



# PERSONAL SAFETY TIPS

North Central Texas College Police Department

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## ***Employees: Know how to contact the police***

- Know the telephone number for the police department. It is **940-668-4270** or **Extension 4270** from a campus phone.
- Keep the emergency phone numbers near your phones (stickers, magnets, etc.).
- Program emergency phones numbers into your personal cell phone.
- Ensure that you are enrolled in LionAlert and have not opted out of the system. Employees are enrolled through Human Resources.

## ***Walking around campus***

- Familiarize yourself with the layout of the campus. Survey the campus while classes are in session and after dark to see that academic buildings, walkways, facilities, and parking lots are adequately secured and well-lighted.
- Plan the safest route to your destination; choose well-lighted, busy pathways and streets.
- At night, stick to well-lighted areas whenever possible and avoid alleyways or “short cuts” through isolated areas.
- If you are being followed, change direction and go to the nearest occupied office or classroom; knock on the door, and request that someone call the police. Note the description of the person following you.
- Walk near the curb and avoid shrubbery or other places of potential concealment.
- Stay alert to your surroundings and the people around you.
- If carrying a purse, keep it close to your body and keep a firm grip on it; carry your wallet in an inside coat pocket or your front pant pocket.
- Keep your keys separate from your purse.
- Don't overload yourself with bags or packages and avoid wearing shoes that restrict your movements.
- Walk with a confident stride; keep your head up and look around.
- If a motorist stops and asks for directions, keep your distance from the car.

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## ***Motor vehicle safety***

- Park in well lighted areas, where your vehicle is visible.
- Remember **HIDE – LOCK – TAKE**.
  - **HIDE** all items out of sight, especially valuables.
  - **LOCK** your vehicle.
  - **TAKE** your keys with you. Never leave them in a vehicle.
- Service your vehicle regularly to avoid breakdowns.
- Keep your vehicle locked at all times.
- Have your key ready when you approach your car. Before getting in, check inside and under your car to make sure no one is hiding.

## ***When driving***



- If you are not disabled, don't park in a disabled space.
- Do not park in fire lanes or other striped areas that are not designated for parking.
- Carry a cell phone.
- Never let fuel level get below ¼ tank.
- Drive on well-traveled streets and keep your car in gear while it is stopped. Allow at least one car length space between your car and the car in front of you so that you can escape should someone try to get into your car.
- Always be aware of your surroundings and check your rear view mirror often.
- Keep doors locked and windows shut and keep valuables out of sight; either covered or in the trunk.
- If your car breaks down, open the hood and stay inside. If someone stops to help, do not open your window or door, but have him or her call for assistance.
- If you do not know the location of your destination, ask someone for specific directions before you leave.
- If you get lost, do not pull over until you find a well-lit public area, and then call the police.
- If you suspect you are being followed, drive to a well-lit public area and call the police.
- Always carry an emergency kit in your vehicle with first aid supplies, flares, flashlight, jumper cables, blanket, etc.
- Never pick up hitchhikers.
- Beware of people who yell, honk, and point at your car as if something is wrong; if your car breaks down, stay inside and lock the doors. If anyone approaches to help, crack the window and ask them to call the police. Ask uniformed people to show identification.

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- Beware of people who motion and ask you to stop and lend assistance; if you want to assist someone whose car has broken down, go to the nearest phone or use your cell phone and call the police.
- Beware of people who may bump your vehicle from behind; if you think you were bumped intentionally, signal the other person to follow you to the nearest police station.
- If a person with a weapon confronts you and wants your vehicle, give it up. No car is worth being injured or losing your life over.

