

An Garda Síochána

Crime Prevention Information Sheet



Personal Safety

“Streetwise”



Get “Streetwise”

Crime can happen to anyone, anytime, anywhere. The culprits think they won't get caught and the victim thinks it won't be me! The reality is very different. For every crime there is always a victim. **Not every culprit will get caught but every victim will suffer.** This information leaflet is designed to reduce your risk of injury and/or loss from crime in Public Places.

The extent of your suffering or loss will depend on three key factors:

- Your Vulnerability
- Your Environment
- Your Individual Behaviour

Your Vulnerability

Understanding your individual potential to becoming a crime victim must be approached from the mindset of the criminal. They will judge or rate your vulnerability in a number of ways and some factors will outweigh others for them depending on the type of crime being contemplated.

If you are:-

- Elderly, very young or a person with a disability
- A Man or a Woman
- Alone rather than in a group
- A Local or a Stranger
- Confident and assertive or mild and meek in appearance

then one or more of the above can increase or decrease your potential victimisation. Some are outside your control, others are not. What's important is to remember that each one can affect your risk category.

Your Environment

Some areas are more prone to crime than others. Busy shopping thoroughfares with many people will always attract thieves. Likewise, quiet and poorly illuminated streets, underpasses and laneways may be the ideal place for muggers and robbers to strike.



Many night-time random assaults and acts of violence occur at predictable flash points such as queues, outside licensed premises, fast food restaurants, and night-clubs.

You should always instinctively prepare for the environment you may visit by asking yourself some basic questions:

- Do I know how to get there?
- Will I need to travel through potential trouble spots and can I avoid them?
- Do I need to go alone and do I need to go by day or night?
- What is my mode of travel and how long should the journey take?
- If I am using my private car - where can I park safely and what contingency plans do I have if I break down?
- Do I know anything about the place I am visiting - is it safe and well managed?

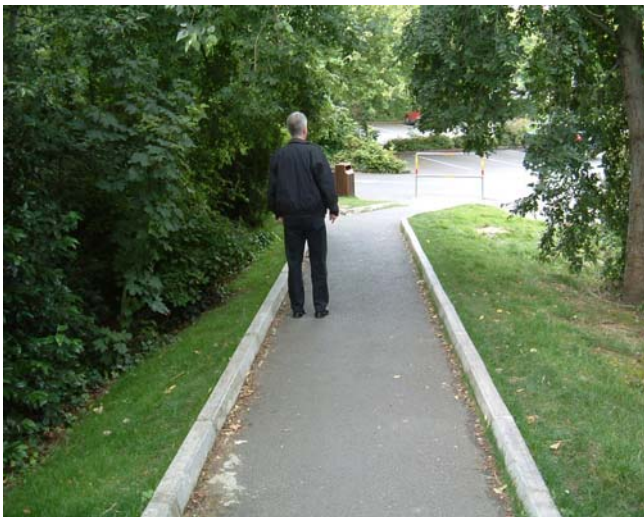


FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THIS OR OTHER CRIME PREVENTION ISSUES,
PLEASE CONTACT
your local GARDIA CRIME PREVENTION OFFICER
or
visit the Garda website at www.garda.ie

- Have I told anyone where I am going and what time I expect to return?
- Is my appearance or dress suitable and do I need to wear expensive items of jewellery or carry all my credit or laser money cards?
- What other items are in my possession that may be attractive to thieves – do I really need to bring them?

Your Individual Behaviour

What **we are able to control** when in the public domain is **our own individual behaviour**. Some people are naturally confrontational and aggressive; others can remain calm and controlled even in the most provocative situations. Your ability to anticipate potential trouble and minimise or diffuse it can depend on your individual personality and your own behaviour. Becoming “streetwise” is a learning experience; however we should all observe some basic principles in avoiding trouble and the trouble maker.



- Stay in the company you know
- The consumption of alcohol, drugs or other toxic substances not only diminishes your senses but makes you particularly attractive to criminals
- Avoid public displays of your wealth - keep your wallet/purse hidden
- If you observe criminal behaviour - leave the area immediately and call the Gardaí
- If you see or feel intimidated by groups of people - take a safe diversion - cross the street - or wait until there are others present
- Stay on well-lit streets and walk against the flow of traffic
- Never get involved in other peoples disputes
- Never respond to taunts or snide remarks by others - these are designed to engage you in conflict
- People who deliberately collide or jostle you are intent on aggression - avoid eye contact and do not engage with them either verbally or physically
- **Remember - you cannot rationalise with aggressive or drunk people**
- Young women should avoid the temptation to accompany strangers alone - however benign they may appear

- If you are the victim of crime or violence - report the matter to the Gardaí immediately - **do not** take it upon yourself to deal with the assailants



The advice contained in this information sheet is not intended to be exhaustive or absolute.

Nothing contained in this publication should be interpreted as mandatory, obligatory or designed to conflict with any statutory regulations.

Useful Contacts and Links

**The Garda National Crime Prevention Unit,
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