



Office of Operations, Security, and Preparedness (OSP)  
Office of Security and Law Enforcement (OS&LE)



# Personal Security

Personal security is a 24/7 mission. You must always be alert to surroundings, make yourself a difficult target and most importantly, have a plan.

❑ **Assess Your Own Situation First:** Your most likely threat in the NCR is from crime. The best start point is thus to consider where, when, and how you could be most exposed to it in the context of home, family, travel, and other activity.

❑ **Train Your Family:** Develop security awareness in family members. Good security practice is common sense both for their welfare and as others might try to use them as conduits to you. Discuss security from time to time, and develop/rehearse plans with your family.

❑ **Control Your Space:** Don't open your door to strangers or give them means of easy access. If you are unsure of people, meet them in public rather than in private. Lock cars, offices, residences, and secure the keys to them. Avoid crowds and volatile situations where you could be jostled or attacked – and if you see such situations developing, get up and leave.

❑ **Notice and Report the Unusual:** Develop a sense of what looks normal. If you see suspicious people, evidence of being monitored or other threatening signs, report them to local police.

❑ **Be Unpredictable:** A regular pattern of activities facilitates hostile planning, while seemingly random behavior makes it so difficult that criminals will often look elsewhere. Unpredictability can also make you and your family unattractive for the more serious crimes that require planning.

❑ **Be aware of your surroundings:** Whether you are at work, driving your car, or sitting in a restaurant, it is important to be aware of your surroundings at all times. Stay near the exits if possible, and sit with your back to a wall. Remember: if confronted in public, your priorities should be, first, to escape and evade and go to a secure location; second, to barricade and wait for help if you can't escape; and last, to stand and fight where there is no other choice.

❑ **Practice “what if” scenarios:** To stay sharp and prepared, do what law enforcement officers do: envision possible dangerous scenarios and think about your reactions and alternatives. Involve your spouse and staff with these scenarios for a collaborative and coordinated outcome. In this way, you pre-plan your responses and

your reaction times become much faster in emergencies.

**Personal Weapons<sup>1</sup>:** Carrying personal weapons for security is not recommended, unless you have trained with that weapon and know all the rules and law in the state in which you reside. However, police have long known that most people are not capable of using a weapon effectively on short notice, and that those who try usually lose it to their assailants, shoot them-selves, or shoot innocent bystanders. Also remember, use of a personal weapon can also escalate violence to lethal levels when the typical assailant is ready for combat and the typical victim is not. Carrying a concealed personal weapon is a choice, however, the individual carrying that weapon must be trained and must do so in accordance with state laws. .

## Surveillance<sup>2</sup>

The purpose of surveillance is to identify a potential target based on the security precautions that individual takes, and the most suitable time, location, and method of attack. Surveillance may last for days or weeks. Naturally, the surveillance of a person who has set routines and who takes few precautions will take less time.

Detecting surveillance requires a fairly constant state of alertness and, therefore, must become a habit. A good sense of what is normal and what is unusual in your surroundings could be more important than any other type of security precaution you may take. Above all, do not hesitate to report any unusual event.

There are three forms of surveillance: foot, vehicular, and stationary. People who have well-established routines permit surveillants to use methods that are much more difficult to detect.

If, for example, you leave the office at the same time each day and travel by the most direct route to your home or if you live in a remote area with few or no alternate routes to your home, surveillants have no need to follow you all the way to your residence.

You should:

- Vary your routes and times of travel.
- Be familiar with your route and have alternate routes.
- Check regularly for surveillance.

Stationary surveillance is most commonly used. Most attacks take place near the victim's residence, because that part of the route is least easily varied. People are

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<sup>1</sup> Pentagon Force Protection Agency, *Personal Security Guide* (June 2005)

<sup>2</sup> Diplomatic Security Service, *Personal Security: At Home, On the Street, While Travelling* (May 2003)

generally most vulnerable in the morning when departing for work because these times are more predictable than evening arrivals.

Many surveillance teams use vans with windows in the sides or back that permit observation from the interior of the van. Often the van will have the name of a business or utility company to provide some pretext for being in the area.

Where it is not possible to watch the residence unobserved, surveillants must come up with a plausible reason for being in the area. Women and children are often used to give an appearance of innocence. Try to check the street in front of your home from a window before you go out each day.

If you suspect that you are being followed, drive to the nearest safe haven, i.e., police station, fire station, mall, or public location. Note the license plate number, color and make of the vehicle, and any information printed on its sides that may be useful in tracing the vehicle or its occupants.

Don't wait to verify surveillance before you report it.

Be alert to people disguised as public utility crews, road workers, vendors, etc., who might station themselves near your home.

Household staff and family members should be reminded to look for suspicious activities around your residence; for example, surveillance, attempts to gain access to your residence by fraudulent means, and telephone calls or other inquiries requesting personal information.

Tell your household staff and family members to note descriptions and license plate numbers of suspicious vehicles. Advise them to be alert for details. Household staff can be one of the most effective defensive mechanisms in your home— use them to your advantage. While there are no guarantees that these pre-cautions, even if diligently adhered to, will protect you from violence, they can reduce your vulnerability and, therefore, your chances of becoming a victim.