## ***Road rage***

- Do not take your eyes off the road.
- Avoid eye contact with an aggressive driver.
- Stay cool; don't react to provocation.
- Distance yourself from drivers behaving erratically.
- Do not make obscene gestures.
- Use your horn for safety to alert other drivers – not for expressing anger.
- Keep to the right except to pass; don't block passing lane.
- Do not switch lanes without signaling.
- Avoid blocking the right-hand turn lane.
- Do not take more than one parking space.
- Be careful to not allow your door to hit the car parked next to you.
- Do not tailgate.
- Avoid unnecessary use of high beam headlights.
- Do not become distracted by a cell phone, radio, GPS system, etc.
- Do not stop in the road to talk with a pedestrian or other driver.
- Do not expose neighboring cars or others with loud or inappropriate music.
- Assume other drivers' mistakes are not personal.
- Be polite and courteous, even if the other driver isn't.
- Avoid all conflict if possible. If another driver challenges you, take a deep breath and get out of the way.
- Understand that you can't control the traffic, only your reaction to it.
- If you are followed, either drive to the nearest police station or call 911 on your cell phone.
- Finally, if you are tempted to drive irrationally, ask yourself: "Is it worth being killed? Is it worth going to jail?"

## ***Safe walking, jogging or running***

- Plan your route in advance and walk/jog/run in familiar areas.
- Go with a known companion if possible.
- Carry identification.

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- Don't wear jewelry or carry cash.
- Avoid secluded or dimly lighted areas.
- Avoid going after dark.
- Always face the traffic.
- If you're being followed, cross the street or change directions; keep looking back and get a good description of the person.
- If you're still being followed, go to the nearest house or business and call the police.
- Wear bright colors to improve your visibility.
- Change your route and schedule.
- Avoid bushes where a person could hide.
- Take a key with you; do not leave your house unlocked; someone could be watching to see when you are not home.
- Carry your cell phone, a whistle or shrill alarm to summon help.

## ***If you sense trouble***

- Move away from the potential threat if possible; cross the street and increase your pace.
- Join a group of people nearby.
- If a threatening situation is imminent and people are close by, yell, scream or do whatever you can to get their attention.
- If you are facing an armed criminal, you may minimize the risk of injury to yourself if you comply with the criminal's demands. However, if your life is in immediate danger, use any defense you can to protect yourself and get away.
- Dial 911 immediately and give a description of the suspect.

## ***If you are attacked***

- Go with your instincts, but be realistic about your ability to fight off someone; your instinct may be to run, scream, kick, hit or bite.
- If a weapon is displayed, don't resist. Give up your property and save your life.
- Do what you are told and don't make any sudden moves.
- Try to remember as many details as possible and alert the police as soon as possible.
- Your goal should be to escape safely and survive; cooperate if you think that resisting may lead to further harm.
- Remember every situation is different; you are the only one who can decide the appropriate course of action.
- Constantly play the "what if" game to think about what you would do in a particular threatening situation. This will help prepare you to respond instinctively when a threat is encountered.

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- After an event, never feel guilty about what you did or did not do.

## ***Describing a suspect or a vehicle***

Date

Time

Location

Direction of Travel

Weapon

### **Suspect Information:**

Male/Female

Adult/Juvenile/Approximate Age

Race

Height/Weight

Hair Color

Eye Color

Mustache, beard, sideburns or other facial hair

Tattoos, scars or other identifying marks

Gait, limp or amputations

### **Clothing:**

Hat

Glasses

Shirt type/color

Pants type/color

Shoes

### **Automobile Information:**

Make/Model

Color

Year

Body style (2-door, 4-door, convertible, truck, etc.)

License plate number

Distinguishing features (spoiler, racing stripes, tinting, damage, etc.)

## ***If you are a victim of sexual assault or rape***

- Seek help immediately. Do not feel guilty or try to forget what happened; it is a crime and should be reported.

NCTC Police: 940-668-4270

Emergency: 911

police.nctc.edu  
facebook.com/NCTCPD

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- Get medical attention as soon as possible. Do not shower, wash or change clothing; valuable evidence could be destroyed.
- Seek counseling and support to deal with emotional trauma; the police will be able to assist with determining the best available resources.
- If you think you've been assaulted while under the influence of an unknown drug (GHB, etc.) seek help immediately. Try not to urinate before providing a urine sample and if possible collect any glasses that you drank from.

