



Traveling Alone

The purpose of this article is to give you some things to think about when traveling alone. The points included here are not just for commuters, they are things we should all keep in mind whenever we are traveling alone.

The golden rule of safe traveling is to have a properly fueled and serviced car. Check your fluid levels on a regular basis and keep them topped up - especially in the winter. Watch your fuel gauge; make sure before you drive anywhere you have enough fuel to get there. Maintaining your car is a good way to prevent it from breaking down unexpectedly, leaving you stranded.

If your car does break down unexpectedly, be cautious about getting out of it. Pull off the road far enough to avoid impeding traffic then remain inside the car with the windows rolled up and the doors locked. If you have a "CALL POLICE" sign, place it in a rear window to alert passing motorists that you need assistance. If another motorist stops to offer help, don't get out of your car. Roll your window down just enough to communicate, but not enough to allow the person to reach inside, and ask them to call the police for you. Whatever you do, don't let them talk you out of the safety of your car! Likewise, if you see a stranded motorist, or someone who looks like they may need help, call the police for them from the next phone you encounter. Don't stop and offer your help to a stranded motorist, as it may just be a ploy to get you out of your car. Cellular phones are a great way to avoid being stranded somewhere; they are especially convenient because they can be transferred from vehicle to vehicle and allow you to call for help from anywhere.

Be cautious of minor traffic accidents in remote or untraveled areas. If you are involved in a minor "fender bender" stay in your car, note down the other car's license plate and wait for the driver to approach you. Lower your window just enough to talk and exchange names and addresses, then explain that you will drive to the nearest open establishment with a phone and call the police from there. Invite the person to follow you, if they wish, to make out the accident report. Don't just jump out of your car to inspect the damage when you first feel the impact; remember, it might just be a ruse designed to lower your guard.

Don't pick up hitchhikers or offer strangers rides since many victims of violent crime pick up their assailant unknowingly. Likewise, don't hitchhike yourself--many assailants pick up hitch hikers, too.