

THE DENVER CENTER FOR CRIME VICTIMS

TIPS FOR YOUTH SAFETY – BE A CRIME DETECTIVE

When walking...

Walk with others whenever you can. Have a special group you walk to and from school with. Ask someone to go with you to the store. Call your friend or family member to let them know you are on the way and about how long it will take you to get there.

Carry a pad and pen/pencil with you so you can write down license plate numbers or information of people or things that don't look or feel right. Neighbors and police will appreciate such helpful information. You can attach a pad and pencil to your lunch box so you will always have it going to and from school.

If you are out in the street and a car pulls over toward you, just keep walking AWAY from the car. Do the same if a person or group of people walk toward you and you feel uneasy, just walk the opposite way and look for a familiar, safe place, business or person to go to. People who are in cars or on foot who need directions to a house or business do not have to ask a child, they can find an adult to ask those questions. Adults can figure out ways to find out what they need to know to get where they are going.

If someone has approached you on the way to school and you are uncomfortable about it, get to school and let an adult know about it. Try to remember information about how that person looked, what they were wearing, or anything that could be of help. It may well be that they have done this before and someone else may have reported it. Teachers want to know about people who make their students uncomfortable or scared.

If a person offers you money or food, say, "No, thank you," and go on your way. People you don't know shouldn't be offering you such things. If they say they need your help to find a missing dog, cat, bike, ring, etc., ask them what it looks like, and tell them that you will look out for it. Again, he or she can ask adults for that same help. Do not be tempted by money or other prizes. If the person is telling the truth, he or she can put up a sign with a telephone number for people to call. If you find the object, your mom/dad can call with you and you'll get the reward.

If you find someone that appears injured, make lots of noise to get attention. You can call 911 or get someone to do it. If you're near a pay phone, you can call 911 or 0 for the operator without having to pay. The operator will pass the call on for help.

If someone is coming up to you and you are scared, scream or make lots of noise. You may want to carry a whistle. Keep it somewhere you can get it really easily.

When you are at home...

NEVER open the door to someone you don't know or feel uncomfortable with. If they insist and say they absolutely need your help, tell them you will call 911 for them while they wait outside.

If you are home alone and someone calls, never say, "I am home alone. My mom is not here." Just say, "My mother is not available at the moment. Can you call back later or leave a telephone number for her." A person who has a genuine reason to call will understand. You have been polite and have not given out too much information.

How to make your own safety plan...

Speak with the people in your house and make a set of rules about what to do in uncertain situations. Everyone should know whom he or she can contact on the block, in the neighborhood, or elsewhere when help is needed. Those people should be spoken with so they know that you have them on your list to call if you need help. Know where their telephone numbers are. Memorize key phone numbers.

Make sure a neighbor or friend has an extra key to your house in case you lose yours. Try not to put extra keys under the mat or other places around the house. Robbers sometimes figure those things out. Keep the key with someone responsible whom you are comfortable getting it from. Never give your key out to anyone unless you have permission from your mom/dad. If you lose your key, let your mom or dad know immediately.

Kids should always know how to contact their mom/dad. Moms/dads should always know where their kids are. Each of you must be responsible. Set up a system, a way to assure that this happens. Sometimes it is not possible to be in touch, but you can still make a plan to let each other know where you are.

Remember, NOISE and LIGHT are the enemies of people who might want to cause you harm. If you hear strange noises outside your house, make sure all of your lights go on, make noise and call a neighbor or 911. Keeping a light or lights on outside all night is a really good way to keep away people who should not be there.

NO ONE should ever touch you without your permission. 1) No one should ever touch you without your permission. 2) You don't even have to shake hands with someone if that is not comfortable. 3) You get to set the limits.

There are a lot of wonderful people you will meet and interact with during your life. But you get to decide what feels comfortable to you. If you are not comfortable with a person or situation, your detective side is picking up on some good clues. Do what you need to do. If that situation turns out to have been a false alarm, so what. You have taken care of yourself and that is what is important!