban Environments ☺

DID YOU KNOW?

- Americans are twice as likely to be assaulted, robbed at gun point, raped or abducted as they are to be seriously injured in a car accident.
- If someone illegally “arrests” your movement on the street – Blocks your path and challenges your progress – He is assaulting you. Battery occurs once the aggressor touches you.
- Stalking is any pattern of repeated attention, harassment or contact that would make a reasonable person feel fear. Stalking can include unwanted phone calls, emails, sending unwanted items, following or laying in wait, making threats, obtaining personal information, searching garbage or contacting family or friends. Although trivialized, stalking is a crime in every state.

CRIME FACTS

- **80% of all muggings begin with an aggressive panhandling or “shakedown.”**
- **1.5 million people are stalked every year in America – 4 out of 5 victims are women.**
- **A robbery mugging occurs every 48 seconds in urban America.**
- **This year in America 246,000 women will be raped or sexually assaulted.**
- **This year more than 15,000 men will be sexually assaulted or raped.**

HAVE A PERSONAL PROTECTION PLAN

AWARENESS and **DISTANCE** are your two most important self defense skills. Visualize different defense scenarios, have a plan of escalating response.

Your right to self-defense begins when you are stopped in a shakedown.

Preemptive response is legal if you perceive an imminent physical threat - “YOU DID WHAT YOU HAD TO DO TO PROTECT YOURSELF”

Develop a mental willingness to use force in your own self defense.

REMEMBER, YOU ACT QUICKER THAN YOU REACT

YOU HAVE LESS THAN 3 SECONDS TO REACT IN A VIOLENT ASSAULT

- Walk with purpose, communicate confidence. Develop a habit to alert yourself as you pass through doorways and exits. Scan the environment and maintain “situation awareness.”
- Have your faculties about you. Have full use of your hands and feet when moving in or out of a secure area. Know who is around you at all times, it is not paranoia to be aware. Criminal terrorism is a fact of life in urban America.
- Empowerment is 90% mental. When you are assaulted, stalked or abused you will likely be alone. Make a conscious decision to defend yourself in advance. Establish a pre-emptive threshold stimulus that will trigger a defensive response.

- Avoid little used stairwells and parking lots. Look inside an elevator before entering. If someone suspicious is on the elevator DO NOT GET ON! Give yourself permission to make a scene in a dangerous situation.
- Evaluate access and entry areas to your home, loft or apartment. Consider in advance locations that could hide an intruder. Use or request motion sensor lighting around entryways, walkways and waiting areas. Do not ignore safety risks in your living environment.
- Keep your personal Taser or pepper spray where it is immediately accessible in the event you are aggressively approached. Practice drawing it and using aggressive “Stay Away” or “Stand Back” commands.
- Professional security, police and military are taught four levels of awareness – Unaware (WHITE)/Aware (YELLOW)/Alert (ORANGE)/Alarm (RED). Have a response for any alert (ORANGE) or higher awareness. Plan in advance to evade the situation, demand a “Stand Back” response or take defensive action.
- Always approach your car with a heightened state of awareness. Evaluate adjoining cars and tight fits on the driver side. Glance under the car and along two cars on each side for suspicious persons. Walk away or around if you are concerned. Approach your car from unexpected angles.
- If you arrive in a parking lot to find a flat tire on your car consider it an immediate ALERT situation. Carefully retreat from the immediate area, raise your awareness and reach for your pepper spray or personal Taser. Go to a safe place to call for assistance.
- Many victims of sexual harassment, assault, and stalking are working women, which makes the workplace a central point for intervention. Contact your employer if you are a victim of workplace violence – your employer can be an effective partner and, bears responsibility to maintain a safe environment.
- Be suspicious of unannounced or unexpected sales or repair persons at your home or work. Look them squarely in the eye for identification purposes and ask for ID from behind your locked door. If possible confirm a company vehicle and call for verification. Never allow your children to answer any door alone.
- Have a “safety drill” rehearsed in advance with your children to lock them safely inside your car if you are threatened. Teach your children and family how to properly call 911 for assistance and what to say. Never hang up on 911, stay in contact. 911 calls are always recorded and can be a powerful recorded defense if you must defend your family in the street or in your home. The 911 operator will serve as a link between you and police, tell the operator where you are, how you are dressed, what the aggressor looks like and is wearing.

Information Sources: National Crime Center for Policy Analysis, FBI Uniform Crime Reports, FBI SMSA, U.S. Bureau of Justice, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, National Rifle Association, CT Safe Kids

www.cicerobb.com