

# Five Most Dangerous Places for Women

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MEMPHIS, TN - Eyewitness News Everywhere uncovers the five most dangerous places for women! Crime prevention expert and Shelby County Sheriff's Sergeant Marty Almond gave us the lowdown on the places women are at high risk of becoming crime victims. Here are the five places he says you need to be the most careful:

## **#5 College Campuses**

Sgt. Almond said large numbers of women walking outdoors at all hours of the day make college campuses the fifth most dangerous place for women.

He said students and visitors can stay safe by avoiding walking the campus alone, especially at night. "The best thing is always to have somebody with you," said Sgt. Almond. He said take advantage of the free escorts offered by campus police departments, if you can't find a friend to walk with you.

During the day, walking in open well-lit areas and paying attention to your surroundings will help keep you safe. "Don't be reading your book or paying attention to your cell phone, text messages, anything like that," said Sgt. Almond. He said, "Be aware, if somebody's walking up to you, make eye contact with them because if you make eye contact with somebody, more than likely they're not going to want to have a confrontation."

## **#4 Gas Stations/Convenience Stores**

Sgt. Almond says bad guys love to hang out in the parking lots. "It's just the convenience of knowing that people are going to be coming here (to gas stations and convenience stores) and knowing that they're going to have money," he said.

He says planning ahead will help you stay safe. Sgt. Almond said, "Make sure you have your vehicle filled up during the daytime. If you have to come at night, pull up and when you get out, lock your car. Don't leave your purse and everything laying in plain view."

Sgt. Almond also said pay attention at the pump. "I suggest standing with your back to your car where you have something behind you. When I pump gas, I'm always looking around, making sure no one's walking up on me."

## **#3 ATMs**

Sgt. Almond said you should follow the same safety rules you should follow at gas stations and convenience stores also apply at ATMS. He said they are also dangerous places for the same reasons. Crooks know you will soon have cash in hand. Sgt Almond said, "Especially at night, because there's no security officer, during the daytime, there's security officers here, but at night, when there's an open ATM, you're very vulnerable for somebody to walk up because you can hide anywhere around a bank."

He said many banks now have new technology that will help customers avoid getting robbed at an ATM. "If you put in your pin number reversed, put it in pin backwards, then it indicates to the bank, there's a problem and they will contact police," said Sgt. Almond.

He said before you hit up an ATM, pull your bank card out of your wallet, then hide it in your hand. The quicker your transaction, the more safe you will be, he said.

## **#2 Mall Parking Lots**

Sgt. Almond said mall parking lots are so dangerous because they give crooks a lot of opportunities to commit crimes. "You have a lot of people, once again, you have a lot of people coming and going," he said.

Sgt. Almond recommends leaving your purse at home. He says only bring the credit cards you plan to use, your identification, and cash to the mall.

He said a purse is easy for crooks in cars to grab. He said, "If I drive in a car as passenger, I reach out and grab this (your purse), you're coming with it and it could drag you up underneath the car. It has happened before."

If you absolutely need to bring a purse, Sgt. Almond believes it is safer to carry it in your hand instead of under your arm. He said it will be easier for thieves to grab, but it will be less likely you will get assaulted. Sgt. Almond said, "My thing is, I wouldn't want to see somebody get hurt over their purse."

## **#1 Your Home**

Finally, if you think you can let down your guard once you pull in your driveway, think again. Sgt. Almond says your home is the place where you are in the most danger.

Sgt. Almond said, "You think, 'Oh my house is safe, nobody will mess with me at my house,' and that's why it's a good target for the criminals. They know people get relaxed when they come home and they know it's an easy target."

To show us how easy a target your home is, we took Sgt. Almond to the home of a Memphis woman who wanted to see if her home is safe.

Sgt. Almond had no trouble strolling inside her garage as our crew waited for its door to close.

He said you should shut your garage door as soon in your pull in and stay in your locked car until you are certain no one is inside your garage.

Sgt. Almond said it would be easy to break into our test subject's home because she did not have a deadbolt on her door. "Every house should have a deadbolt," said Sgt Almond. "At least coming in two inches inside the main frame," he added.

"All they have to do is bust this window, unlock this door and open it up and they're in," said Sgt. Almond. "Way too easy," he added.

Sgt. Almond said plenty of lights, a fence, and an alarm system sign outside your home will help keep crooks away.

Inside your home, keep your doors and windows locked and invest in a home security system to stay safe.

He also said leaving a \$20 bill by the door you always use to enter and exit your home will help you create a telltale way to discover if someone has broken into your home.

Sgt Almond said, "If that money's laying there you can rest assured no one's been in your house. It's just natural instinct to pick up money. They're going to pick up that money whether they're there to rape, burglarize, or rob," said Sgt. Almond.

Something to keep in mind, men need to follow these tips too. The 2005 U.S. Department of Justice report says more men than women were crime victims that year.

Here are Sgt. Almond's top tips to help you stay safe wherever you go:

1. Always aware of your surroundings. Criminals target folks who look lost!
2. Stay in well-lit areas. Criminals are like vampires, they try to avoid giving you a chance to see their faces!
3. Don't stress about losing your stuff! If a bad guy wants your purse or car, let it go. Things can be replaced, you can't!