



Here are a few tips to consider when developing a personal Protection Plan that makes you feel safe!

- Maintain Situational Awareness - Maintain a 360 degree view of what is happening around you at all times. Maintain more than a 32 foot protective "bubble" around you. Anyone that is within 21 feet of you is within your danger zone. Frequently deviate from your current path or direction of travel and stay in well-lit and populated areas. If available, make use of windows to see the reflections of those behind or near you. Be aware of blind spots along the road such as dumpsters and corners of structures. Follow the crowd rather than taking shortcuts through alleyways. Take notice of people that seem out of place. Avoid dark corners in parking garages. Always take note of possible escape routes when entering an area.
- Do Not Look Like a Victim - Walk with a high degree of confidence and purpose. Know where you are headed before going. If the eyes are the window to the soul then wear sunglasses when appropriate, otherwise make eye contact.
- Knowing when to call 911 or other emergency services is an important part of your safety plan. You should teach your children how to call 911 and what information to give the operator. That information includes their names, address and telephone number as well as a brief description of the emergency that is taking place at that specific time.
- Tell a trusted friend or family member if you feel threatened by anyone, such as a stalker or someone in your own household. You should also let your employer or co-workers know about your situation. If you have children, their child care provider should also know about what is going on. Don't forget to tell your health care provider as well. Give them as many details about the threat as you feel comfortable with.
- Know where you will go if you feel that violence is about to occur? This could be a family member or friend's home, but only if the person who is threatening you is unaware that you would go there. Another option is the police station, hospitals or even a fire station, if you are being followed. You can also go to the drive-through of a fast food restaurant. If the person who is threatening you also lives with you, many communities have domestic violence safe houses where you would be able to go. Remember that domestic

violence is not just when a family member or spouse is threatening or abusing you. It also applies to roommates and someone you have a child in common with. Depending on local laws, it can even be someone you have lived with in the past.

- Keep copies all important paperwork in a safe and easily accessible location. You can even give copies to people you trust. This paperwork would include identification for you and your children (driver's licenses, social security cards and birth certificates), insurance and medical information. Keeping an extra set of keys in a safe location is also something else that could help you should you have to leave quickly.
- If you are unable to leave the location or call for help, go to a place there that is free of weapons. The kitchen and garage are not the best choices because there are many objects that can be used as weapons. As soon as possible, leave and call 911.
- Screening your phone calls, both at home and at work, is another part of your personal safety plan. Let the answering machine or voicemail pick up the call. Your co-workers can also screen calls for you, taking messages without admitting if you are at work or not.
- Ask people you trust to walk you to your car. If no one you are available to walk with you, stay within a group and in a well-lit area. Constantly be aware of your surroundings. Talk to someone on your cell phone (or pretend to talk to someone) as you are walking alone.
- Carry a cell phone with you at all times. Even if the phone has been turned off or you're pre-paid account is low or without minutes, you will still be able to call 911 in case of an emergency.
- Remember to yell "fire" if you feel you are in danger. This will draw more attention than screaming "help." Think of something shocking to say that would attract attention, such as "naked man" or "ugly woman." It may sound rude at the time, but people will turn to look.
- Always be aware of your surroundings, whether walking or driving. Pay attention to poorly lit areas. Look around and under your car for people hiding or something that could damage your car. Always keep your car doors locked so no one can hide in your car.
- How do you assess someone as a threat? You have to take into account the totality of the cues available to you. The aggressors clothing, appearance, demeanor, actions, anything he says to you, are all cues. The single most important cue is body language. About 80% of human communication is through body language. Predators display subtle pre-aggression indicators, which are obvious once you learn to look for them.

Be prepared Plan ahead!