

- Follow your intuition. If you feel uncomfortable or have a bad feeling about something, don't ignore it. Don't worry about offending the other person. Address your concerns first, and then deal with any other issues that arise.
- Continue to meet in public places until you feel comfortable with the individual. Females should enroll in a self-defense course, but that does not exclude males from keeping their guard up as well. Many young men have become victims of assault and other crimes by people they met through online dating services.
- If your date is persistent and suggests things that you are not comfortable with, that is a sign of disrespect, control, and inconsideration. Understand that this behavior will only get worse in time.

## Parties

The use of drugs or alcohol can increase the risks of becoming a victim as senses and reactions are slowed. The best way to avoid danger when at a social setting (bar, party, etc.) is to avoid drinking alcohol altogether, or at a minimum, limit the amount of alcohol you are consuming. If possible, eat before going to a party to help slow the effects of alcohol. When socializing, be aware of who is around and keep an eye out for friends that came with you. Don't ever let a drink out of your sight, especially at a bar. If a stranger offers to buy you a drink, approach the bar and watch as the bartender pours you the drink. Do not accept bottle drinks that have been opened. Watch the bartender open your drink before accepting it. Many club drugs are clear and tasteless, but are potent and dangerous, and can be slipped into a drink unnoticed. Be aware of club drugs and their effects.



If you are drinking, please plan ahead for a ride home. On holidays, many local cab companies provide free rides. Designate a driver, call a friend, or catch a cab, but never accept a ride home from a stranger.

## Travel Safety

Many wonderful destinations are within driving distance but it's important to take precautions to make sure you arrive safely. Here are a few tips to ensure a safe and pleasant trip.

- Car maintenance: Always keep your car properly maintained, including regular checks of your spare tire to ensure proper air inflation, cracks, etc. and emergency tire repair kits are good if you are not comfortable changing a tire. Have tire-changing equipment in your vehicle at all times. Fluid levels, including oil, brake, power steering, transmission and radiator should be checked on a regular basis. A small tool kit, as well as an emergency first aid kit, may also come in handy. Always carry extra drinking water as help may take some time to arrive.
- Cell Phone: Carry a cell phone and car charger. Even if your cell phone does not have a provider, you will be able to make an emergency call to 9-1-1 if the phone is charged and a satellite can be reached.
- Automobile clubs: Enroll in an emergency roadside service automobile club, as they can provide assistance if your vehicle breaks down, you get a flat tire, or you get into an accident. Have their phone number handy in case you need to contact them, and if possible, program it into your phone. If your car becomes disabled do not accept a ride from a stranger. If someone stops to ask if you need help, roll down your window slightly and ask them to call your auto club, a friend, or the police for you.
- Destination: Leave your destination, path of travel and expected time of arrival (to and from) with a family member or close friend. Contact them when you arrive as well as when you are leaving to return home. This way, if your vehicle becomes disabled or you encounter problems, law enforcement can easily locate and help you.
- Do NOT pick up hitchhikers. Not only is it illegal, it is very dangerous. Don't give rides to strangers.
- If possible, avoid traveling alone. There is safety in numbers.
- Taking a self-defense class is always recommended.

Mesa Police Department Crime Prevention  
480-644-2300  
[www.mesaaz.gov/police](http://www.mesaaz.gov/police)



# Safety For Singles

## Jogging & Walking Safety

While exercise is always a good idea, it's important to take precautions if you intend on **participating in** outdoor activities or if you walk to/from work. If you jog, walk or bike ride, do not wear head phones as it makes it difficult to hear vehicles or footsteps behind you. Remember that bicycle riders need to follow the same laws as vehicles, **including** stopping at red lights, riding with traffic, etc. For runners, joggers and walkers, be aware of your surroundings and **stay in populated areas**. Use authorized jog/foot paths, busy streets, etc. Stay away from isolated areas including wooded areas, canals, etc. Try to remain visible to the public at all times. With the excessive heat in the summer it is most appropriate to exercise early in the morning or late at night. Running with a partner, and/or your dog will help you keep active as well as provide additional safety. You should also change your path of travel on a regular basis. Leave jewelry at home, but carry a cell phone. Keep some form of identification **with** you, and wear **light colored** or reflective clothing. If someone approaches you, be aware of his/her actions and don't approach "lost" people who are seeking assistance with directions, etc.



## Safety at Work or School

In order to stay safe at work or school, park as close to the facility as possible, **preferably** under a light if you leave after dark. Park so that you can see the driver's door, allowing a direct path from your exit point to the vehicle.

