

**MIAMI-DADE SCHOOLS POLICE DEPARTMENT
MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA
ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION**

TRAINING BULLETIN

INFORMATION BULLETIN 2004-02

Subject: Personal Safety

May 5, 2004

All Miami-Dade County Public Schools (MDCPS) employees should become familiar with some basic safety tips to safeguard themselves from becoming victims of violent crime when entering or exiting any location. Prepared with these simple, yet effective techniques, employees of the School District can work together and become a powerful force against crime.

The following are some guidelines that MDCPS employees can implement into their daily routines:

- Always be aware of your surroundings when in areas of concern; e.g., parking lots, roadways, open access areas.
- Be vigilant in looking for potential hiding places such as behind parked vehicles, bushes and shrubs.
- Report any suspicious vehicles, persons and activities to the police.
- Have your keys in hand so as not to delay entering buildings or vehicles.
- Always walk in a group, if possible. There truly is "safety in numbers," and offenders are less likely to target a group as opposed to an individual.
- Avoid displaying valuables such as jewelry or large sums of money.
- If carrying a cell phone, it should be concealed, yet readily accessible in the event of an emergency.
- Dress conservatively to avoid attracting unnecessary attention.
- Never utilize your cell phone while walking through a parking lot as this detracts from your ability to be aware of potential danger.
- If carrying a purse or handbag, be sure to keep it close to the body. Avoid having shoulder straps around your neck or twisted around your wrists.

- Avoid leaving valuables; e.g., purses, money, laptop computers and wallets in unlocked or unattended desk drawers, or visible within vehicles.
- Practice becoming familiar with your work location address and nearby landmarks.
- Park in a well lit area if you arrive early or anticipate departing late from the facility. Be sure to report any damaged lights or fencing to site administrators.
- Prior to entering your vehicle, look in the rear seat for any intruders that may be hiding. After entering your vehicle, immediately lock the doors and depart.
- Exude strength in your body language when walking through parking lots.
- Avoid becoming a sympathetic victim. Many offenders will attempt to deceive their victims using crutches, canes or stories of vehicle problems as distractions.
- If confronted, be sure to appear calm, scream for help and avoid close contact by positioning an object, such as a vehicle, between yourself and the assailant.
- Be sure to obtain a good physical description of the offender, any vehicle used to facilitate the crime, and direction of flight. This information will assist police in the ensuing investigation.

Remember, in the event of an emergency you should immediately call 911. For any other calls for police assistance when at MDCPS facilities, you should contact the Miami-Dade Schools Police Department at 305-757-COPS.

It is important to remember that no loss of property, regardless of value, is worth the risk of serious injury. Always be aware of your surroundings and never dismiss any suspicious behavior. What may seem trivial at the time could prove to be the difference in avoiding a potential attack. No one ever expects to become a victim of violent crime, but we all must have a plan and be prepared to act quickly.

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