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**Life-Saving Personal Safety Tips Every Woman
(And Those Who Love Them)
Must Know**

SPRINGFIELD, N.J., March 27, 2003 — Unfortunately, the world has become a more dangerous place in terms of personal safety. Women in particular are often the targets of abduction, theft, car jacking and rape. Danger can lurk almost anywhere, even in one's own home, and the threat level increases when women are unprepared to deal with predators who seek female targets. Developing "street smarts" can greatly increase chances of surviving virtually any type of threatening situation.

Alan Breindel is the president of New Jersey based Secure Defense Systems, Inc. a firm that specializes in emergency preparedness. Mr. Breindel shares his extensive knowledge of personal safety issues for women.

HOW COMMON IS CARJACKING?

Carjacking is on the increase in part because so many cars now have good anti-theft devices. People who steal cars are discovering that while it's getting harder to steal a car that's simply parked at the curb, it's relatively easy to get the car by taking the keys from the person who is driving it.

How can I keep from being carjacked?

"Be aware of the possibility that it might happen," says Alan Breindel. "Look around you when you approach your car in a parking lot or on the street to see if anyone is close by or even underneath the car. Have your keys in your hand so that you can get into your car very quickly and lock the car immediately. Keep the car doors locked and the windows rolled up nearly all the way, or all the way, when you're driving. Whenever you stop, be sure that you can see the road between your car and the car in front of you; that will give you enough space to maneuver if you have to suddenly pull out to one side or the other. Always check the back seat area before entering your car."

What should I do if carjacked?

"If someone approaches you while you are getting into your car, it might be the best thing to simply let them take the car – as long as they're not trying to take you or your child with it," notes Mr. Breindel. One way to foil their plan is simply to throw your keys as far away as possible. If someone is threatening you with a weapon, you are entitled to defend yourself; you're not protecting your car from the carjacker, you're protecting yourself from the carjacker.

Other key tips:

- Always check your car before getting in to make sure that no one is hiding inside.

- It is best to park in attended lots. If you must leave a key with the attendant, leave only the ignition key. In all other cases, lock your car. At night, park only in lighted areas.
- Do not leave ANY packages or personal items in open view in the car. Place them in the trunk.
- If you are in danger of being harmed or robbed while in your car, start sounding your horn until assistance arrives.
- If you feel you are being followed, drive to the nearest police or fire station, or open filling station.
- Once you get in your car, lock it and leave. Don't linger. If you need to check directions or look at a map, do it before leaving your home or office.
- If you are stopped in your car in a parking lot or even at a traffic light and someone approaches, sound your horn and attract attention.

STREET SMARTS FOR WOMEN

Street crime is on the increase in most large U.S. cities. It is also becoming more prevalent in small communities. The following list of "safeguards" will help protect you – and may even save your life:

- When leaving home, make sure that all doors and windows are locked – including the garage door.
- Watch for loiterers and do not carry large sums of money.
- If possible, travel with another person. This is especially true after dark.
- When carrying a purse, women should have only 3 or 4 one-dollar bills placed inside. Credit cards, currency, driver's license, keys and jewelry should be carried in a coat or sweater pocket, or concealed on your person to reduce the opportunity of large losses.
- Always leave all unnecessary credit cards at home.
- When carrying a purse, don't wrap the strap around your shoulder, neck or wrist. If your purse is grabbed, a strong strap will not yield easily and you may be injured. Some purse snatch victims have been thrown off balance and received concussions, broken hips, arms or legs.

Safeguards (cont.)

- When you shop and carry a purse, put it in your shopping bag.
- At night, travel only well-lighted and well-traveled streets.
- Never hitchhike or accept rides from strangers.
- Walk on the side of the street nearest to oncoming traffic.
- If accosted by someone in a car, run in the direction opposite the way the car is headed.
- Beware of people who approach asking directions; keep a polite but safe distance.
- Upon returning home, particularly after dark, do not linger at the entrance of your residence. If you feel something is strange, don't enter. Instead, go elsewhere and call for police assistance.
- If you feel someone is following you, go to the nearest occupied residence or building, and ask for assistance.
- If you are confronted with a dangerous situation, cry out for assistance. Yelling "FIRE! FIRE!" instead of "Help!" will generally bring faster attention.
- If possible, try to travel at night in pairs or groups.

Awareness can prove to be life-saving. It is critical to pay attention at all times to whatever is going on around you. It does take time to become acclimated to heightened levels of safety awareness. Some people feel they are being paranoid when they consider dangerous scenarios. However, with time, it will develop into a natural habit – a habit that can ultimately save your life.

ABOUT SECURE DEFENSE SYSTEMS, INC.

Secure Defense Systems, Inc. located in Springfield, N.J. provides risk management services to help people and organizations mitigate the risks that affect their families, employees, property and operations. Services include: emergency preparedness; evacuation planning; threat and vulnerability assessment; security surveys; parking lot security; executive and family protection; business continuity; and design, installation and maintenance of electronic surveillance and monitoring equipment. Products include emergency preparedness kits for the office, home and automobile.

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