

Crime Prevention Tip of the Month for April 2008

With warmer weather approaching, more people will be outside walking, working in the yard, or just enjoying the warmer weather. This month, the Wichita Police Department Crime Prevention Section would like to offer these personal safety tips in an effort to make you and the community safer.

WALKING/JOGGING:

Avoid jogging or walking alone. Remember there is safety in numbers. Avoid unlit streets, vacant lots, and unpopulated areas. Stick to well-traveled areas like malls and businesses in your area. Refrain from wearing headphones, which prevent you from hearing what is happening around you. Be assertive and know where you are going. Never be friendly when out walking or jogging. Don't give out directions. If you think someone is following you, change directions and get to a safe place. Always have your keys ready when returning home. When arriving home, have a friend wait until you are inside before leaving.

ASSERTIVENESS:

Assertive behavior will help reduce your vulnerability to an assault. Make eye contact with people you meet. Eye contact is a powerful way to say "I am in control myself and my environment. Do not violate my space." No one will listen to you or take you seriously if you speak softly. Speak clearly and with authority. Say "**NO**" rather than "Well, I don't know." Speak up. Strong body language also sends the same assertive message as eye contact. Walk with a sense of purpose like you know exactly where you are going and what you are doing. Pay attention to your instincts. Do not discredit them by thinking that you are just paranoid. If you feel someone can't be trusted or you are in danger, you probably have a good reason. Listen to your instincts and trust them.

IN CONCLUSION:

Be aware of your surroundings. Avoid dangerous situations. Think about your options in advance should you encounter an attacker. Value yourself and your feelings as much as you value others. The most important step you can take in protecting yourself is to acknowledge that it can happen to you. The following principles should be useful in helping you reduce your degree of vulnerability.

1. Be alert.
2. Be aware of the people around you, your surroundings, and the total environment.
3. Be assertive, do not allow yourself to be intimidated.
4. Stay calm.
5. Think clearly.

**Crime Prevention Tip of the Month Brought to you by
the Wichita Police Department Crime Prevention Unit**