Keep Yourself Safe at NOVA

NOVA campuses are very safe, but our record of safety doesn’t mean it is not important to take steps to protect yourself at all times. There is an assault in this country every minute, and several serious crimes have occurred on or near NOVA campuses.

The most important thing you can do to protect yourself is to be aware of your surroundings at all times. Do not walk around texting or wearing earbuds while listening to music. Predators prey on inattentive people who are easily surprised. The risk is not only from predators. There are numerous cases of people texting or wearing earbuds and falling or stepping into traffic.

Here are some other tips:

- Avoid walking in isolated areas on campus and, when possible, walk with a group of people. If you’d like an escort to your vehicle or need a jump start, call college police dispatch. An officer will be sent to your location.
- If possible, park at night in lighted areas of nearby parking lots.
- If you encounter someone in a hallway or on campus, present a confident image. Do not slouch or look away. Rather, keep walking and look the person in the eye as you pass.
- Walk to your vehicle with your keys in your hand.
- Check the interior of your vehicle before entering it.
- If confronted by an assailant, do not fight unless your life is in jeopardy. No property is worth your personal injury.
- Keep your valuables such as computers, cell phones and textbooks under your direct control at all times. Leaving them unattended invites theft.
- Do not carry large amounts of cash, and keep your cash, ID and credit cards in your pocket.
- Learn the locations of call boxes on campus and how to use them.
- Be familiar with panic dialers in classrooms and in offices.
- In the event of an active shooter, evacuate if possible and do not carry your backpacks, handbags or any parcels which arriving police could suspect of hiding a weapon. If you must shelter in place, remain quiet and be prepared to fight for your life.
- Get a good description of any assailant (gender, race, height, weight, hair color, accent, odor, clothing, tattoos, etc.) and report same immediately to police.
- If you see something that concerns you or seems out of place, call the college police. Do not attempt to intervene directly.
- Sign up for NOVA Alert to be informed of campus safety and security issues.
- Program NOVA Police Dispatch into your cell phone. You may reach us 24/7 at 703-764-5000.

Remember to stay alert at all times. If you have safety or security concerns, report them to your campus police or call Dispatch. Working together, we can make NOVA even safer!