

# Car Safety

## 1. How to approach your car:

- Have keys ready.
- Before entering parking lot, look from left to right, and right to left.
- Half way to car, look all around you. If you see anything suspicious, go no further. GO for help.
- When you get close to the car, stop and look under, left and right side, and in the back seat.
- Unlock the door while standing at an angle to the car and looking around. Get in quickly and lock the door, using your elbow or an automatic door lock.
- Don't lower windows until you have left the garage, or are moving.
- Remember the key to your safety is to keep looking all around. **BE AWARE!**

2. Your car is a protective shell around you, but you must take into consideration its vulnerable points. Windows can be broken. Tires can be slashed. The engine can be sabotaged. The advantage of being in a car is that you can drive away, or even use it as a weapon.

3. A car phone will allow you to call for help without leaving the security of your locked car.

4. Have AAA or other roadside repair service. A person changing a tire is a vulnerable target.

5. Keep a map, a heavy flashlight, coins and money, first aid kit with reflector blanket, water, jumper cables and a spare tire and jack in the car.

6. Never leave your purse or other valuables on the seat, use the trunk instead. Clothing with pockets will allow you to minimize the need to rely on a purse. If you form the habit of always keeping your keys in a pocket then you will never fumble for them.

7. Keep your windows up most of the time. Air conditioning increases your ability to be comfortable with the windows closed when it is hot. Automatic windows allow you to have control of the windows you cannot reach while driving, however a crank window can be raised more quickly in an emergency. Stand outside your car door and experiment to find the smallest opening that will allow

your hand to reach the door lock. If the window opening exceeds this limit, you are vulnerable unless moving.

8. Avoid dangerous neighborhoods if possible. Car accidents or breakdowns can happen, thugs can stop you. Rocks can be thrown. Take a little extra time to drive around a danger area. If you must enter a suspicious neighborhood, be very alert and aware.

9. If your car is surrounded by a gang, do not leave the car or open the window even a crack. Blow your horn until help comes. If you have a car phone, call 911. As a last resort, drive slowly through the crowd. Remember a car can be a weapon, do not use more force than is necessary.

10. If you are followed, don't pull over to see if he'll pass you. You could be blocked in and trapped. Instead, stay on well lit, well-travelled streets. Don't go home. Slow down, flash lights, hazard lights, horn. Make other motorists aware you're in trouble. Drive to a police or fire station, or an emergency room. Again, a car phone is a good thing!

11. At the patient's home, park as close to the front door as possible. Park facing the way you will go when you leave. If it will be dark when you leave consider the location of street lights and dark areas. Do not park near bushes or hiding place. Never park by a van with no windows.

12. When you set up your visits, let the client know when to expect you, and if it is a dangerous area, ask them to be watching for you. Ask the patient for their opinion of safety in the area. The patient may well be your best resource in this matter. Consider calling ahead as you leave the home of the preceding patient (another argument for car phones). When you leave the home have the patient watch you to your car. Family members often enjoy walking you to your car because this is a way for them to speak to you privately. This could be a protection, or a case in which two people have become vulnerable.

13. Leaving the car to use a pay phone exposes you to danger. If you are paged while driving, consider driving on to your next visit. Only use pay phones if absolutely necessary, and maintain awareness as you do so.