



RAPE COUNTERMEASURES

■ SAFETY AT HOME

- » Replace all locks when you move into a new home. Install a peephole in the door. Never open the door for anyone before making sure who it is.
- » Keep doors locked at all times, and teach your children to do the same.
- » Confirm the identity of all persons coming to do repair work in the house. Phone his employer or agency, and rather let him wait outside until you have ascertained that he is in fact who he pretends to be.

■ LOWERING THE RISK

The following is a list of hints that may be followed to lower the risk of being raped or assaulted:

- » Safeguard your car and home. Be sure to always have a large torch, a cell phone and at least R100 in cash with you in the car. The torch could also be used as a weapon. The cash amount is for any emergency regarding the car (buying fuel, etc.). Keep the doors of the car locked and the windows closed at all times. Never open the car's door for a stranger.
- » Avoid unsafe situations, places and strangers. If you see you are being followed, drive to the nearest SAPS station, fire station or any other place where there are other people (shops, filling stations, etc.).
- » Never go for a walk alone or in a deserted place after dark.
- » Move away from a potentially dangerous situation. Shout or make a noise to draw attention to yourself. Have a whistle with you that can make a considerable noise.
- » Offer passive or active resistance. Passive resistance means to think or talk yourself out of a situation. Active resistance means to immediately react aggressively in order to unnerve your attacker. Use any weapon available (keys, hair spray, nails, teeth, etc.).
- » In such a situation it is important to keep calm! Consider alternative actions to escape from the situation.
- » You are responsible for your own safety. Organise talks by law enforcement officers or other specialists to address your family, employees and neighbours on how to deal with a threat.
- » Never allow a stranger into your home, whatever the circumstances.
- » Never suggest to any stranger that you are the only one at home.
- » Never indicate on any address list, telephone list or mail box that you are a single woman.
- » Switch outside lights on after dark and keep at least one light in the house on throughout the night.
- » If you receive an indecent call, terminate the call immediately and do not react to it in any way.

■ SAFETY HINTS WHILE WALKING SOMEWHERE

- » Avoid walking alone. Ask someone to accompany you and walk in areas where there are other people close by.
- » Walk in well-lit areas, away from alleys, bushes and deep and dark driveways.
- » Do not take shortcuts through parks, vacant stands and other deserted places.
- » Do not hitch a ride or accept lifts from strangers.
- » If a vehicle stops next to you to ask something, do not get too close to the vehicle.
- » If you see you are being followed, immediately go to the nearest house or business premises.
- » If you are being harassed by the occupants of a car, turn around and walk in the opposite direction to where you were walking.
- » Keep your handbag close to your body and do not allow it to swing freely. Do not have valuable items or cash on you.
- » Have the key to your home ready when you arrive, so you can enter without delay.
- » Do not jog with earphones after sunset. You should at all times be able to hear if someone approaches you.

Always be aware of people moving in your immediate space. Be aware of your environment and be prepared for any eventuality at all times.

■ SAFETY HINTS WHILE DRIVING

- » Never pick up a hitchhiker.
- » Always keep the doors of your car locked. Look under the car as you approach it.
- » Look at the rear seat and on the floor of the car before getting in.
- » Have your car key ready to unlock the car immediately when you arrive at the car. Never search for your key in your handbag while in the parking area. Be sure to have the key ready in your hand before leaving a building.
- » If your car is unlocked via a remote control device, activate the device only when you are ready to get into the car.
- » Be sure to have enough fuel to reach your destination.
- » If possible, drive on well-lit, busy roads and avoid deserted back roads.
- » If you see you are being followed, immediately drive to the nearest open business, SAPS station, fire station or filling station.
- » Never leave your home key with your car key at a service centre or parking area.
- » Women travelling alone should never stop to assist a stranger who has had a breakdown.
- » If your car gives trouble, open the engine cover and get back into your car. Lock all doors and windows. If someone stops to offer assistance, open the window just enough to communicate with the person.

■ SAFETY HINTS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS

- » Children should be warned never to accept a lift from a stranger.
- » Encourage children to talk to their parents if ever they were in a situation where they were feeling uncomfortable, not only with a stranger but also with a friend or a relative.
- » Children should be taught what routes to take back home, and to avoid deserted areas.
- » Teenagers should not look after children of people they do not know or who were not referred by someone.
- » Parents should be aware of their children's movements at all times.

In spite of all the hints and advice one could find oneself in a situation where one is confronted by an attacker. If the unavoidable does happen, you have only seconds to make a decision that could mean the difference between life and death. For this reason it is important for you to prepare yourself mentally for the possibility of falling victim to this horrible form of violent crime.

■ IMMEDIATELY REPORT A RAPE

Report it to the SAPS immediately. The police can investigate a case and apprehend the criminal only if they are aware of it.

Do not:

- » Change your clothing.
- » Take a bath or shower.
- » Eat, smoke or chew chewing gum. All physical evidence, including semen, hair, blood and skin scrapings under the victim's nails, can serve as evidence in court.

■ INFORMATION THAT WILL BE REQUIRED BY THE SAPS

- » Registration number, make, model and colour of the car
- » Race of the attacker
- » Length, weight and age
- » Colour and length of hair
- » Colour of eyes
- » Clothing
- » Any uncommon marks or lesions, tattoo marks, rings etc.
- » Beard, moustache and specific characteristic smell

Try to keep calm during the incident, and try to remember as much about the attacker as possible.