

# Decatur Police Department



Rape is a violent crime and a frightening experience. Rape affects all women, no matter what their age, race or economic status. It must also be remembered that men are not immune and are also victims of sexual violence. Rape can occur anywhere and at anytime, in public or in your own home. Rapists are not necessarily strangers. In fact, in many reported cases, the rapist is an acquaintance, neighbor, friend or relative.

The following tips are not a guarantee, but they can help reduce the odds. Despite all this, if a person is ever raped, the responsibility **ALWAYS** lies with the aggressor, not the victim. Forgetting to lock a door is not a crime. Trusting a friend is not a crime. Partying is not a crime. Walking alone is not a crime. **RAPE IS THE CRIME.**

## **Safety Tips While Walking**

- When possible, avoid walking alone. Walk with someone, or walk in areas where other people are near.
- Stay in well-lighted areas, away from alleys, bushes and entry ways.
- Avoid shortcuts through parks, vacant lots and other deserted places.
- Don't hitchhike or accept rides from strangers.
- If a driver stops to ask you directions, avoid getting near the car.
- If you are being followed, go to the nearest business or residence for help.
- If you are harassed by the occupants of a car, simply turn and walk the other direction. The driver will have to turn around to follow you.
- Hold your purse close, not dangling, and avoid carrying extra money or valuables on your person.
- When you return home, have your door key ready so that you can enter without delay.

**ABOVE ALL, BE AWARE OF THE PEOPLE AROUND YOU.  
BE AWARE OF YOUR SURROUNDINGS AND THE TOTAL ENVIRONMENT.**

## **Safety Tips While Driving**

- Never pick up hitchhikers.
- Keep car doors locked at all times.
- Before entering your car, look into the back seat and on floor board.
- Always have your keys ready to unlock the car door and enter without delay. Never walk across the parking lot digging in your purse for your keys; have them in your hand before leaving the building.
- Make certain that you have enough gas to get where you are going and always keep your vehicle in good running condition.
- If possible, travel on well lighted, busy streets and avoid isolated back roads and short cuts.

- If you are being followed, drive to the nearest open business for help, or drive to the Police Dept.
- Never leave your house keys with your car keys at a service station or parking lot.
- Women driving alone should never stop to aid a stranger in a stalled vehicle.
- If you have car trouble stay in your vehicle. When someone offers assistance, roll the window down just enough to talk to them. Ask them to call the police for you. Never get into a stranger's car.

### **Safety Tips for Youth**

- Children should be made aware of the dangers of accepting rides from or talking to strangers.
- Children should be encouraged to talk with their parents if they ever have a problem, not only with a stranger but also with a friend or relative.
- Children should know a safe, well-traveled route to take to and from school. Isolated areas should be avoided.
- Teenage baby-sitters should not accept jobs with people they do not know, or who have not been referred by people they know.
- Baby-sitters should call the police immediately if anything suspicious happens at the house. They should **never open the door for strangers**.
- The sitter's parents should be called at the end of the evening to inform them that the babysitter will be home shortly.

### **Reporting a Rape**

The Police Department can only arrest a criminal if they are made aware of the offense. If you are the victim of a sexual assault/rape, please call the Police **IMMEDIATELY**.

**DON'T CHANGE CLOTHES OR TAKE A BATH OR SHOWER and do NOT EAT or SMOKE or CHEW GUM.** All physical evidence, including seminal fluids, hair, blood types, and scrapings of flesh from the victim's nails are used in court. Avoid using the bathroom prior to the exam if possible.

### **Important Information Needed By Police:**

1. Car license, make or model and color
2. Race/Gender of assailant
3. Approximate age, weight and height
4. Hair color and length of hair
5. Color of eyes
6. Clothing
7. Any unusual marks, scars, tattoos, rings, etc.
8. Any facial hair or odors