

## SECTION 4: SAFETY ON THE ROAD

# SAFETY ON THE ROAD

As a REALTOR®, you spend a great deal of time in your car. These tips may help protect you from dangerous situations while in your car:

- When you're alone getting into your car, the first thing you should do is lock the doors. Be observant when approaching your car, looking underneath and in the back seat before entering.
- Know where you are going. Study a map to find the location(s) you must drive to. Plan your route yourself; don't assume a client's directions are accurate.
- Keep roadside breakdown essentials in the trunk, including flares, a tire-inflation canister, basic hand tools, spare belts and hoses, water, a flashlight and a first-aid kit. Have your vehicle inspected regularly, keep it well maintained and learn how to change a flat tire.
- Don't antagonize potentially dangerous drivers by mimicking their gestures or aggressive driving. Just let it go.
- Dress for the weather. If your car breaks down or you need to escape a dangerous situation on foot, you could find yourself exposed to harsh weather conditions for an extended period of time. In the winter, bring a coat with you and keep a blanket in the trunk of your car along with some spare warm clothes.

### Parking Lot Safety: Don't Become an Easy Target!

- Park in highly visible, well-lit areas and be mindful of suspicious activity. Report any lights out or suspicious persons to law enforcement.
- Make a note of where you parked so you don't spend unnecessary time walking around a parking lot looking for your vehicle.
- Always lock your car doors when driving and parked. Never leave your keys in your car, whether you're at a gas station or in a parcel pickup area.
- Limit the amount of time you spend idle in the car.
- Never leave valuables in your car.

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Walking to your car:

- As you walk through the parking lot observe those around you. Notice if there are strangers sitting in parked cars or standing in your pathway. If so, choose an alternate route and avoid them.
- Stay away from isolated or poorly lit areas. Avoid walking near shrubbery, which can hide attackers.
- Always be alert and aware. Have your car keys in your hand and be ready to unlock the door without delay.
- As you approach your car, look under and around it. Before getting in, look in the back seat and on the floor.
- Don't place your purse or package on the roof of the car while loading other items.

If you are approached:

- If someone suspicious approaches your car, honk your car's horn. It's one of the loudest and fastest ways to scare off an attacker or let others know that you need help.
- If a car approaches you while you are walking and you are harassed by the occupants, scream and run in the opposite direction so that the driver will have to turn around to pursue you.
- If you feel that you are being followed, walk or run quickly to a lighted store or where crowds of people can offer help if needed. Know where to go for help, such as a police station or firehouse. Do not go home.
- It's a good idea to keep a police whistle on your key chain. If you feel your personal safety is being threatened, follow your instincts. Do anything you can to draw attention. Don't be embarrassed. Scream, yell or blow your whistle!

Sources: REALTOR® Magazine, North Carolina Association of REALTORS®