

REALTOR® Safety Tips*

1. Be suspicious of everyone. There isn't any benefit in being paranoid; however, being a little guarded can keep you from getting into a vulnerable situation.
2. ID and pre-qualify at your first meeting. Whether you are at your office or meeting at a property get some form of identification. Someone who is pre-qualified by a lender and meets you at the office is less likely to be a predator. Open a file with all their identification information such as license plate and employer contact information.
3. Stay in communication with the office. Before showing a property make it known to your co-workers, a spouse or a friend where you are going and when you will return. Have them call you at a designated time to check on you. Have them set an alarm on their pager /cell phone as a reminder. A system where you call in has advantages too. Have a designated in-out file. Use a clip board, cork board, email or voicemail system that everyone has access to. Consider a Nextel system with direct communication.
4. Have a plan for a safe open house. Take a friend and bring a cell phone. Spend a few minutes considering all the vulnerable points within the home and how you would escape if necessary. When a couple comes, require them to stay together. Don't park in the driveway of the open house property. You may get your self "boxed in" and unable to leave by car.
5. Use predetermined code words to alert your office of distress. Utilize green, yellow and red (like a traffic light) as levels of distress. For example, say to your caller "it's in the green folder" letting your caller know you are fine. Or, "it's in the yellow folder" alerting your caller that the situation is shaky and you might need assistance. Use an acronym for help as "Have Emily Leave the Papers (HELP) at 35 Cherry St. (the address of the home where you are experiencing the problem)
6. Conduct safe personal marketing. To a stalker, your photo on a sign or in print is a personal ad. He determines if you have the "look" he is seeking. Keep photos professional. Use PO boxes and voicemail systems. Keep your personal number unlisted.
7. Implement a buddy system. Whenever possible bring along a co-worker. There is strength in numbers. Predators thrive on isolation. By pairing up you reduce the chances of being attacked.

8. Dress for safety and success. Don't wear expensive jewelry. A \$3,000 to \$5000 diamond buys a lot of drugs. Dress professionally, not provocatively. Scarves and loose fitting "flowy" type styles of dresses can give an attacker something to grab on to. Wear shoes you can run and kick in and won't hinder fighting back.
9. Don't allow the client to ride in your car if you don't know who they are.
10. Pay attention to your intuition. Trust your gut and don't discount any troubling feelings you might have about your new client. If anything seems wrong, then it IS wrong. Cancel if necessary. When the hair on your neck stands on end, your sixth sense is signaling you, pay attention. This feeling is a survival mechanism, use it.
11. Know how to defend yourself. You are worth fighting for. We don't think about hurting others because we have been conditioned not to. However there may be a time when it is necessary to defend yourself. Go for the eyes, throat, groin and the instep of the foot. Fighting from the ground is an advantage that few people realize they have. Kicking the knees and groin is very effective from the ground. Scream, gouge, bite and fight with whatever you have. Have a pepper-spray in your hand or your coat pocket. Have a ball point pen ready to jab. In previous studies 80 % of the women who fought back in an attack situation got away. You have more power than you think.

**Taken from Safety Expert, Robert Siciliano*