



The Safety Corner

From the Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned December 07, 2007



Personal Safety

This issue of the Safety Corner highlights personal safety tips.

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From the Director: The holiday season is a time for celebrations and family gatherings. Unfortunately, it is also a time when crimes against people and property become more prevalent across the nation. Crowded malls and parking lots can present unique dangers, especially during the holiday season when criminals conduct some of their most successful business. Remember, they have to do their shopping too.

The chances that you or a family member will be a victim of violent crime are low, but many of us still fear that we or someone close to us, will be the victim of an attack. This fear can be magnified when you are deployed in support of the War on Terrorism and your spouse is back home. The best way to reduce the chance of an attack is by examining your surroundings and potential threats, taking sensible precautions, and developing situational awareness.

Please take a look at the personal safety issues in this newsletter. My wife recently had her car broken into, resulting in her camera, cell phone, purse, id cards, credit cards, and cash all being stolen. As you read through the section on how to avoid being a victim, I think my wife and I will attest that closer attention to some basic precautions might have saved us some headaches and expenses. This was not some high speed theft, it was just a big rock taken from the pre-school flower garden smashed through the side window of the car and the purse grabbed off the front seat while she ran my daughter into school. She was only gone a few minutes, but it was long enough. Take a look and talk about these issues with your family.

You are welcome to pass on and post this newsletter for widest dissemination. Log on the www.mccll.usmc.mil to download previous editions of the Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned Safety Corner as well as our Monthly Newsletters. I look forward to receiving your comments and feedback so we can raise awareness, reduce risk and maintain a high level of readiness. Happy Holidays from the Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned (MCCLL) staff.

Semper Fidelis,
Col Monte Dunard, Director MCCLL
Email : monte.dunard@usmc.mil
Telephone: 703.432.1286 DSN: 378.1286

Safety Quiz Source: http://www.courtv.com/safety_challenge/2004/holiday_alert/quiz.html

Answers on page 3

1. When shopping for holiday gifts and paying with a credit card what should be done with the receipts you receive?
 - a. Throw them out
 - b. Leave them with the store for them to dispose of
 - c. Put them in the bag with your purchase
 - d. Place somewhere safe, e.g. your wallet, purse etc
2. What should you do if you think your identity has been stolen?
 - a. Call the credit card company
 - b. Call the police
 - c. Call the three major credit reporting bureaus
 - d. Call the FTC (federal trade commission)
 - e. All of the above.
3. When hosting a party where you are serving alcoholic drinks you should:
 - a. Assume your guests are responsible drinkers and won't drive drunk
 - b. Wait until everyone is settled in to start asking about designated drivers
 - c. Graciously ask who will be driving when your guests arrive before you serve drinks
4. When you become overburdened with bags when holiday shopping in a mall -- which of these is a safe idea:
 - a. Make multiple trips to the car in order to drop off packages
 - b. Carry as much as possible in order to minimize trips to your car
 - c. Keep excess packages in a mall locker or ask the stores to hold onto your packages for you until you leave the mall
 - d. All of the above



(Continued)



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Safety Quiz (continued)

5. If you must store packages in your car, what is the safest place for them?

- a. Locked trunk.
- b. Floor of the car.
- c. Backseat.

6. Which of these is an example of using an ATM safely?

- a. Using ATMs in populated areas and paying attention to what is going on around you.
- b. Using them during the day if you can.
- c. Picking one at night that is well lit and not hidden away from traffic.
- d. Being on the lookout for shady people hanging around the machine.
- e. All of the above.



7. When purchasing gifts online, which is the safest method of payment?

- a. Sending cash.
- b. Using checks.
- c. Using a credit card.

8. Watch your back driving home – shoppers have been robbed of their gifts in their drive way. If you believe you're being followed, what precautions should you take?

- a. Circle the block.
- b. Step on the gas and try to lose them.
- c. Call the police.
- d. Call a friend to come over and help you out.



9. What should you do when paying for your online shopping and nothing happens when you click on the "Send" button?

- a. Keep clicking the "Send" or "Submit" button until the website changes.
- b. Reload the whole website and start from the beginning.
- c. Contact the website and check your credit card activity to see if you've been charged or over charged.



In the Parking Lot

- Always park where there is plenty of light, not only around your car, but also from your car to the mall or store entrance.
- Once your car is parked, familiarize yourself with its location so you can find it without delay.
- Don't hesitate to ask for a security escort if you feel unsafe.

