

A GUIDE TO SAFE LIVING FOR OFF CAMPUS RESIDENTS

Over the years Public Safety has been a facilitator of information and programs designed to help make campus living safe. We realize though, that many students live off campus and are in need of information and guidance regarding personal safety and property protection.

ARE YOU RENTING AN APARTMENT? Here are some considerations prior to making the commitment.

- Are the doors to the apartment SOLID CORE wooden doors or METAL? Do these doors have good dead-bolt locks or at least shielded door knobs to deter access to the locking mechanism. Ask the landlord if the locks have been re-keyed since the last tenant moved out. (If allowed, consider installing your own locks)
- Do the doors have a “peep-hole” so visitors can be observed without opening the door?
- Do shrubs and trees allow places for concealment near entrances and windows?
- Do windows and accessible fire escapes have good locking mechanisms?
- Good lighting deters crime. Is the lighting adequate near entry doors and around walkways?
- Do outer doors of the apartment stay locked at all times?
- Are good working smoke detectors in place? There should be at least two emergency escape routes in case of fire.
- Is there a telephone line provided for you?

HERE ARE SOME SAFETY TIPS REGARDING YOUR APARTMENT!

- DON'T allow strangers into your building or apartment. View visitors through the peep-hole or other viewer. When in doubt, don't answer the door and never reveal to a visitor or telephone caller that you are alone. Ask repair or service personnel to show official identification.
- ALWAYS lock your door(s) to your apartment when you are alone, sleeping or going out, EVEN if only for a few minutes! It's easy... “Just do it!”
- Don't leave EXTERIOR doors to your apartment building unlocked.
- Keep your windows covered at night and LOCKED.
- If your building has an elevator, don't enter it with a stranger. Stand in front of the button panel so you can push the emergency alarm if necessary.
- Don't use your first name on mailboxes. Use your first initial.
- Laundry rooms, lounges and common areas should not be used when you're alone.
- Keep keys in your possession. Do not put them under mats, over doors, or in other obvious hiding places. Do not “tag” your keys with your name and address.
- Use a timer for lamps and a radio to give your apartment an occupied look and sound.
- If you return home and you think it has been illegally entered, DO NOT enter. Get to a safe place and call the Police.
- Keep valuables out of sight and do not place such articles near windows.
- DO NOT ADVERTISE that you are not home with notes on your door.
- Get to know your local Police Department members and Campus Public Safety Officers. Make sure you have the phone numbers in this guide near your telephone and remember, in an emergency, just dial **911**.

“STREET-SMARTS” A GUIDE TO STREET SAFETY!

- Be aware of your surroundings at all times and stay in well-lit areas. Walk mid-point between curbs and buildings and stay away from alleys or less traveled areas.
- Stay near people. Avoid short-cuts through parks, vacant lots and deserted places.
- Carry only necessary credit cards and money and avoid using ATM machines when alone and at night.
- Walk with someone you know whenever possible.
- Obtain a whistle from Public Safety and carry it with you at all times.
- If someone is following you on foot, cross the street, change directions or vary your pace.
- If someone is following you in a car, turn around and walk in the opposite direction. If that person persists, record the license number and call the Police immediately. Get to an area where there are other people around.
- Don't stop to give directions or other information to strangers.
- Use the “buddy system”.
- If you must carry a purse or handbag, keep it close to your body to minimize the chances of theft. If your purse or wallet is “snatched”, don't fight. Turn it over rather than risk personal injury and report the incident as soon as possible.
- Look aware, look confident and walk briskly.
- If confronted, make a scene, and make lots of noise to draw attention to yourself and the other person.
- Wear sneakers or other comfortable shoes.
- Carry a personal protection alarm on your key chain and make sure you know how to use it.
- DO NOT wear a personal stereo system or play music so loudly that you are not aware of your surroundings.
- Learn where the emergency telephones and call boxes are located on campus.
- And please remember that ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS adversely affect your chances of evading an attack. Stay sober, stay alert!
- Learn about and USE public transportation such as CDTA buses.
- CDTA! 518-482-8822! TDD! 518-482-9024! And don't forget...www.cdta.org
- WOMEN OF RENSSELAER! TRY OUR “RAD” CLASSES!

BUS SAFETY

- Carry a schedule and know what route you will be taking.
- After dark, arrive just before the bus is due.
- Sit at the front or near others on the bus.
- If you are being bothered, tell the driver.

DO YOU KNOW?

- Do you know CDTA bus schedules are at the Visitors Information Center?
- Do you know CDTA has a state of the art messaging board at the “horse-shoe” side of the Student Union at the lobby area? They have a web site too! Once again, it's www.cdta.org
- Do you know that all you have to do to ride the bus is swipe your student I.D. card?
- Do you know that riding a bus is a lot safer than walking?
- Let's ride the bus!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

CAR SAFETY AND SECURITY TIPS

- Always pay attention to your surroundings and any activity near your car.
- Have your key ready as you approach your vehicle. Check the door locks, door handles, and the rear seat before entering.
- If someone appears to be “hanging around” near your car, keep walking until they leave.
- Keep your valuables out of direct sight or in the trunk.
- Do not put personal information on your key chain.
- Well-lit, busy places are the best places to park. If you have to park in a poorly lit area, or have to walk some distance to and from the car, have someone walk with you if possible.

