

# PERSONAL SECURITY BY SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

Mr. Victor H. Aguirre of the CIA, who has provided protection to presidential level executives, evasive driving and intra walls security, recently gave a talk to executives in Santo Domingo. Here is a list of the tip's he mentioned which can keep you safe in all environments.

## GENERAL

1. Leave your driver's license in a bag, and store it in the trunk of the car
2. Carry a single credit card or debit card with the lowest possible limit (for handing over in case of assault).
3. Do not carry business cards and family photographs in your wallet or purse.
4. Don't show your cellphone on the street.
5. Dress modestly when out running around on errands.
6. Always observe hands and eyes of strangers that walk towards you.  
If he has his hands in his pockets, he may have a weapon.
7. In a parking lot or on the street, do not point the car's remote control until within a foot or two of the car.  
Someone may be watching.
8. If you are assaulted while opening the car, raise your hands, look down (never look your assailant in the face).  
Listen to his demands. The alternatives at this time are:
  - Do not get in the car, negotiate: take the car, my money, wallet, etc.. (98% of people that get in the car die).
  - Repeat always "Easy. I'll do what you say." For example, "My wallet's in my right pocket. I'll take it out".
  - If he insists you get in the car, fall down, pretend to faint or to have an asthma attack.  
He may give give you one or two kicks, but don't fight back. He'll most likely jump in the car and go.
9. Vary your routes and do not be predictable. While driving:
  - Try to park diagonally, not side or front.
  - The most common places for assaults are stops, crossings and traffic lights.  
You have to be looking in the rearview and side mirrors at these times.
  - Windows up and locks down and secure. Do not have your purse in view. It's better to have it on the floor.
10. Watch the windshield washer boys who always notice what you have aboard. Keep the windows up.
11. As a prevention use the center lanes, attacks on cars usually come from the outside lanes.
12. Stop only a few feet from the car in front of you. If assaulted you can crash into the car in front.  
That will cause the driver to get out and frustrate the attack.

## KIDNAPPING

### *Risk Factors:*

1. Always going the same route
2. Frequenting unsafe areas
3. Traveling alone
4. Showing high value personal effects (earrings, necklace, watch, laptop, cell phone, etc.)

[continued]

### ***Kidnapping for ransom:***

1. Usually senior executives
2. Planned
3. Committed in the vicinity of home or office
4. Committed by 4-6 people

### ***Express Kidnappings:***

1. Victim randomly selected
2. Committed around an ATM
3. Looking fast loot (e.g., jewelry and money)
4. Victim released within hours
5. Usually occur on Fridays after 6:00 PM and weekends

### ***Virtual Kidnapping:***

These are when the assailant says he represents a organization (e.g., police, electric, phone or cable company). Or you are told that a relative has had an accident and you need to go with them, and so on.

## **AT THE ATM**

1. Do not go alone, and if possible, do not to make withdrawals at night or on weekends.
2. Find an ATM that is not in a lonely or unknown place.
3. When you withdraw money in a bank, ask the cashier to recount the money slowly so that you don't have to count it in front of others.

## **PRECAUTIONS IN PUBLIC**

1. In a restaurant, sit close to an emergency exit and where you still have an eye on the principal entrance.
2. Walk as far as possible from the street.
3. Do not walk in dark streets.
4. Parking near the store entrances at the malls.
5. When someone asks you for the time, ignore them and carry straight on as though you hadn't heard.  
Do the same, of course, for the ubiquitous "Hey! My friend!"

## **HOTELS**

1. Try to stay on floors 1 to 5 (firefighters ladders only reach that height).
2. Keep electronic card keys, as they contain all your personal and credit information.

*As an expert in security matters, Mr. Aguirre says, "If they have a plan, we should also have one."*