## ***Cyber security***

- Never give your password to anyone.
- Change your password frequently.
- Do not allow others access to your email account.
- Monitor your access time; by keeping track of when and how long you were on a computer system, it will be obvious if someone has gained access to your account.
- Be wary of anonymous "re-mailers".
- Do not put personal information or photos on your web page and do not give personal information that can identify where you live to social networking sites.
- Never leave your computer/laptop unattended.
- Engrave markings on your computer.
- Keep either photos or notes with serial numbers of your electronics in a safe place. This is the most important tool in reporting theft.
- Shop online only with companies that you know; check with the Better Business Bureau if unsure.
- Use an updated secure browser that will encrypt or scramble purchase information or pay with a money order or check.
- Update your anti-virus software regularly, or when new versions are available.
- Do not download files sent to you by strangers or click on hyperlinks from people you don't know.
- Make certain that all your personal information is deleted from your computer prior to disposing of it.

## ***Computer scams***

- Computer phishing is a crime. Phishers attempt to fraudulently acquire credit card details and other sensitive personal data via bogus emails or pop-up windows. It may look like a legitimate email from a legitimate institution, but beware of unsolicited requests for information.
- Financial or payment institutions will never request that you send them personal sensitive data via email or pop-up windows.
- If you receive a suspicious looking email from any bank, lending, or payment institution, it is best to delete and not respond. If, by coincidence, you have an

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account with the entity mentioned in the email, call your legitimate institution using the number on your physical bill or via the telephone book or through telephone information.

- Do not call the number that may be listed in the bogus email and do not click on any link listed in the bogus email.

## ***Cell phone protection***

- Carry your phone with you whenever possible and make sure it is in a safe place whenever you leave it behind. If you are leaving your phone in your car, be sure it is hidden from view.
- Turn off your phone when you are not using it.
- Set up a personal identification number or password.
- Use the "lock" feature on your phone.
- Report a stolen cellular telephone immediately to the cellular telephone carrier and police.
- Check your monthly bills carefully, and report unfamiliar calls to your cellular phone company.
- Do not give out your electronic serial number or even your phone number to strangers, including callers who represent themselves as technicians testing your line.
- Keep your subscriber agreement, which includes your electronic serial number, in a secure location.

## ***Obscene and annoying phone calls***

- Hang up as soon as you realize the nature of the call. Do not try to find out who the caller is, even if you think it is a friend playing a joke.
- You can also record an obscene phone call with a voice recorder or an app on some phones.
- If the calls occur frequently, keep a log of exactly when the call was received and what both parties said. Describe the type of voice and note any background noises.
- Consider changing your phone number and depersonalizing your voice mail message.
- If the calls continue, contact the police department.

## ***Automated teller machines***

- Try to use ATMs during daylight hours. If you must go at night, do not go alone.
- Avoid ATMs that are not well lit or clearly visible from the street.

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- Be aware of people loitering or sitting in cars around ATMs.
- Prepare your transaction ahead of time. Do not spend much time at the machine.
- Do not give out your Personal Identification Number (PIN) to anyone! Many thieves will attempt to steal your PIN number by calling you on the phone and claiming they are the police, security officers, or bank officers. Memorize it and do not keep a written copy of it in your wallet.
- Either keep your ATM receipt or tear it up and throw it away.
- Look out for unusual attachments at card entry to avoid “skimmer” devices from stealing your card information.

