

Safety not to be taken lightly, common sense vital

by Jimmy Criswell
Staff Writer

Safety on our streets is an issue not talked enough about, even though we know every night people are being raped, mugged, assaulted, and killed.

People should know what they can do to protect themselves from becoming statistics as victims of violent crimes. It is said that we shouldn't have to do anything to protect ourselves; that is what the police are being paid to do. But, as the adage says, "if you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem." This holds true here, too.

Clackamas County Sheriff Bill Brooks suggests many different things people can do as simple precautions. One of his key points was just always be alert.

"Violent crimes can happen at anytime and in any location, though assaults are more apt to happen at night under the cover of darkness."

Not being alone is one of the most useful ways to protect yourself, according to Brooks. "The greatest deterrent to an individual is to be in the company of other people. It is also good to be in a lit area, and/or in the middle of a busy section, such as in traffic or in a mall."

If you are out at night, be aware of the area around you. Don't go where you can easily be surprised. If this isn't possible, have somebody go with you, as what Brooks calls a "courtesy escort."

When you go somewhere that you have to park your car for a long period of time or out of sight, always lock the doors. Not only can that protect any possessions in your car and possibly the car itself, it also helps prevent a possible assailant from getting in and lying hidden, where he can attack you by surprise. You should have your keys ready beforehand in case you need to get in your car quickly. It is also good

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to lock your door after you get in.

If you are at a traffic signal and you have a strong reason to believe that someone is about to attack you, Brooks advises you to ignore the traffic signal and report the incident.

Brooks also stresses always knowing where you are when you

are driving, especially at night. That is important in cases where you are being followed. Knowing where the local police station, sheriff's office, and pay phones are is very important. If you feel you are being followed, you should go to one of those places, in that order, unless your proximity dictates otherwise. Try to get the description of the car as best as possible. If you have a cellular phone, call 911. But be sure not to forget to tell them where you are.

If you are on a highway or other well-traveled road and your car breaks down beyond your ability to fix it, put your hood up, turn your hazard lights on, and lock the doors. If someone stops to help you, roll down your window part way and ask him/her to call the police or a tow truck to help you out. "There are good samaritans out there," Brooks says, "but you can't really tell which ones they are."

Things can be done at your home to create a safer domain in your neighborhood. Make sure the area around your home is well lit. Either trim or remove bushes in your yard that could conceal individuals or their movements. Put dead bolts on all doors leading to the outside, and never hide the key

under a mat, behind a rock, or anywhere else near the door. Those will be the first places they look.

Automatic burglar alarms are also very useful. Some good systems can be found at a low cost. It is also possible to rent an alarm system from month to month. The noise created by these can often effectively deter a criminal.

If your house is broken into while you are there be very careful about what you do. Call 911. Don't use a firearm unless you know how to use one and you know what the

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law is regarding it.

The following is the law exactly how it reads: "161.219 Limitations on use of deadly physical force in defense of a person. Notwithstanding the provisions of ORS 161.209, a person is not justified in using deadly force upon another person unless the person reasonably believes that the other person is:

(1) committing or attempting to commit a felony involving the use or threatened imminent use of

physical force against a person; or (2) committing or attempting to commit a burglary in a dwelling; or

(3) using or about to use unlawful deadly physical force against a person."

If you see a crime in progress, find a police officer and report it immediately. Brooks leaves the decision of intervention up to the person witnessing it.

"If you think you can successfully intervene, then you should. Some people are very capable of handling certain situations. But if you don't think you can successfully intervene, report it and leave it up to the police.

"If you are present in a place of business at the time of an armed robbery, comply completely to the demands," Brooks says. You should concentrate on getting a description of the person--height, clothes. Get the type of car, color, license plate, or anything else you think will help the police capture the person.

The most important thing to remember is being aware of what goes on around you and using common sense.

Rape goes unreported, statistics climb at alarming rate

By Greg Tully
Staff Writer

According to figures recently released by the FBI, there were 100,433 rapes reported in the United States in 1990, with 424 of these occurring in Portland.

Does the police department do enough to protect victims of rape? Are police procedures fair to the victims of sexual assault?

While one in four women will be raped during their lifetime, only one in ten rapes will be reported. 13 per cent of all rape charges will eventually be dropped by the victim.

One of these cases involved a young Milwaukie woman. While on a brief visit to another state to see a friend, the woman was attacked by one of her friend's co-workers. When she went to police, they told her that if she wanted to press charges, she would have to remain in the state while the charges were investigated and through subsequent trials.

The police asked her if and how much she had been drinking and put her on the spot for being around several men.

"They basically made me feel

like I was to blame, like I had been asking for it," said the woman, who preferred to remain anonymous.

She was forced to drop the charges, rather than disrupt her life. She was questioned by the police and went through an exhaustive and embarrassing physical exam. The attacker walked away without a hassle.

In a case where the victim was from a different area than the attack occurred, police would do all they could to get to the bottom of the charges, said Detective Carter of the Portland Police/Sex Crimes

Division.

"In that type of case, we would get as much evidence as we could and then turn the case over to the victim's local jurisdiction," Carter said. "The woman would have to return for the actual trial. If she couldn't afford to come back, generally the district attorney's office would pick up the tab."

Women may not be aware of how frightening a rape investigation may be, said Mirna of the Women's Crisis Hotline.

"The examination itself, women may not be aware of what's involved in that," she said. "Sometimes the investigation can scare a woman off."

Seven out of every ten rapes will be committed by someone the victim knows. One of these cases allegedly involved a young Portland woman.

According to an article in *The Oregonian*, the woman, Brook

Lemke, claimed to be raped by two men she had met earlier in a bar. According to Lemke, the police wouldn't act on the case. When she called the police she was told "I'd set myself up for rape," Lemke told *The Oregonian*.

"If a woman is adamant on pressing charges, we'd go as far as we possibly could with the investigation," Carter said. "If I didn't think we could win the case, I'd tell the woman. I'm not going to lie to anyone."

Nationally, one rape will occur every six minutes. The figures on rape are up 8.1 per cent over 1989 statistics.

The police department may have less than enough capable people to cover the growing tide of rape cases.

"We don't have as much money as the homicide department, but generally, I think the police do a pretty good job," Carter said.

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