

Safety tips for students

The University is committed to make your stay in Bristol as enjoyable as possible, whilst ensuring you keep yourself safe and secure whether working or socialising in this beautiful city.

Keeping yourself safe does not involve any great financial outlay and can be achieved by using simple basic principles to improve your personal safety.

The first area to highlight is awareness. There is substantial evidence to support the view that those people who are unaware of their surroundings and its inhabitants can endanger their personal safety.

Firstly, plan your journey. Whether by foot, taxi or car, a few basic principles should be adhered to.

- Does your flat- or house-mate know where you are going and what time you will return? Is it to visit a friend? Is it someone they can contact if there are any problems or if you are late home? What time will you be back? Are you working late in a department? University Security staff can assist in escorting you back to your car in an isolated car park – call (0117 92) 87848
- If you are travelling late at night, it is always best to go with a friend, especially if it is a quiet area.
- Use a reputable taxi company (pre booked if possible). Carry their card. Some use female drivers. Don't be tempted to use unlicensed taxis.
- If accepting a lift do you know the person you are travelling with? Don't accept lifts with strangers however nice they appear.
- The shortest route may not be the safest. Stay in well lit areas, where there are plenty of people.
- Walk on the outside of the pavement facing the oncoming traffic. You then cannot be 'kerb crawled' by cars coming towards you.
- Don't miss that last bus. Know the times. Sit near other people or the driver.
- Do not walk along on your mobile or listening to your iPod. Be aware of iPod 'oblivion;' that is having little or no awareness of what is happening around you. Have a look at this example!
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CzOcEWOfuOg>
- Use your surroundings to check who is behind you. Use reflections from shop windows or car wing mirrors to see who is there. Be aware of who is there!

- Consider places of safety in the area that you could go to if necessary, e.g. cafes, shops or 24-hour garages which will invariably have CCTV, security staff and a well-lit, busy environment.
- Never be in a condition where you are not capable of looking after yourself. You can still have good time!

Next we move on to your personal property.

- Clothing. Ensure it is sensible for your journey. Can you walk in those shoes!
- Hand or any other type of bag. Try and wear it so that the strap is across your body, with the opening closest to your body. Keep at least one hand free to use to defend yourself or prevent injury during a fall. Also take a good look at the contents of any bags. For example-do you really need to take all of your credit/debit cards with you every time?
- Keep your mobile phone handy, not buried at the bottom of your bag, so that when you are in need you can locate it quickly. Where is yours now?
- Is your mobile fully charged, with credit on it? Also keep a couple of I.C.E. numbers in the contacts list. **I.C.E.** stands for **In Case of Emergency**. From your long list of contacts would someone know that Jenny, Matt or.....is the person who you would like contacted in an emergency in relation to you?
The emergency services and other agencies will check mobiles for these ICE numbers especially if you are unconscious or incapable of communicating for yourself.
- A phone card could be useful. If your mobile doesn't work then you have you an alternative, be aware that a lot of public telephones no longer accept coins
- Do you have a personal attack alarm? The University provide these free from Royal Fort Lodge.

Will you be using a car? Consider these few simple rules:

- Lock all your doors when driving. It isn't unknown for people to get into vehicles or steal property from the seats at traffic lights or in slow moving traffic.
- Don't leave valuable items on view when you leave the car
- Make sure you are a member of a motoring organisation. The student union may have cheap/competitive offers
- Is your car in good working order?
- Park to leave do not park to arrive! Reverse in so you can drive out easily.
- Always check the interior of the vehicle before getting in

Finally, if you encounter an incident what should you do?

- If threatened be prepared to give up bags or equipment. It is not easy to do that but property can be replaced. You cannot!

- Try and attract attention by whatever means you can
- You can legally defend yourself using reasonable force in the circumstances
- Fleeing the scene is your best option. Run towards a place of safety.
- Please report suspicious incidents to the University security and/or the police. They may seem inconsequential at the time but may establish that there is a problem at a particular location or area. Patrols can then be targeted or increased
- There are plenty of people willing to offer help and support to you including your friends and family, University security, police, victims support, students union, occupational health and counselling services to name a few.

Simple, sensible precautions will always prove their worth. Make them second nature as you are moving around this great city. Encourage your friends to do the same, create a pro-security culture among your fellow students. A little bit of time spent on these issues could save a lot of heartache in the future.

Stay Safe