



2017 Lesson Leaders Guide & Members handout.

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## **Safety First.....Be Prepared!**

### **Protect Yourself.....Protect Others!**

The unfortunate reality of society today is that people are being victimized and targeted every day. That means we as citizens need to be prepared and alert for anything, at any time. While this can be very intimidating (and unfortunate), there are simple ways to keep ourselves safe. It is easy to have the “it’ll never happen to me” attitude, but the reality is it CAN happen to you, and the better we can prepare ourselves, the more we can reduce and ultimately eliminate these crimes.

This lesson is not intended to frighten but to help each of us recognize danger signs and be prepared.

The 2016 KSU Lesson “Know Yourself, Understand Others, Improve your Relationships” was a great start. There are two Hearth Fire Series that can also be helpful with this lesson. They are: #30 Resisting the Deadly Triangle of Violence and #10 Making Good Decisions.

#### **Educational Goals:**

- Learn how to protect yourself
- Learn how to identify warning signs
- Know when to get out of harms way

#### **Community Action:**

- Host a self-defense workshop with Police or someone with self-defense background
- Share safety tips with family and others
- Prepare a fair booth/display sharing personal safety tips
- Write news articles about personal safety
- Make brochures or flyers to circulate

You don't have to take a Karate class to protect yourself. But a few basic tips can help. As we age, we are less likely to be able to fight off a would-be robber, but we can make his attempts more difficult.

### **Simple Steps to Keep Yourself safe**

Take your key out before you approach your car or home. Not only could you potentially use this as a weapon if someone approaches you, but with your keys out, you will be able to enter the car or home quicker. Always lock the doors behind you.

Be a good citizen. If you see something, say something. It seems more recently we've heard people speak up too late to make a difference. You never want to be in a situation where you kept quiet and could have saved a life.

Be aware of your surroundings. Unfamiliar noises, someone in an area they shouldn't be, a person walking too close to you (especially at night). Never walk with your ear buds in. You need to be able to hear what is going on around you.

If someone wants to steal your purse/wallet, don't hand it to them....throw it as far as you can and run in the other direction. He/she will probably not chase you if it's the money they want.

If someone is angry....walk away!

If carrying a purse, keep it held close to your body. ALWAYS keep your predominate hand free, carry everything else in the other hand.

A cell phone is great to call for assistance whether when experiencing car problems or whatever. Put numbers of family, friends and Police in your contact list. Most can even take pictures or videos.

Call the Police if you see someone in danger.

Scream at the top of your lungs....that can sometimes cause would be offenders to run away.

Know your surroundings. Be aware of what is going on around you. If there is a large van parked next to your car, go around and get in it on the other side. Vans are often used for kidnapping women when putting purchases into their cars.

Women are always sympathetic...don't be! Some of the worse serial killers have been clean, good looking and may use a cane for sympathy. If they need your help, tell them you will call the police to assist them.

Learn to use your eyes effectively...You can actually see more than you realize. Car tags, color, model of car can be very helpful when needed.

If you are face to face with someone, memorize their features; height, weight, sex, color of clothes, color of eyes, hair and skin. Even from a distance you can get some description.

Learn to “READ” people. Are they acting strangely, upset, or nervous. That could be a warning signal of trouble.

If you are in an unfamiliar location or area, always face the entrance. This will give you an edge if something is about to happen.

Some may choose to carry a weapon. If you do—know how to use it properly!

Pepper spray or perfume on the key chain can be used for defense...spray into the eyes of the attacker.

### **Simple tips for Drivers Wellness:**

If you feel like someone is following you (in your car), change directions. If they continue to follow, call the police. Cell phone with the phone number in the contacts make that much simpler. If walking, cross the street and head for a crowded area.

Never stop for an un-marked police car with flashing lights. Keep driving. Call 911, this is the Police Dispatch. They will know if it is an officers or not.

Include Exercise in your daily routine. Flexibility, strength, range of motion and coordination are all valuable when driving.

Brain training can also make you a safe, smarter driver. Brain training exercises can help you maintain critical driving skills as: attention and reaction time, concentration, problem-solving skills, and memory.

Maintain a regular sleep routine. Drowsy driving is distracted driving. Maintaining regular sleep routines will help fight fatigue. Eat breakfast before you head out in the morning so you are not distracted by trying to unwrap the granola bar.

