

COMMUNITY PROTECTION AND SAFETY ISSUES

Personal Safety Tips: Please be aware that there are no perfect protection strategies. There is no way to predict all possible situations. These tips are intended to reduce, not eliminate the risk of assault.

- The primary responsibility for any sexual assault rests with the offender and not the victim. *Unfortunately, you can take all reasonable measures to reduce your risk and still be assaulted.*
- **Knowledge is power.** Though many sex offenders are NOT known to law enforcement, you can educate yourself about those known offenders who reside in your community by contacting your local law enforcement agency. Community Notification also provides valuable information about sexually violent predators (SVPs) in your community.
- **Remember, most sexual assaults are committed by someone known to the victim.** The stranger does not pose the highest risk to you. 80-95% of sex offenders are known to their victims and includes relatives, friends and authority figures. If you feel uncomfortable in someone's presence, trust your gut and take steps to distance yourself from him or her. Don't be afraid to make a scene if necessary. Tell someone!
- **Societal myths** are beliefs that contribute to the continuation of sexual assault and abuse. Understand the current rape myths and help debunk these myths for others.
- **Be thoughtful and use good judgment in choosing your friends and partners.** Identify safe people in your neighborhood that you or your children can go to if you need help. Be cautious about making personal contact with those you meet on the Internet or in other similar environments.
- **Be observant and aware of your surroundings.** Avoid poorly lit areas where an attacker might hide. Be careful of your use of alcohol and drugs; you are more vulnerable to attack if you are intoxicated. Do not leave your food or drink unattended at a party or in a public place. Don't be embarrassed to use security staff at work or when shopping to walk you to your car. Do not pick up hitchhikers or stop to help a stranger in a stalled vehicle; use a phone in a safe location to call for help.
- **Do not harass the offender.** The purpose behind community notification is to **reduce** the chances of future victimization of persons by this offender. The information presented through this notification should assist you and your family in avoiding situations that allow easy victimization. Initiating contact with the SVP can increase the risk of you or your family being victimized or may drive the offender underground and place others at greater risk.
- For more information, go to <http://sor.state.co.us/>