

# safety

Altona Police Service

# Topics of Discussion

- Safety on the Street
- Annoying Phone Calls
- Apartment/Home Security
- Babysitting
- Block Parent
- Internet Safety
- Residential Security
- Protecting Yourself from Sexual Assault
- Safety for the Home Visitor
- Safety while Travelling
- Frauds and Scams
- Identification of Personal Items

# Safety on the Street

- Be Aware – adopt a “security conscious” lifestyle
- Stay alert to your surroundings
- Trust your instincts
- If you feel uncomfortable in a place or situation – leave immediately

# Pedestrian Safety

- Use the buddy system – especially at night – walk in pairs or a group
- In larger centres it is recommended that you carry a personal alarm
- Always be aware of your surroundings – avoid “time saving shortcuts”
- Stay on well lit streets

- Walk in the middle of the sidewalk
- Walk facing traffic so you can see approaching cars.
- If you are being followed change direction and head for a populated area.
- Carry emergency cash and keys separate from your purse or wallet

- Never accept rides from strangers or people you do not know well
- When you jog or cycle vary your route using populated paths
- When shopping carry only what you will need why take all of your personal cards when you do not need them.
- If you do not carry a purse it dramatically decreases your chances of being a victim

# Transportation

- If using public transportation always board at a well lit bus stop. Alert someone if you need to wait for an extended period of time especially if you are alone.
- Know where you are going so that you do not end up in an area unfamiliar to you.

- On a bus sit near the bus driver if possible.
- Report any harassment from other passenger(s) to the bus driver. Let others know that you are being harassed.
- Be alert to other passengers.
- When riding in a cab sit in the back seat.



# Personal vehicle

- Keep your vehicle in good working condition and keep at least  $\frac{1}{4}$  tank of gas in your car.
- Drive with the doors locked at all times
- Be sure you know your route to your destination so you do not need to stop and ask strangers directions.

- If you think you are being followed pull on to a well lighted open business if the vehicle follows you honk until someone assists you.
- If you see someone on the roadside call for help for them do not try to help.
- When parking your vehicle park in a well lighted area and as close to entrances as possible.

- If your vehicle breaks down pull over as much as you can, turn on your four ways display a call police sign in your window or if you have a cell phone call for help. Only open your window a portion if you need to talk to someone and ask for their help.
- If a vehicle is driving erratically or carelessly slow down and allow them to get ahead of you. Record the plate and report it.

## When Vehicle is Unoccupied

- Keep vehicle locked at all times.
- Consider an anti-theft device.
- Don't leave the vehicle running.
- Don't leave packages or property in plain view.
- Keep personal information out of the vehicle.
- Don't hide an extra key in the vehicle.

- When returning to your car have your key ready. Check quickly to make sure your vehicle has not been tampered with and no one is inside it.
- When carrying children and other items be sure to place children in the vehicle first then your other items. If available ask for assistance from the store. Don't put keys in the ignition until you are behind the wheel.
- Don't use your name on license plate or key fob

# Annoying Phone Calls

- It is against the law to use profanity, obscenity or abusive language over the phone.
- People who harass others are usually seeking a reaction.
- If the caller will not identify him/herself, does not speak or at the first obscene remark simply gently hang up don't give the satisfaction of a reaction.
- Be cautious of divulging personal information be sure of who you are speaking with.

- Get information from MTS regarding call trace
- If asked the number they dialled request the number they were calling they may be checking out your residence.
- May need to consider unlisted number.
- Call police if life or property is threatened. Or if the call is obscene. Try to provide a description of the voice, male female, intoxicated, accent, speech impediment, background noise. Make a note of date and time and nature of the call.

# Apartment Security

- Keep your apartment locked at all times.
- Let the manager know if you will be away and have someone you trust check your apartment regularly.
- Use first initial with your last name on the callboard.
- Check with the manager to have locks changed if you are moving in to a new apartment.



- Ensure that your patio doors are secured at all times and windows are properly locked.
- Put a viewer in your door and install a dead bolt.
- When using an elevator use caution. If person(s) in the elevator are suspicious wait for another one. When in the elevator stand near the controls so you can push emergency buttons if you need to.

- If using the laundry room arrange to use it with a friend.
- If you have a security buzzer always be sure the person you are allowing in is someone that you know. Do not allow anyone in to the building that you do not know refer them to the building manager.

- Be alert when using the parking areas, if you see something suspicious contact the manager or police. Keep vehicle locked and don't keep anything valuable in it.
- If you will be away, notify your manager. Make arrangements for mail and other deliveries. Put clock timers on lights and radios. Don't leave valuables in the apartment.
- If you find a door or window has been disturbed in your absence do not enter the apartment call police from another location.