## ***Protecting yourself from identity theft***

- Destroy private records and statements. Destroy credit card statements, solicitations and other documents that contain any private information. Shred this paperwork using a "cross-cut" shredder so thieves can't find your data when they rummage through your garbage. Also, don't leave a paper trail; never leave ATM, credit card or gas station receipts behind.
- Secure your mail. Empty your mailbox quickly, lock it or get a P.O. Box so criminals don't have a chance to steal credit card offers. Never mail outgoing bill payments and checks from an unsecured mailbox, especially at home. They can be stolen from your mailbox and the payee's name erased with solvents. Mail them from the post office or another secure location.
- Safeguard your Social Security number. Never carry your card with you, or any other card that may have your number, like a health insurance card or school issued ID. Don't put your number on your checks; your SSN is the primary target for identity thieves because it gives them access to your credit report and bank accounts. There are very few entities that can actually demand your SSN - the Department of Motor Vehicles, for example. Also, SSNs are required for transactions involving taxes, so that means banks, brokerages, employers, and the like also have a legitimate need for your SSN.
- Safeguard your computer. Protect your computer from viruses and spyware. Use complicated passwords or passphrases; frequently update antivirus software and anti-spyware software. Surf the Web cautiously. Shop only at trustworthy web sites and be wary of obscure sites or any site you've never used before.
- Know who you're dealing with. Whenever you are contacted, either by phone or email, by individuals identifying themselves as banks, credit card or e-commerce companies and asked for private identity or financial information, do not respond. Legitimate companies do not contact you and ask you to provide personal data such as PINs, user names and passwords or bank account information over the phone or Internet. If you think the request is legitimate, contact the company yourself by calling customer service using the number on your account statement or in the telephone book and confirm what you were told before revealing any of your personal data.

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- Take your name off marketers' hit lists. In addition to the national Do Not Call Registry (1-888-382-1222 or <https://www.donotcall.gov>), you also can reduce credit card solicitations for five years by contacting an opt-out service run by the three major credit bureaus: (888) 5-OPT OUT or <https://www.optoutprescreen.com>. You'll need to provide your Social Security number as an identifier.
- Guard your personal information. Ask questions whenever anyone asks you for personal data. How will the information be used? Why must I provide this data? Ask anyone who does require your Social Security number, for instance, cell phone providers, what their privacy policy is and whether you can arrange for the organization not to share your information with anyone else.
- Monitor your credit report. Each year, obtain and thoroughly review your credit report from the three major credit bureaus; Equifax (800-685-1111), Experian (888-397-3742) and TransUnion (800-680-4213) or at <https://www.annualcreditreport.com> to look for suspicious activity. If you spot something, alert your card company or the creditor immediately.
- Review your bank and credit card statements carefully. Look for unauthorized charges or withdrawals and report them immediately. Make sure you recognize the merchants, locations and purchases listed before paying the bill. If you don't need or use department store or bank-issued credit cards, consider closing the accounts.
- Keep track of your billing dates/cycles and follow up with creditors if you don't receive bills/statements on time.
- Use random letters and numbers for passwords; don't use your mother's maiden name, your birth date, your graduation date, your social security number or any other familiar letters or numbers that can be associated with you as passwords.
- Be aware of how ID thieves can get your information. They get information from businesses or other institutions by stealing records, bribing employees with access to records, hacking into computers, rummaging through trash, posing as a landlord, employer, or someone else who may have a legal right to the information, stealing credit and debit card numbers as your card is processed by using a special information storage device ("skimming"), stealing wallets and purses containing identification and credit or bank cards, stealing mail, including bank and credit card statements, pre-approved credit offers, new checks, or tax information or completing a "change of address form" to divert your mail to another location.

## ***If your identity is stolen***

- Contact the fraud departments of each of the three major credit bureaus. Tell them that you're an identity theft victim. Request that a "fraud alert" be placed in

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your file, along with a victim's statement asking that creditors call you before opening any new accounts or changing your existing accounts.

1. **Equifax** To report fraud: 1-800-525-6285 (P.O. Box 740241, Atlanta, GA 30374-0241),
  2. **Experian** To report fraud: 1-888-EXPERIAN (397-3742) (P.O. Box 9532, Allen, TX 75013), and
  3. **TransUnion** To report fraud: 1-800-680-7289 (Fraud Victim Assistance Division, P.O. Box 6790, Fullerton, CA 92634)
- Contact the creditors for any accounts that have been tampered with or opened fraudulently. Speak with someone in the security/fraud department of each creditor, and follow up with a letter.  
If your Social Security number has been used illegally, contact the Social Security Fraud Hotline at 1-800-269-0271.
  - File a report with the police in the community where the identity theft took place. Get a copy of the police report in case the bank, credit-card company, or others need proof of the crime.
  - Keep records of everything involved in your efforts to clear up fraud, including copies of written correspondence and records of telephone calls.