At the Mall

- Try to shop when the mall is less crowded, during the weekday, or at night when malls stay open late for holiday shoppers.
- Avoid the weekend rush, when it's easy to lose children among crowds.
- Don't dangle your handbag from your shoulder. You are creating a perfect setup for a purse-snatcher.
- Keep your purse tucked tightly under your arm, or better yet, don't even carry a purse. Wear a fanny pack facing the front instead.
- Keep your hands free to hold onto or carry your child. You'll eliminate the possibility of leaving your purse behind or having it stolen. If you use pockets, place your checkbook, cash, or credit cards in your front pockets.
- Only bring one or two credit cards and a limited amount of cash with you.
- Spread your money around in different pockets. That way a pickpocket can't clean you out in one fell swoop.
- Avoid carrying your checkbook, cash, and credit cards all together in one wallet, because a thief who gets the whole package together can cash checks with your identification and run up a large credit card bill in a short amount of time.
- Keep your keys separate.
- Don't "flash" large rolls of money in public. You never know who's watching!
- Check to see that your cards have been returned once you've paid.
- Watch your credit card slip being filled out, and make sure it's not passed through the machine more than once.
- Ask for your carbons. Destroy the carbons, but keep your credit card receipts and check them against monthly bills.
- Make a list of your major credit cards, their account numbers and the phone numbers to call if cards are lost.
- Keep this list at home.
- If you're not sure a shopping bag will be available, take one of your own to the mall.





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Shopping

- Keep excess packages in a mall locker or ask the stores to hold onto your packages for you until you leave the mall.
- Don't allow yourself to become so burdened down with packages that you become a tempting target.
- Avoid carrying large, heavy packages that block your vision and make you a target for purse-snatchers.
- Keep an eye on your child. It's okay to let children look around and have fun while they shop, but they also need to understand that it's important to stay near their parents.
- Bring a babysitter, friend or older child to help watch your youngest, especially when waiting in long lines.
- Teach your son or daughter what to do in the event you get separated.
- The best option is to instruct your child to look for a security guard or police officer, or go to the customer service desk where people are trained to help.

10 Ways to Become a Victim of Crime and Violence Source: www.Self Defense Resource.com

Need to inject a little excitement into your hum-drum life? Become a victim of crime! It's easy to be a target of criminals and violent assailants. Just follow these 10 easy ways to get robbed, injured, maimed, and/or killed. In no particular order: This article was meant to be a humorous and sarcastic view on the serious subject of self-defense. Learn the lessons contained herein. Effective self-defense is the opposite of what is outlined below. Be safe!

1. Ignore Your Surroundings

Don't pay attention to your environment. Solely focus on where you're going, or get lost in your thoughts. Don't look around you to see if there are any potential problems. Don't worry about loiterers around your car. Talk on your mobile phone on your way to the car or walking on the street. Keep your head down.

2. Be a Soft Target

Act in a way that assailants will choose you over others. First, be oblivious to everything around you (see #1 above). Act meek and fearful. Look down and slouch. Don't speak up or look at anyone.

3. Don't Have a Plan

Be a spontaneous free spirit! You figure that if you're ever in a confrontation, you'll immediately react properly, without ever planning an escape or rehearsing an escape plan. Don't quickly scan for exits wherever you are. At home, don't develop an escape plan with your family (which can also be use for escaping a fire).

4. Ignore Your Instincts

Instincts are for cavemen. We're in the 21st century now and our brain knows better. Those funny feelings (intuition) that something isn't right are illogical and not based on any fact. Ignore your feeling that a group of young thugs could be trouble, or that gut feeling that your date is being overly friendly. Without hard evidence, just go along and don't worry about anything bad that might happen.

5. Always Comply with a Criminal

Believe the criminal when he says he won't hurt you if you do whatever he asks. After all, criminals get to their esteemed positions by always telling the truth.

6. Give Up

Why bother resisting or finding ways to escape? After all, karma has brought you face-to-face in a confrontation, and there is nothing you can do to get out of it. Well, other than let the criminal do whatever he wants with you. If you do resist or try to escape, it'll just make him more angry, and you don't want that. Be a polite victim and the confrontation will soon pass.

7. Focus on Complex Techniques

You need several years of advanced martial arts training to be really effective in using techniques based on fine motor skills. Those simple moves using gross motor skills are for wussies and are just plain un-cool. You want to show off your spinning jump back kicks to your assailant so he knows who he's dealing with.

8. Focus on Not Getting Hurt

Getting hurt sucks. It's not worth getting a scratch, bruise, broken bone, or cut if you try to escape. After all, you'd rather be found dead and intact than alive and injured. You'll look better in a coffin that way.

9. Rely on a Lethal Weapon

Having a gun or knife will protect you in all situations - at work, home, or running errands. You'll always have your gun or knife ready to use. Or they'll warn you before they are 21 feet from you, since 21 feet is the distance it takes for someone to reach you before you can pull out a gun and fire 2 rounds. A criminal would be ashamed and dishonored if he didn't give you fair warning before he attacked you.

10. Wait to Be Attacked Before Responding

Having mastered the rules of etiquette, you are exceedingly polite and considerate. So you don't say or do anything until someone already attacks you. After all, you don't want to be rude or embarrassed by yelling "stay back," "no," or "I don't want any trouble." Your civility will protect you from bad things happening to you.

(Answers to Quiz: (d,e,c,c,a,e,c,a,c))



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Sometimes the road less traveled is less traveled for a reason.
Jerry Seinfeld

Fatality Summary as of 07 Dec 07

