

RUNNERS AND HIKERS, LISTEN UP!

by Sally Burgess, Forefront Families LLC

We see lots of people running on the verge of the road around our area because there are no sidewalks. I have also seen some pretty shocking TV stories of the dangers of running, walking or hiking alone so, with that in mind, I thought I would share some tips for you to consider and pass on to your children.

Precautionary measures

Walkers and runners:

1. Children under 14 years old should always walk or run with a trusted adult.
2. Neither adults nor children should ever run or walk alone, especially in unpopulated areas. Individuals have been killed because they are so easily overcome by bigger and stronger attackers. Don't think you are safe as long as you have your dog with you. Animals can become casualties, too.
3. Always carry a cell phone, a whistle and, if possible, mace.
4. Always tell someone else where you are going and for how long.
5. Never go running, walking or hiking in the dark or unfamiliar places.
6. Always keep to the side of the road facing traffic.
7. Wear bright or reflective clothing at all times.
8. Do not run with ear-buds in your ears. I saw a terrible true story on TV recently about a girl who never heard a perpetrator running up behind her and she was strangled. There are crazy people out there!
9. Take a self-defense course.

What to do if you think you are in danger:

1. If someone appears to be following you or slows down beside you, run up the driveway of the nearest house...like you live there. Call for help. If you are on a public street, you can also yell at the top of your voice, "Stop following me or I will call the police." Then run for the nearest help.
2. If a vehicle stops and someone starts getting out, run in the opposite direction to where the vehicle is facing because it takes them time to get back in and turn around. Call for help as you are running away.
3. If someone grabs you, scream your head off, kick them in the groin, head-butt, scratch, stomp, poke them in their eyes, yell at them, twist, squirm or engage any other action that can hurt them. It's not time to be Mr. Niceguy. Do not comply with an attacker's demands. Yell at them and do everything possible to avoid being put in a car. Being put in a vehicle means you will be taken to some isolated place where there is no help. You are much less likely to be injured or killed if you can stay in a public or populated place.

Hikers:

1. Never hike alone.
2. Take enough food and drink to last at least 12 hours longer than the anticipated hike time.

3. Tell someone where you are going and for how long.
4. Wear appropriate clothing and footwear for the hike.
5. Only hike as far as your cell phone works and always keep in touch with someone who can help you if you get into difficulties.
6. Stick to known hiking paths.
7. Take a first aid course and carry a basic first aid kit.

We can never be prepared or prepare our kids enough for the dangers around us. We are responsible to keep them safe from harm. I trust these tips will be of benefit to you and your families.

If you have any comments or questions regarding road and hiking safety, there are plenty of resources also on-line. Please feel free to contact us at sally@forefrontfamilies.org and check our website at www.forefrontfamilies.org and our blogsite at www.forefrontfamilies.blogspot.com