

**U.S. Department of State
Bureau of Diplomatic Security**



Sexual Assault

Reducing the Risk and
Coping with an Attack

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Reduce the Risk of Becoming a Rape Victim

At Home

Make sure all windows and doors in your home can be locked securely, particularly sliding glass doors. Use the locks. Keep entrances well-lighted.

Install and use a peephole in the door.

Check the identification of any sales or service person before letting him in.

Don't let any stranger in when you are home alone—no matter what the reason or how dire the emergency is supposed to be. Offer to make an emergency phone call while they wait outside.

Never give the impression that you are at home alone if a stranger telephones or comes to the door.

Get to know your neighbors—someone you can turn to if you're worried.

If you live in an apartment, avoid being in the laundry room or garage by yourself, especially at night.

If you come home alone and find a door or window open or signs of forced entry, don't go in. Go to the nearest phone and call Post 1 or the RSO.

While Walking

Be alert to your surroundings and the people around you.

Stay in well-lit areas.

Walk confidently at a steady pace on the side of the street facing traffic.

Walk close to the curb. Avoid doorways, bushes, and alleys.

Wear clothes and shoes that give you freedom of movement.

Don't walk alone at night and always avoid areas where there are few people.

Be careful when people stop you for directions. Always reply from a distance, and never get too close to the car.

If you are in trouble, attract help in any way you can. Scream, yell for help, or yell "Fire!"

If you feel you're being followed, don't go home; go to a safe place.

While Driving

Keep your car in good working order and the gas tank at least half full.

Park in well-lit areas and lock the doors, even if you'll only be gone a short time.

When you return to your car, have the key ready and check the front and rear seats and floor before getting in.

Drive with all the doors locked.

Never pick up hitchhikers.

If you have a flat tire, drive on it until you reach a safe, well-lit and well-traveled area.

If your car breaks down, put the hood up, lock the doors, and put on the flashers. Use flares if you have them, and tie a white cloth to the antenna. If someone stops to help, don't get out of the car but roll down the window slightly and ask the person to call a tow service for you.

Exercise extra caution when using underground and enclosed parking garages. Try not to go alone.

If you are being followed, don't drive home. Go to the nearest safe place where you can call Post 1 or the RSO. Don't leave your car unless you are certain you can get inside the building safely. Try to obtain the license plate number and description of the car following you.

If You Are Attacked

Keep your head. Stay as calm as possible, think rationally and evaluate your resources and options.

It may be more advisable to submit than to resist and risk severe injury or death. You will have to make this decision based on the circumstances. But don't resist if the attacker has a weapon.

Keep assessing the situation as it is happening. If one strategy doesn't work, try another. Possible options to not resisting are negotiating, stalling for time, distracting the assailant and fleeing to a safe place, verbal assertiveness, screaming to attract attention, and physical resistance.

You may be able to turn the attacker off with bizarre behavior such as throwing up, acting crazy, or picking your nose.

After an Assault or Rape

Go to a safe place and call Post 1 or the RSO. The sooner you make the report, the greater the chances the attacker will be caught.

Do not shower, bathe, douche, or destroy any of the clothing you were wearing at the time of the assault. Do not disturb anything in the area where the assault occurred. It is important to preserve all physical evidence for court use.

Go to your medical unit and get medical care. Make sure you are evaluated for the risks of pregnancy and venereal disease.

Call someone to be with you. You should not be alone.

Write down a description of the attacker and the assault. The RSO needs all the information you know about the attack and assailant.

Help is available to assist you in dealing with the consequences of an assault. Victims of assault suffer emotional and

psychological trauma. It is important to realize that, no matter how strong a person you are, you cannot go through this alone. Get counseling! Contact your mission's medical unit or the security office, where personnel have been trained to deal with this crime.

Take Action—Today

Practice being alert and observant. You can avoid many threatening situations; and if you are attacked, you will be able to accurately describe the assailant to the authorities.

Find out if your mission has scheduled training on rape awareness. If not, request it.

If someone you know has been attacked, be a good friend. Lend an ear and lead them to others who can help.

RAPE . . . Do YOU Know the Facts?

Rape is one of the most underreported crimes. For every reported rape, an estimated 10 to 20 rapes go unreported.

Myth: Rape is motivated by sexual desire.

Fact: Rape is an act of violence not sexual passion. It is an attempt to hurt and humiliate, using sex as the weapon.

Myth: Most women are raped by strangers in high-risk situations—hitchhiking, walking alone at night, going alone to a bar.

Fact: Rapes can happen in these situations but, in the United States, about one-third of all victims are attacked in their homes.

Myth: Rapes are committed by total strangers.

Fact: 70 percent of all rapists were known to female victims.

Myth: Women invite rape by dressing seductively.

Fact: Victims do not cause rape. It can happen to anyone—children, grandmothers, students, working women, mothers, wives, the rich, the poor, and even men. Police believe that in the stranger-rape situation, rapists tend to prey on women who look frightened, easily intimidated, or seem to be daydreaming. In other words, rape victims often are in the wrong place at the wrong time.