**Do not leave personal information in your vehicle, or if you must, hide it somewhere that a car thief may not look.** Memorize your license plate or write it on your vehicle insurance card and carry it with you at all times. This will help law enforcement identify your car if it is stolen. Do not leave valuables in plain sight. **This includes a garage door opener, cell phone, sunglasses, etc.**

Keep your doors locked at all times and be aware of who is around you as you are exiting or approaching your vehicle. While leaving work, if you see suspicious activity or people around your vehicle or in the parking lot, feel uncomfortable about walking to your car alone, or are disabled (broken leg, in a wheelchair, etc.) ask someone you trust to go with you to your vehicle. If you are the last to leave your building and no one else is around, and you feel threatened by sights, sounds or activity, call the local police department, tell them what is going on, and wait for them to arrive before approaching your vehicle. Provide police as much information as possible about the people or activity you are observing. Universities and colleges have campus security officers who will escort you to your vehicle.

While walking to your car, remain observant. **Don't be distracted with reading, listening to music or searching for car keys.** Keep possessions that can double as weapons handy. Items like keys and purses will often allow you to protect yourself if you are attacked. If you carry mace or pepper spray, **you should receive proper training in its use.** **When exiting your vehicle,** if possible, wait until a group of other students/co-workers pass by and walk close to them.

Most people believe **that** once they reach their cars, they are safe. That is not always the case. Upon **approaching** your vehicle, **if you notice unlocked doors or damage to the keyhole, move away from the vehicle and call for help from security or the police**

department. When you get in your car, look around and behind you. Remain aware of your surroundings and once inside your vehicle, lock the doors immediately.



## Dating Tips

Dating is a natural rite of passage and an important phase of growing up, but there are rules that should be followed to keep safe.

No matter what your age is, it is important to take precautions when going out on a date with someone you are not familiar with.

- Always let someone know who you are going out with, what time you are expected to return home, and where you are going.
- Meet your date at a predetermined location. This allows privacy for both parties and will avoid problems if the date does not work out.
- Always carry enough money to get yourself home, pay your own way, and call for help if necessary.
- If you get into a situation where you need a ride home (the drive becomes intoxicated, annoying, etc.) arrange in advance someone to call who can pick you up.
- If you ask your date to do something and he/she does not want to, even something as simple as taking a drive through a park, feeding ducks, etc., honor their request. Do not push, coerce or force the issue. If someone tries to push, coerce or force you to do something you are uncomfortable doing, realize that this is an indication of a manipulative individual and one who does not respect your feelings.

## Online Dating

Over the past few years, online dating has become very popular. While many social networking sites promote safe environments to communicate with each other, in reality, there is no way to ensure the person on the other end is who they say they are. While many people have successful **relationships** that started online, there are many others who have encountered individuals who have been deceptive. Take precautions as you would with any other stranger and don't give out too much personal information.

Because the person you are communicating with is a stranger, no matter what communication has been exchanged, there are a few steadfast rules for keeping safe while engaging in online dating.

- **Maintain your privacy:** Never reveal any identifying information in your online dating profile, personal ads, or

the initial emails to your matches. Information you should keep private **includes** your last name, where you work, phone number, address, or school you attend. If you don't



know what information you should provide to your "match," a good rule is "if in doubt, leave it out." If the online dating service offers a private email, use that and avoid using your **personal** email address. If you want or need to use a **personal** email address, select an anonymous account through one of the free email providers.

- **Online screen name:** For your safety, consider selecting a name **that does not contain personal information about you (i.e. name, age, date of birth) and is not provocative.**
- **First verbal communication:** At some point, you will want to exchange phone numbers and names with your new "match". Use a cell phone number instead of a home or work number if possible. Consider your privacy and don't leave too much personal information (last name, place of work) **on your outgoing voicemail message.** Don't give the other person your last name or home number if you can avoid it. Home phone numbers [land lines] can be easily connected to an address, and you don't want strangers knowing where you live.
- **First meeting:** The first meeting is also known as the riskiest part of online dating. Following these tips will decrease the chances that something will go wrong.
- **Transport yourself.** Never agree to have your match pick you up, and never pick him/her up. Both of you need to have an option to leave should something go wrong.
- Always meet in a public place. Restaurants, coffee shops, etc. are good places for a first (and second) meeting.
- Tell a friend or family member where you are going and when you expect to return home. Arrange a time when you will call your friend/family so that they will know you have returned home safely.
- Bring a cell phone with emergency numbers set to speed dials. If you do not have a cell phone provider, **carrying any charged cell phone** will still allow you to call 9-1-1 should you need help.
- Don't go home with the person. You may feel very comfortable around them and want to spend additional time with them. In that case, both of **you can drive** separately to a 24-hour restaurant and continue your conversation there.