

How Do You Safely Get From the Mall to Your Car at Night?

Please give me your undivided attention. This is the level of awareness you need to detect and react to a potential threat. As you get ready to leave the mall, make sure you have all of your treasures. If you can, put them in one hand. Now is not the time to get on your cell phone. Wait until you are locked in your car.

As you emerge from the mall, visually find your car. That's it, right under the light. Look at the area. Is there anyone loitering around the parking lot? Is there anyone around your car? If there is, go back into the mall and ask security for an escort. You just might do a little more shopping.

If the coast is clear, walk on the opposite side of the parking row as your car and watch and listen. Is there anyone or anything that just does not seem right? If there is, go back into the mall and get that escort. Walking on the opposite side of the parking row does not telegraph which car you are going toward. This approach also allows you to look under and around your vehicle as you approach it.

Take out your keys before you leave the mall. Have your car keys on a ring by themselves. This may seem inconvenient, but if you have to toss your keys, you have only lost the key to your car instead of the key to your home. Consider carrying a flashlight. Bad guys hate the light.

If all is well, cross to your car and put your packages in the trunk and get into the car quickly. Lock the doors and look around the area. Did you remember to look in the back seat before you got in? Do not roll down the windows until you are clear of the parking area. Your slow speed makes you vulnerable.

If you are approached as you head toward your car, go back into the mall. Do not respond to pan handlers. If you have pepper spray, now is the time to display it and warn the person. Be prepared to use it if they threaten you. You do know how to use the spray, don't you? If you have a Taser®, get ready to use it. You do know how to use it, don't you?

These measures may seem extreme, but they quickly become second nature if practiced. You can make the choice not to become a victim.

Remember: Do not rely on anyone else to keep you from becoming a victim.