

Staying Safe on Campus

Dixie State College is a pretty safe place, but no matter where you are it pays to take precautions that can help you to avoid being the victim of a crime. Women are sometimes more vulnerable than men and may need to take more precautions, but both genders can be victims. Some of the following are things you can do to reduce that risk:

- **Lock your residence door at all times, both when you are at home and when you are away.** Don't make it easy for someone to steal your belongings. You don't want someone to be able to walk in uninvited while you are home, either, especially if you are alone. Avoid leaving ground floor windows unlocked for the same reason. If someone knocks or rings the bell, always check to see who it is before opening it. If you don't have a peep hole in your door, ask your landlord to install one.
- **Lock your car, both while it is parked and while you are driving.** It doesn't take someone long to rifle through your glove box or remove items from your trunk if you leave your car open. Also, if the passenger door is unlocked, it is possible for someone to open the door and get in while you are stopped. Keep your hands free and your keys ready when approaching your car at night. Check to make sure no one is in it before you get in.
- **Don't leave your possessions unattended.** Even if you are just leaving for a minute, don't leave your purse or backpack on a table, in a hallway, or in the restroom where it could be stolen. It only takes a minute for a thief to pick up your belongings and walk away with them. Books, laptops, purses, and wallets are easy targets.
- **Carry a cell phone.** If you ever have an emergency, you can summon help quickly. If you have information to give the police, you can also contact them quickly. For emergencies, dial 911; to contact campus police for non-emergencies, call 652-7515. If you see someone or something suspicious or that makes you feel uncomfortable, even if you're not sure why, report it to the campus police or other campus authority. The more information the police have, the more they can get a big picture of something that's not right.
- **When you are walking around campus, look alert and be aware of your surroundings.** Avoid daydreaming or getting distracted so that you don't notice what's going on around you. Perpetrators of crimes often prefer to target people who look vulnerable. Try to walk and act with confidence, rather than looking down or unsure or upset.
- **If a professor, other college employee, or fellow student makes an inappropriate remark about you, stand up for yourself.** If you don't, it sends a message that you don't have good self-esteem and might be an easy target. Racial remarks, sexist remarks, or anything else that puts someone down is not appropriate. If you aren't the target, but are in the situation, you might also consider sticking up for the person who is. If the remark is particularly aggressive or the situation continues, notify your department chair or another college employee that you know or trust.

- **Don't be afraid to assert your opinion.** If you are a push-over, and people find it easy to get you to agree with their ideas or go along with their plans, it sends a message that you don't think much of yourself and wouldn't be able to defend yourself if attacked or pressured into something you don't want to do. Practice thinking of yourself as a valuable, independent person, with confidence that you have something to contribute.
- **Get to know someone before spending time alone with them.** Date in groups if possible until you get to know the person you are going to be with enough to be comfortable with them. Be careful about going on a date in a car with someone you do not know.
- **When you leave home, let someone know where you are and when you are coming home.** Exchange schedules with your roommates so that you are aware of when to expect each other, or tell your family when to expect you home.
- **Avoid being alone, especially in dark or deserted areas.** Don't assume that just because this is a relatively safe area, no crimes ever happen. It is best to stay away from places where you could be attacked without being seen.
- **If you are uncomfortable in a situation and feel nervous about your safety, even if you aren't sure why, get out of the situation.** Your intuition will often warn you that something is wrong even before you are sure what it is. Obey that feeling – even if it causes an awkward situation, it is better to be safe than sorry.
- **Avoid drugs and alcohol, and people who use them.** Drugs and alcohol alter people's ability to think rationally. If you use them, or choose to associate with people who do, you are putting yourself at a higher risk for being the victim of a crime.
- **Take a self-defense or personal training course.** The college offers a two credit course in the Family and Consumer Science Department called Self-Protection for Women, FCS 2410 (men may also take this course to learn how to protect women in their lives). There are also other opportunities to learn these concepts and methods in the community.