## ***Con Artists***

- If a deal sounds too good to be true; it probably is.
- Be wary of any get rich quick scheme that wants you to invest money in advance.
- Never give out your credit card information over the phone unless you made the call.
- Do not buy on the spur of the moment; take time to research the company or product.
- If you are approached by a possible con artist or unauthorized solicitor, report the incident immediately to the police.

## ***Theft protection***

- When leaving your home or office, lock doors and windows even if you will be gone for "just a minute."
- Never leave your purse, wallet, or valuables exposed; store them out of sight. Be especially careful with your credit cards, which are very popular items among thieves because they are usually easy to steal and then use again. Consider obtaining a credit card with your photo imprinted on it.
- Computers, especially if they are portable, are primary targets of theft. Consider the purchase of a locking security or tracking device.
- Keep a list of all items and serial numbers in a safe place.
- Never prop open a locked door.

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## ***Home security***

- All windows should be secured with anti-slide devices.
- Secure sliding glass doors with a lock or bar, or place a piece of wood or broom handle in the track.
- Move valuables so they cannot be seen from porch windows.
- Never leave a house key hidden outside your home.
- Replace the small screws in strike plate (on the door frame) of your deadbolt lock with 3" security screws.
- Fasten window mounted air conditioners units securely to the windowsill or window frame so they can't be removed from the outside.
- Mid and high-rise residents should release the front door only to visitors who positively identify themselves.
- Arrange for an unlisted telephone number.
- Do not put your name on the outside of your residence mailbox and do not leave notes on outside doors.
- Consider a bank safety deposit box or fire-proof safe for valuable documents and items.

## ***Campus holiday security***

- If you leave your office for the holiday, remove all valuables from it.
- Place valuables that you cannot take with you out of sight in your office and unplug all lamps, heaters, and electric scent warmers or diffusers before you leave.
- If you are on campus during holidays or the summer be alert to any suspicious persons that are out of place.
- Call the police immediately to report any unusual activity.

## ***Tips for home if you are leaving for vacation***

- Lock doors and windows securely.
- Turn your telephone ringers down low so a burglar won't be alerted to your absence by its ringing.
- Make your house/apartment look occupied; have a friend or neighbor pick up your mail and newspapers, set televisions and lights on timers, leave your blinds, shades, and curtains in their normal positions, and keep your lawn mowed and watered.
- Leave your vacation phone number, address, and itinerary with a trusted friend so you can be reached in case of an emergency.

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## ***Active shooter (Campus or Workplace Violence)***

If you are involved in a situation where someone has entered the area and started shooting, stabbing, or committing acts of violence; the following are a list of actions that are recommended:

### **RUN** and Avoid

Avoid the area or move to a safe location and call the police. Provide as much detail as possible as to descriptions, actions, and locations to aid the authorities.

### **HIDE** and Deny

If you cannot safely avoid the area, then deny access to your location. Lock and barricade doors or entry points. Go back into avoid mode and turn off lights, close blinds, and be silent.

### **FIGHT** and Defend

If an aggressor is attempting to enter the room, prepare to defend yourself to save your life. If you choose to engage an attacker for your own defense, utilize objects around you as weapons and, if in a group, work as a team to stop the attacker together.

If you are being cleared from a building remember to keep your hands up and palms open to help the police see that you are not holding any weapons. Comply with police commands to aid in safely clearing everyone from the building or area.

**REMEMBER; a safe campus is everyone's responsibility!**

Personal Safety Tips Courtesy: International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators