



# Vancouver Police Department

## E.S.L. Safety Tips for Personal Safety

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This project was produced to educate students and visitors on crime prevention so that they can have a safe and enjoyable stay in Vancouver.

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Vancouver is a safe city in which to live. Violent crime is not common and not very likely to occur to a resident or student. However, thefts, pick-pocketing and minor crimes do happen, as in any other big city.

The most common type of crime is theft. **DO NOT** leave your purse, backpack, or other property unattended in public places.

### 1. On the Street

**Be Alert.** Walk with **confidence**. Walk with your head up. Plan your route. Know where you are going and how to get there. Ask advice for the best routes to events, restaurants or shopping.

**Be Aware** of who and what is around you. **Be careful** when someone approaches you with a simple question. **Trust your instincts**. Leave strange or uncomfortable situations.

If you feel you are being followed, change direction instantly and go to the nearest store, restaurant, or pay phone.

At night, walk on **well-lit**, busy streets. Try to be with someone. Walk in the middle of the sidewalk. Avoid isolated areas such as parks where there are no other people around. Carry a **whistle** or **other personal safety device**. **Scream or yell loudly if attacked**.

Tell your roommate or host family where you are going and when you will be back.

Do not carry large amounts of money (cash) Do not show money in public. Use bank / debit cards. Never share your PIN number or let other see it.

Keep your passport in a safe place at home. Carry a photocopy of your passport and other ID.

Don't go out alone or accept rides with strangers. **Do not hitchhike**. Don't use headphones when walking / jogging. They make it difficult to hear an approaching car or stranger.

Don't argue or fight if robbed. Yell loudly. (Fight back to protect your-self if you are attacked. Try to stop or distract the attacker so that you can escape). **Report the incident to 9-1-1 (Police) immediately**.



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### 2. Strangers and Street People

Street people who ask you for money are called “Panhandlers”. Many of them suffer from **drug and alcohol addictions**. If you give them money you will be **encouraging** their addictions. There are many social agencies in the community to help them by giving free meals, shelter, and counselling. If you want to help the poor people please contribute to a good charity.

**Please ignore the panhandlers. If they continue to bother you, talk to your local Community Police Office.**

### 3. Busses and Skytrain

Know your route and bus schedule before you leave. Choose busy, well lit bus stops after dark.

Sit at the front of the bus near the driver. After 9pm you can ask the bus driver to stop at the street closest to your destination (between bus stops). You must exit from the front door (This is not available on express buses).

When on the Skytrain, sit in a car with lots of people. Move to another seat if someone bothers you.

All the Skytrain platforms have a yellow safety area **monitored** by cameras.

Use the emergency phones on the platform or emergency button on the train if you are harassed.

### 4. Out at Night

Taxis are a good way to get home. Know the Taxi company and number of the taxi in case you have any problems.

The drinking age in BC is 19years. ID / Passport is required to purchase liquor or enter a bar, night club, or disco.

Drinking in public places such as parks, beaches, cars or on the street is illegal.

If you go to a bar you should go with friends. You can still meet people, but will have a group to help you if you have any problems.



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### **Know your drinking limits – Do not drink too much alcohol.**

Don't let someone in a bar **"give you a lift home"** unless you bring along a friend.

Do not accept drinks from strangers or leave your drink unattended. **Date Rape drugs are sometimes put into drinks when women are not paying attention.** Drugs such as **cocaine, heroin, marijuana** and nightclub drugs such as **ecstasy and GHB** are illegal. Do not use or possess drugs at any time. Foreign students caught possessing marijuana would probably be deported. **People have recently died from Rave party drugs.**

### **5. Scams / Fraud**

Never give or loan money to a person who approaches you on the street. People will **take advantage** of your trust.

Some examples are:

"I need money for a hotel / bus."

"I lost my wallet; I need money for gas for my car – I'll pay you back tomorrow."

Never give cash for a cheque.

"I don't have a bank account in the city, can you cash my \$1000 cheque in your ATM".

When you buy something, make sure that you get a receipt and are charged the correct amount. Make sure that your card is returned promptly. Never give your credit card information or copies of your card unless you are ready to buy something.

If you rent an apartment, deal directly with the landlord and pay the damage deposit directly to them. Be careful if renting from another student or roommate. **Pay your rent with a cheque – never cash.** Get a receipt immediately.

**Only use tutors authorized by your school.** Use caution when contacting tutors through advertisements and at the library. Watch for persons who claim to be tutors or conversation partners but are not qualified. Some tutors are seeking inappropriate relationships. Never pay tutors in advance.



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### 6. Apartment Security

Don't let people into the building or "**buzz them in**" if you don't know them. If someone wants into the building, (i.e. repairmen, deliveries, salesmen) refer them to the manager. **Never hold the door open for someone you don't know. Don't prop doors open with the floor mat or other blocks.** This is a major security problem.

Look through the peephole before answering the door. Don't leave notes on the door saying you are not home. Use only your last name and initial on the entry panel.

Lock your door even if you only leave for a few minutes, such as going to the laundry room or picking up mail. Use locks on your windows.  
Get to know your neighbours.

### 7. Relationships

If you want to stop a friendship, be very clear that you don't want to see the person anymore. (Maybe tell them that you have a boyfriend or that you are getting back together with your old boyfriend). **If they continue to bother you, tell a teacher.**

If someone is bothering you, tell him or her to stop. For example, "**Go away!**" or "**Stop bothering me!**" Do not worry about **hurting their feelings** or being nice. If you are not clear, they might not stop. If they continue to bother you, then tell somebody nearby. **Be safe**, always use a condom when having sex. **Assault** is illegal in Canada. A husband cannot hit his wife, a boyfriend cannot hit a girlfriend, and a roommate cannot hit you.

**Sexual assault or Rape** is when someone forces or **pressures you** to have sex or touch you in a sexual way when you do not want to be touched. **When we think about sexual assault, many of us think about a stranger attacking in a dark alley. But most sexual assaults occur with someone we know, (a date, a friend, a housemate, a tutor etc.)** You may feel **embarrassed or ashamed** but **rape is never your fault**. Get medical treatment immediately and report it to Police or a rape counsellor.

### Remember – No means No

Learn how to stop an **unwanted sexual advance** or any behaviour that makes you **uncomfortable**. **You have the right to say No, no matter what has happened.** Be direct and assertive. Let your date know your limits clearly and firmly. If you do not know your date well, stay in public places with other people nearby. **Tell your host family or friend where**



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**you are going.** Be prepared to find your own way home. Carry money for a taxi or transit, or call someone for a ride.

### 8. **Bicycling**

Traffic rules for bikes are the same as for cars. Observe signs, and traffic signals. Don't ride on the sidewalk or in **crosswalks**. You must wear a helmet, it is the law. A front and rear light are required at night. Lock your bike at all times. Lock the **Frame** and **wheel** to the bike rack. **U-Lock** is recommended.

### 9. **Police / 9-1-1**

Call 9-1-1 (Police, Fire and Ambulance) if you are in trouble or see a **crime in progress**. You do not need coins if calling 9-1-1 from a pay phone.

**Try to stay calm and tell the operator your language. Interpreters in 140 languages are available.**

**If you are a victim of a crime, no matter how small you should report it to the police.**

Community Police offices are located throughout the city and are able to help students with Non-emergency Police-related issues.

**Police in Canada are very helpful and can assist you in finding other helpful services for students.**