

Campus Safety Tips

For many students, college is their first real taste of unsupervised living; being away from parents and surrounded by new friends often feels empowering and exciting. While this combination creates an amazing experience for most people, it can unfortunately put young adults in high risk situations to which they have never been exposed. While there is no need to encourage everyone to be scared of having fun, it is important to follow precautions and be smart about who you hang out with, where you gather and how you party. In addition, being prepared and having a plan of action for when problems do arrive can often mean the difference between a close call and a damaging event. To this end we have created our top ten tips for remaining safe while having a good time:

1. If you see something, say something.

Don't be afraid to ask someone if they are doing okay, or to get an RA if someone looks like they are in trouble. Many incidents can be avoided if someone steps up at the first sign of distress.

2. Don't accept substances from people you don't know.

While don't do drugs is a great motto, experimentation is very common in college. If you are going to make this choice, you should be aware that powders, pills and liquids can be absolutely anything, in any concentration. This is one of the easiest ways people overdose or end up incapacitated.

3. Let your friends or family know your plans.

Give your friends and family an idea of where you are going and what time you will be back. That way, they will know to look for you if you don't check in by a certain time.

4. Know where the campus emergency blue light phones are located.

Blue light phones give direct access to campus security. In an emergency situation, it is always best to know where these are, as the campus police will be able to easily locate you.

5. Watch your drink.

GHB and Rohypnol, the two most popular date rape drugs are odorless, tasteless and colorless, meaning a stranger can easily slip them in your drink. Never leave your drink unattended and never accept a drink from someone you don't know.

6. Be aware of your surroundings and suspicious people.

Always be alert for people who look out of place, poorly lit areas or sparsely populated locations. If someone looks like they are up to no good, they likely are, and a situation can be easily avoided by detecting it early and removing yourself.

7. Go with a group, leave with the same group.

There is safety in numbers. Going out with a group is an easy way to make sure everyone has fun and gets home safe.

8. If you must walk alone at night, consider non-lethal weapons or a safety app.

Being prepared for when you do have to walk alone is the best protection against an incident. If you choose to carry pepper spray, a taser, or other non-lethal weapon, be sure to get training on the proper use. If you aren't comfortable with non-lethal weapons, a safety app can automatically alert police in the event of an emergency. We breakdown our top five safety apps below.

Many schools also offer escort services for students who have to walk home late at night. Ask your campus safety office if this is an option.

9. Take a self-defense class.

Self defense classes teach simple techniques that can mean the difference between being taken and running away. Many schools offer these for free or for credit. You will learn what it feels like to be attacked and how to respond instinctually in way that will disable your attacker long enough to escape.

10. Don't accept rides from casual acquaintances or strangers.

Many predators wait at bars looking for people who are too intoxicated to make sound judgements. When drunk, a free ride home might seem like an enticing offer, but it is one of the easiest ways to put yourself in a compromising position. Services like Uber and Lyft should eliminate the need to take rides from strangers.

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