

# **A Guide to Your Personal Safety**

This document has been produced to provide you with an overview of best practice guidance to assist you in keeping safe whilst undertaking volunteering activities for Guide Dogs.

## **Out and about alone**

If you are going to be out and about on your own, make sure that someone knows where you are, what you are doing and what time to expect you home and ensure you carry a mobile phone or phone card with you.

## **Walking**

- Carefully plan your routes, avoid known 'hazardous' areas
- Avoid walking through 'deserted' or ill lit areas

- Try to avoid walking alone at night
- Keep to busy routes
- Think ahead, be alert and aware of your surroundings
- Walk facing oncoming traffic
- Keep hands free to defend yourself
- If you see an incident, it is advisable that you do not stop to offer assistance, but to report it to the police as soon as possible
- If you are approached by someone unknown, keep walking and try to enter a shop or somewhere where there are other people. If the person does not leave you alone call the police or ask someone else to do it for you
- It is recommended that some form of identification is kept on your person at all times



## Using public transport

- Avoid travelling alone late at night on any form of public transport if at all possible
- Only use a reputable company
- Stay away from isolated stops and stations
- Have your fare ready in your hand or pocket
- Sit near the driver or conductor or near exits
- Sit in a area where there are several other people if possible
- In taxis always sit in the back
- Check to see where the emergency controls are located
- Don't doze off - stay alert



## Driving

- Keep valuables, bags etc. out of sight and out of reach of open windows
- Keep your car locked when inside
- Don't display items that indicate the presence of a female driver
- Lock the car when paying for petrol
- Reverse into the space so that you can pull away if you are approached whilst parking
- Consider where you should park your car for a speedy exit
- If you park in daylight think what it will be like returning at night

## Unfamiliar surroundings

On entering unfamiliar surroundings:

- Be aware of exits
- Be aware of the layout, which way the doors open, if the doors lock

behind you, know where keys are or how to unlock

- Be aware of anything that may impede/obstruct a quick exit
- If you sit, choose a chair that is as near to the exit as possible
- Be aware of a person's body language or change in attitude/behaviour
- If you feel threatened, uncomfortable or sense a risk of danger, leave immediately. Do not give a warning

## **In the event of a verbal or physical attack**

- Give in - hand over whatever they want
- Try to get away
- Shout for help

## **Self defence or attempts to restrain should be an absolute last resort**

### **Personal alarms**

The purpose of personal alarm is to shock and disorientate an attacker, giving you vital seconds to get away. If you have one:

- Ensure you have it ready to use i.e. around neck or in hand
- Operate it near the ear of the assailant and then throw it away so that the attacker has to reach it to stop it
- Don't rely on it to summon help, to get help shout an instruction such as 'call the police'



## Cash handling

If your work involves collecting cash, you must be extra vigilant with regards to your personal safety.

**If at any time you are in a situation where you are threatened or your collection is taken we advise that you hand the money over and try to get away, do not try to fight or retrieve it. Report it to the police immediately.**

Ensure that lids supplied are attached to your collection buckets and that counter collection boxes are secured if necessary. When storing cash before banking ensure that it is kept in a locked container and not be seen or easily identified as holding cash.

When going to the bank it is advisable to go in pairs, carry the cash in a holdall that looks inconspicuous so that it is not easy to identify that you are carrying cash and make sure that any coins are not making a noise as you move. Try to park as close to the bank as possible.

## **In case of emergency (I.C.E.) – Mobile phone emergency procedure**

I.C.E. is a method of contact for use by emergency service personnel and hospital staff during emergency situations. It can ensure that they are able to contact the right person by simply dialling the number you have stored under I.C.E.

You need to store the details of a person or persons who should be



contacted during emergency under the name 'I.C.E. name' i.e. I.C.E. Sarah Wife