

Parking Lot Safety

With the daylight being shorter during the fall and winter, being outdoors can be a little scary. Whether you're at work, visiting a client site, at home or out on the town, you should always have caution to your surroundings while in parking lots. Depending on its location, design, and the time of day, parking lots can present a risk of violence both intentionally and unintentionally. The good news is that there are some basic safety principles that you can use to keep you safer when traveling to and from your car.

Always:

- Park near your building in a highly visible and well-lit area, if possible
- Use the main building entrance – avoid secluded exits
- Keep your valuables, including purse and recent purchases, out of sight. Always lock them in the trunk if you have to leave them in the car
- Lock the doors and roll up windows once you are in the vehicle
- Once you're in your car, again lock your doors and try to avoid sitting there for an extended period of time
- Use the main building entrance – avoid rear or secluded exits.
- Keep your valuables, including purses and recent purchases, out of sight. Always lock them in the trunk if you have to leave them in the car.
- Lock the doors and roll up windows once you are in the vehicle.

Always be alert to your surroundings. Walk with confidence. Keep your head up, not on your cell phone, (eh hem) and look around. Look directly at people but do not stare at them. Trust your instincts when you feel something is not right.

If you have to walk alone:

- Have a co-worker watch you from a window
 - Wave to them on the way to your vehicle, even if no one is actually watching you to give the illusion that someone is
 - Stay on well-lit streets, and in the center of the sidewalk. Stay away from hiding spots, such as bushes, doorways, alleys and parked cars. Cross the road if necessary.
- Always be alert to your surroundings. Walk with confidence. Keep your head up and look around. Look directly at people, but do not stare at them. Trust your instincts when you feel something is not right.

Do not:

- Dig in your purse or bag
 - Wear headphones or be distracted by a cell phone conversation
 - Carry heavy briefcases or bags that may get in the way
 - Carry any type of weapon, including pepper spray. They could easily be used against you and are illegal in some jurisdictions
- Be prepared when you leave your business, or wherever you previously were.
- Have ready:
- Your keys to unlock the vehicle or your key/key card to unlock building doors
 - Your keys or card key to unlock building doors.
 - A whistle or other personal alarm.

Have the keys ready to unlock the door as you get near the vehicle or door. As you approach your car, look around, inside, and even glance underneath for people who may be present. If you are suspicious, walk away. Go to a safe place and call for help.

Workplace Safety Tips: *Parking Safety*

- Park in well-lit areas close to destination.
- Walk with co-worker or security guard to car.
- Use extra caution in parking garage- there are lots of blind spots.
- Write down location of your car, so you don't get lost and wander around.

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