



Personal Security Guidance

Overview

In today's world, personal security is more important than ever. This brochure provides practical steps to help you protect yourself, your family, and your property by strengthening security at home, at work, online, and while traveling.

Your personal safety involves general recognition and avoidance of potential harmful situations or people in your surroundings. The core principles of personal safety are awareness, assessment, and action, often called the 3 A's. Remembering the 3A's and adopting safety practices will reduce the likelihood of becoming a victim. ~~To be aware~~ means knowing who and what is around you. Pay attention to your surroundings. Assess the situation by evaluating the people around you in relation to your environment. Identify risks and look for escape routes. Trust your instincts, if something doesn't feel right, leave. If action is necessary yell or scream loudly, use your instincts to fight back if you can't get away.

Reporting Suspicious Activity:

Immediately report any threats, explicit demands, or swatting incidents to the Virginia Fusion Center or (877) 4VA-TIPS and the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) at www.ic3.gov.

Resources/Articles:

General Personal Safety Resources:

FEMA Ready.gov: [Home Safety Tips](#)

FEMA Ready.gov: [Safety Skills Including First Aid and CPR](#)

National Safety Council: [Safety is Personal Campaign](#)

UW Medicine: [6 Self-Defense Tips to Stay Safe](#)

AARP: [Home Safety Tips and Tools](#)

FBI.gov: [2024 Reported Crimes In The Nation Statistics](#)

DHS.gov: [FPS Personal Safety & Security Series](#)

Safety Tips: [Additional Personal Safety Tips](#)

Stunster.com: [The 3A's Of Personal Safety: Awareness, Assessment, And Action](#)

NRA Women: [Personal Safety And Responsibility Through The Eyes Of A LEO Family](#)

KATU.com: [Personal Safety Tips Every Woman Should Know](#)

National Crime Prevention Council: [Personal Safety Tips](#)

RAINN.org: [National Sexual Assault Hotline and Resources](#)

Cybersecurity Online Privacy/Safety:

VFC Shield - [764 Overview and Assessment](#)

Wireless Safety: [Suggestions on Securing Your Wireless Connection](#)

Federal Trade Commission: [Online Privacy & Security](#)

CISA.gov: [Personal Security Considerations Action Guide](#)

CISA.gov: [Secure Our World - Cybersecurity Best Practices](#)

CISA.gov: [Cybersecurity Best Practices](#)

IBM.com: [The 2026 Guide to Cybersecurity](#)

CyberGuy.com: [10 Simple Cybersecurity Resolutions for a Safer 2026](#)

Techtimes.com: [Protect Kids From AI Scams: A Guide To Children's Online Safety And Kids Personal Data Privacy](#)

ed.gov: [Personal Safety For Children - A Guide For Parents](#)

Senior and Vulnerable Groups Safety:

The National Council on Aging: [How Older Adults Can Improve Their Personal Cyber Security](#)

National Cybersecurity Alliance: [Online Safety Tips For Older Adults](#)

Federal Trade Commission: [Scams Against Older Adults](#)

Federal Bureau of Investigation: [Elder Fraud](#)

ConnectSafely: [The Senior's Guide to Online Safety](#)

Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency: [Cybersecurity and Older Americans](#)

Washington State Attorney General: [Internet Safety for Seniors](#)

AARP/OATS from AARP: [Online Safety for Older Adults: Browsing the Internet Confidently](#)

AI Scams and Emerging Threats:

AutoGPT.net: [How to Protect Yourself from AI Scams in 2026](#)

CanIPhish.com: [The 7 Most Popular AI Scams In 2026](#)

Travel and Emergency Preparedness:

Department of State: [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#)

Ready.gov: [Plan Ahead for Disasters](#)

Ready.gov: [Make a Plan](#)

FEMA.gov: [FEMA Mobile App](#)

Travel.State.gov: [International Travel Guidance](#)

Travel.State.gov: [Travel Advisories](#)

Virginia Department of Emergency Management: [Emergency Preparedness Resources](#)

Other Tips

Home Security

- Lock doors, windows, and security screens.
- Install and maintain CCTV or video intercom systems
- Use motion-sensor lighting and keep outdoor areas well-lit.
- Avoid leaving spare keys outside and maintain strict key control.

Cyber Security

- Use strong passwords and enable multi-factor authentication.
- Avoid clicking unknown links or responding to suspicious messages.
- Keep software updated and report cybercrime promptly.

Travel & Vehicle Safety

- Vary travel routes and avoid predictable routines.
- Park in well-lit areas and keep vehicle doors locked.
- Check under and around your car before entering.
- Place your purse or valuables under your seats.
- If your car breaks down, turn on flashers, lock your doors, and pull off the road as far as you can.
- Stay alert to surroundings and report suspicious followers.
- Walk in the center of sidewalks and avoid doorways, bushes, and alleys.
- Advise family and/or friends of your expected travel and when you plan to return.
- Place a hold on your mail and other deliveries while you are away.

Workplace Security

- Prevent unauthorized access by watching for tailgating.
- Avoid sharing schedules or sensitive details with unverified individuals.
- Report suspicious activity to building security or law enforcement.

Social Media Awareness

- Adjust privacy settings and disable geo-tagging.
- Avoid posting identifiable details like your home or car.
- Decline friend requests from unknown individuals.

Children's Safety

- Avoid posting children's details or photos online.
- Teach children not to open doors to strangers.
- Develop an emergency plan and encourage vigilance.
- Accompany children to the restroom when in public.
- Teach children to always advise you where they are going and when they plan to return.