WHEN YOU'RE IN YOUR CAR

- Keep your doors and windows locked. Roll up your windows far enough so you can get fresh air, but no one can reach into the car.
- Avoid high crime areas and travel well-lit, busy streets.
- Don't pick up hitchhikers.
- People like to help others. Don't stop to assist broken down vehicles. Drive to the nearest phone and report the circumstances to the Police.
- If you feel you are being followed, drive safely to a well-lit, occupied area such as a 24 hour gas station or grocery store, or better yet, a Police or Fire station.
- We recommend you don't use drive-up ATM machines, especially if you are alone. If you do, pay attention to your surroundings.
- If your car breaks down, stay inside with the window up, the doors locked and the hood down. If someone stops and offers help, stay in the car, roll down the window a few inches and ask the person to call help for you.
- Carry a large, brightly colored “HELP, call Police” sign in your car for emergencies.
- If you are “rear-ended” by another vehicle, motion for the driver to follow you to a public place. “Bump and Rob” artists stage such accidents to lure unsuspecting drivers out of their cars to rob them of their wallet or purse. If the driver won't follow you, obtain as thorough description of the vehicle as you can and report the incident to the Police.

- **A SPECIAL MESSAGE TO ALL THE “TOUGH GUYS” AND “TOUGH GALS” OUT THERE. ANYONE CAN BE A VICTIM AND EVERYONE SHOULD TAKE PRECAUTIONS TO PREVENT VICTMIZATION!**

- The most difficult aspect of crime prevention training is getting people to realize that any one could be a victim. That's right. Everyone believes it will only happen to someone else.

DEALING WITH OBSCENE OR ANNOYING PHONE CALLS

- **HANG UP!** As soon as you hear an obscenity, improper question or no response. It may take the caller seven or eight times to get the message, but if you are consistent and hang up each and every time, they usually stop calling. Hang up normally, without slamming down the receiver. You don't want the caller to know he or she succeeded in making you upset.
- Report calls that are threatening in any way to the Police and the telephone-company and ask about tracing calls or getting an unlisted number.
- Make detailed notes of times, numbers, dates, etc, in case the calls continue and criminal charges are filed.
- Be careful if the caller states he or she is taking a survey. Even if you feel it is legitimate, ask for the person's name, number and company and tell them you will call back after you verify the authenticity of the survey.
- Never extend the call in an attempt to figure out who may be calling. People who make these calls are looking for that reaction. They want you to stay on the line.
- Place ads with caution when using a newspaper or bulletin board. Use a post office box number. If you do have to use your phone number, do not list your address. Believe it or not, these types of callers read the classified sections.
- The local phone company can provide "Return call services" such as *69, which can be useful if you are receiving harassing phone calls. Contact your local phone company for more information.
- Lastly, **DO NOT** give your phone number out to people you do not consider close friends and associates. Many times, stores will ask you for your address and phone number for their computer files. Don't provide it, especially when there are others behind you and around you that can easily listen in and obtain this information.

PROTECTING YOUR PERSONAL PROPERTY

- Keep a photographic record of your possessions. Write down the date and place of purchase along with the model number and most importantly, the serial number. This information can be placed on the back of each photo. Store the photos and information in a safe place.
- If you must have valuable items such as jewelry and other collections, make arrangements to keep them in a safe deposit box.
- You can borrow Public Safety engravers as long as you present a valid student I.D. Engrave your valuables with your drivers license number. You can also register the property with Public Safety. This ID number should be in a conspicuous place (don't hide it) as burglars can be deterred from stealing engraved items because they are harder to sell and pawn off.
- Perform a "safety audit" around your apartment using the Public Safety check-list.
- Make sure your car is always locked with no valuables left in view.
- If you have to store your bike outside, use a high quality lock and lock it to an immovable object.
- Public Safety can register your bike with both our local registry and the National Bike Registry. This is a free service. Please take advantage of it!
- Make copies of all your credit card numbers and ID cards and keep them in a safe place.

FOR THOSE THAT LIKE....TO BIKE!

- When you ride use reflective tape and reflectors on fenders, frames, pedals, and even your cycling shoes.
- Keep to the right and ride WITH traffic, not against it. A bicycle must obey traffic laws.
- Always ride defensively.
- Don't ride in bad weather if at all possible.
- Use hand signals to indicate your intentions to turn and or to stop.
- Walk your bike across the busy intersections and remember that pedestrians have the right of way.
- Wear protective clothing and maintain your bike. Perform safety inspections.
- Park your bike in open, well-lit and frequently traveled areas and lock it up with a high quality bicycle lock.
- When you arrive on campus, use the bicycle racks to lock your bike.

PROGRAMS OFFERED BY PUBLIC SAFETY

Your Department of Public Safety is here for all students, including those that live off campus. We offer the following programs:

- **RAD (RAPE AGGRESSION DEFENSE) FOR WOMEN!**
- **DDC (DEFENSIVE DRIVING COURSE)**
- **ALCOHOL AWARENESS PRESENTATIONS**
- **SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION AND AWARENESS PRESENTATIONS**
- **FIRE SAFETY PRESENTATIONS**
- **OPERATION I.D. TO REGISTER YOUR PROPERTY**
- **SPORTS CHALLENGES PROGRAMS**
- **FIRST AID AND CPR TRAINING**
- **VEHICLE LOCK OUT ASSISTANCE**
- **VEHICLE "JUMP" STARTS**
- **REMEMBER TO VISIT THE PUBLIC SAFETY WEB SITE AT: www.dps.rpi.edu**