# Babysitter

- Choosing a sitter
  - ◆ Relatives, friends, neighbours, community centre, school counsellor are good references
  - ◆ Check references and if possible spend some time with the sitter to get to know them.
  - ◆ CPR, first aid and baby sitting courses are important  
how would they deal with  
behaviour problems

- ◆ Ask questions – how would you handle emergency give examples how would they deal with behaviour problems what kinds of activities will you do with child/ren.

*Child and Family Services Act states that a child under the age of 12 can not be left unattended and without reasonable provision being made for the supervision and safety of the child.*

## Your role as parent/employer

- Show sitter
  - ◆ your home and yard alert to off limits and/or danger points
  - ◆ First aid supplies, fuse box, fire extinguisher, smoke alarms
  - ◆ Give info on meds, allergies, bedtimes.

- ◆ Provide nutritious foods as required
- ◆ Check in at home at least once.  
Always notify if you will be later than originally planned.
- ◆ Provide emergency contacts.
- ◆ Provide number where you can be reached.
- ◆ Provide payment and safe ride home.

# BLOCK PARENT

- Block Parents provide a safe place for children and seniors to go if they become frightened, lost or in case of an emergency.
- Block Parents are checked through police agency.



# INTERNET SAFETY

- Risks to children of inappropriate material
  - ◆ Keep computer in common area so it is easily monitored.
  - ◆ Make children aware of people who may attempt to deceive them. Any harassment be it sexual, obnoxious or menacing should be reported to the internet provider.

- ◆ Explain that if they accidentally come to a site that is questionable to back out of it and log off. Then tell a trusted adult
- ◆ Make children aware that they must always ask permission to give their names, etc. over the internet. If anyone attempts to make personal contact with the child it should be recorded and reported to police.

# Internet Safety

- Be aware of many scams on line.
- Don't give out credit card numbers without checking that the company can be trusted.
- Be cautious about down loading software

# SECURITY AT HOME

- INSPECT DOORS AND FRAMES TO BE SURE THEY ARE STRONG AND SECURE. THIEVES LIKE EASY TARGETS.
- WHEN SECURING DOORS FROM INSIDE MAKE SURE THAT YOU ARE STILL ABLE TO EXIT RELATIVELY QUICKLY IN CASE OF FIRE.

- HINGE PINS SHOULD BE ON THE INSIDE TO PREVENT REMOVAL OF DOORS
- SECURE DOORS WITH GOOD LOCKS.
- SECURE WINDOWS PROPERLY
- USE LIGHT TIMERS, INSTALL DOOR VIEWER, DOOR WEDGES SECURE DOOR FROM BEING OPENED BUT ALL RESIDENTS MUST BE AWARE OF THIS FEATURE IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

- MAKE SURE YOUR HOUSE NUMBER IS VISIBLE FROM THE STREET ESPECIALLY AT NIGHT IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY.
- SECURE YOUR GARAGE TO THE BEST OF YOUR ABILITY. CHANGE THE CODES TO YOUR AUTOMATIC DOOR OPENER OCCASIONALLY.
- INSTALL A SECURITY SYSTEM FROM A REPUTABLE FIRM.

- IF GOING ON VACATION
  - ◆ CANCEL ANY DELIVERIES TO THE HOME.
  - ◆ HAVE SOMEONE CHECK ON THE HOME REGULARLY
  - ◆ HAVE THE YARD MAINTAINED APPROPRIATELY AND STORE AWAY LADDERS.
  - ◆ DO NOT KEEP VALUABLES IN THE HOME

# Protecting yourself from Sexual Assault

- Precautions
  - ◆ Home security – doors and windows locked
  - ◆ Pay attention to your surroundings
  - ◆ Don't go out alone



- ◆ If you are in danger attract attention to yourself, yell, run, scream if you are able
- ◆ Carry a personal safety alarm
- ◆ Don't go somewhere alone with someone you don't know well
- ◆ If you are being stalked, and keep a record of all incidents. Call police

- ◆ Avoid becoming under the influence of alcohol or drugs that impair your judgement. Only accept drinks from a bartender or waitress and never leave your drink unattended. Stick with your friends if you are out and about, watch for any signs of a “cheap drunk” as the person may have had something slipped in their drink. Always party with people you trust.

# If You are Attacked

- Always consider your safety
- You are the only one who decides how to respond should you find yourself in this situation

- Some methods to deter the attack that have been used by victims
  - ◆ Stall for time
  - ◆ Distract
  - ◆ Negotiate
  - ◆ Verbal assertiveness
  - ◆ Scream to attract attention
  - ◆ Run away
  - ◆ Resist physically

# If you become a victim of sexual assault.

- Go to a safe place call a sexual assault crisis centre, hospital, police, relative or friend.
- Report the incident to police immediately. Do not bathe or shower, use personal hygiene, change clothes or disturb the area where the assault occurred. Allow police to collect what they need to investigate the matter.
- Always remember that it is not your fault.