Take care of your eyes. 90 percent of a driver’s reaction depends on vision.

Don’t talk on your phone while driving...that is also distracting.

If someone manages to get in your car with a weapon and tells you to drive off – Don’t do it! I repeat don’t do it. Hook your seat belt and put your foot on the accelerator. Drive as fast as possible and run into something-anything. The air bag will protect you but not the predator. Get out of the car as fast as you can. HOWEVER, IF there are children in the car don’t put them in danger. Drive but do so as if you are having problems. Someone will call the police.

### **Some additional tips:**

The elbow is the strongest part of the body. If close enough..use it! Also, if it is a male attacker, a knee to his groin area may defer his attack so you can flee.

A hard side kick to the outer part of an attacker's knee can give you time to get away. He won't be able to give chase.

A blow to the vagus nerve (located slightly below the ear on the neck) will result in intense pain and involuntary muscle spasms. A strong enough blow can result in syncope (loss of consciousness or death).

Your fingers thrust into a would-be attacker's eyes sound pretty gross but it could save your life. It would be very painful for the attacker.

The butt of the hand can be used to strike someone directly under the nose, pushing upward as hard as possible. Breaking a nose like this is very painful and may give you time to escape. But notify the Police of the location and identity. If struck hard enough, the attacker may become unconscious.

### **The three reasons women are easy targets for random acts of violence are:**

1. Lack of Awareness – You must know where you are and what's going on around you.
2. Body Language – Keep your head up, swing your arms, stand straight up.
3. Wrong Place, Wrong time – Don't walk alone in an alley or drive in a bad neighborhood at night.

Hopefully, none of us will have to experience the danger but we must all be prepared.

The intention of this lesson is not to frighten anyone but to become better prepared for the possible events in our lives.

The best advice for personal safety is to trust your instincts. If something feels off or wrong, it probably is. Don't be afraid to reach out to someone for help or to call the Police if you notice or suspect something might be wrong.

If we as citizens continue to work together to help prevent crime, we can be the change we need so badly in the world today.

### **Stay alert, Keep Safe!**

Lesson reviewed by: Smith County Sheriff Bruce Lehman and Kimberly Schwant (Kansas Parole Officer)

References: Hearth Fire Series #10 Making Good Decisions and #40 Resisting the Deadly Triangle of Violence

Web sites: <http://www.safewise.com> and by just goggling personal safety.

### **Tips to Keep you safe at home alone:**

1. Get to know your neighbors. Friendly neighbors will keep an eye on your home and help alert you to any potential problems.
2. Keep your windows and doors locked. You may live in a really safe neighborhood, but a locked door can prevent a stranger from walking in uninvited.
3. Have an emergency plan. Have a fire escape plan and practice it.
4. Get an alarm system. There are several available.
5. Turn on exterior lights and close the blinds. When the sun sets and it gets dark, turn on the outside lights. Lights and sounds deter criminals.
6. Get a dog. If you can't have a dog, but a tape recorder and tape a barking dog. A guard dog will not only scare away an intruder, but the dog will also keep you company. If you can't have a dog, at least a recorded bark will make a would-be robber leave.
7. Don't leave a spare key outside. Give a spare key to a trusted neighbor or family member instead of hiding it under a mat or a rock in the front yard. Those are the first places intruders will look for a key.
8. Take a self-defense class. The more knowledge you have, the better you'll feel about being home alone. These classes teach you the basics of protecting yourself.
9. Have a check-in plan. When you live alone, it's important to let someone you trust know your basic schedule and plan. If you are going out of town, make sure a family member or neighbor knows your plans.
10. If you hear a faucet outside running at night, do NOT go outside to check it. It could be a trap.
11. Call someone. If you are scared or worried, call someone to talk to help you calm down.
12. Write down all serial numbers for your electronics. If your items are stolen, it is much easier for the Police to track them with those numbers. Keep a record of your belongings. It is harder to remember what you had after it is all gone.
13. Whether you own your home or rent, purchase insurance. While it might seem like an expense you can live without, but it is worth it in the end.
14. Never open your door to someone you don't know. Regardless of what the person is saying on the other side of the door, if you don't recognize the voice or you weren't expecting someone, it is probably best to ignore them. If they do not leave, call the Police.

The more you know, the more confident you'll be. The key to feeling safe when home alone is to feel in control.