# Personal Safety for Professional Home Visitor

- ◆ Take precautions
  - ★ Obtain as much information about the client and location as possible
  - ★ Verify information
  - ★ Check the location – is it in a potentially dangerous location

- ★ Check if there are extenuating circumstances – alcohol/drug abuse, domestic violence, criminal involvement, mental illness
- ★ If it is a dangerous area make your appointment for morning when those posing a risk may still be sleeping.
- ★ Use all safety precautions when parking your vehicle, leaving your vehicle and returning to your vehicle.

- Discuss potential dangers
- Take a partner
  - ◆ Be calm and confident
  - ◆ Be aware of surroundings if you feel unsafe, leave, ie client exhibits signs of intoxication, client dressed inappropriately,
  - ◆ Note where exits are.
  - ◆ Try to stay behind the client when entering and stand side by side.



- ◆ Avoid the kitchen
- ◆ Do not sit if the client does not
- ◆ Keep your shoes on if possible – they should be flat shoes
- ◆ Don't carry a purse, large amounts of cash or wear expensive jewellery, only essential personal identification.
- ◆ Wear a personal alarm
- Inform a supervisor or co worker where you are going and anticipated return time. Call when you arrive and when you are leaving.

# TAKING A TRIP

- CHOOSE A REPUTABLE TRAVEL AGENCY
- INVESTIGATE YOUR DESTINATION
- SELECT SAFEST ROUTES
- IF TRAVELLING ABROAD CHECK WITH FOREIGN AFFAIRS FOR SECURITY AND HEALTH INFO

- DO NOT OVERBURDEN YOURSELF WITH LUGGAGE
- DO NOT PUT PERSONAL INFORMATION ON LUGGAGE, USE A WORK NUMBER
- LOCK LUGGAGE, DO NOT LEAVE UNATTENDED
- DRESS WISELY WITHOUT LOOKING TOURISTY
- LEAVE AN ITINERARY WITH FAMILY OR FRIEND AND WHERE AND WHEN YOU WILL BE

- USE REPUTABLE HOTEL
- CHECK THE ROOM WITH HOTEL STAFF PRESENT
- BE SURE THERE IS A PEEP HOLE AND DON'T ALLOW ANYONE IN YOU DON'T KNOW, CHECK WITH THE DESK IF SOMEONE STATES THEY ARE WITH THE HOTEL
- KEEP DOORS LOCKED – TRAVEL DOOR LOCK MAY BE PURCHASED
- DON'T KEEP VALUABLES IN YOUR ROOM CHECK AT THE DESK AND GET A RECEIPT.

- IF YOU RENT A CAR USE A REPUTABLE COMPANY AND BE SURE THE VEHICLE IS NOT MARKED AS A RENTAL CAR – DO NOT KEEP PERSONAL ITEMS IN THE CAR – EVEN WHEN YOU ARE IN THE CAR PUT PERSONAL ITEMS OUT OF SIGHT.
- LOCK THE DOORS, KEEP WINDOWS UP AT ALL TIMES
- IF TAKING A CAB – KNOW THE ROUTE AND WRITE DOWN THE PLATE NUMBER AND NAME OF THE CAB COMPANY AND THE DRIVER'S NAME.

# Frauds and Scams

- Anyone coming to your door to sell something does not need to be invited in, it is often difficult to get rid of a persistent salesperson once allowed in. (they often take an invitation to come in as a 'yes' to whatever they are selling) Never feel that you are obligated to invite anyone in to your home.
- **BUYER BEWARE**
- If it sounds too good to be true it probably is.

- Two of the most harmful frauds are home repair and phony prize fraud.
  - ◆ Home repair – usually over priced and poorly done
  - ◆ Telling you that you won a prize but you must pay a fee or provide Credit card number

## Techniques

Rush deals –

Must make a down payment to get the deal –

Claims of credibility –

Free gift(s) if you buy today -

**BE AWARE – Be Wary**

- DEBIT CARDS
- Protect your PIN number
  - ◆ Don't write it down
  - ◆ Don't give it to anyone
  - ◆ Don't ask for help from someone in line if the machine is giving you trouble go in to the bank and have a teller help you.
  - ◆ Use an ATM that is well lit if you have to go at night.
  - ◆ Be aware of persons hanging around
  - ◆ Never count your cash out in the open where you will be noticed.



# Identification of personal items

- ◆ Using an electric engraver to mark your property makes it more difficult for thieves to dispose of your property. Altona Police Service has an engraver which can be borrowed to mark items.
- ◆ Use your DL number that can be traced by police – record S/N of your property for your self and your insurance company.