

MEETING UP WITH A MUGGER

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EXCERPT from
KEEPING
YOURSELF
SAFE!
PERSONAL
SAFETY
WORKSHOP

*The safest
thing to do in
a robbery is
cooperate!*

*No property
you own is
worth your
life!*

*There are no
absolutes in crime
scenarios and no
blanket responses.
Evaluate each
situation individually
and respond in the
way you judge best.*

TIPS FOR KEEPING YOURSELF SAFE!

- ▶ **Keep the encounter brief.** The average robbery lasts only 52-60 seconds. Act as if you're conducting a routine business transaction and try not to prolong it.
- ▶ **Adopt a "non-victim" posture.** Head up, shoulders back, feet shoulder-width apart. Keep your expression blank—not scared, not angry. Make eye contact (*I see you; I'm aware you're there*) unless the person is high, drunk, acting erratic, or enraged. Experts advise this is the best way to defuse a confrontation.
- ▶ **Adopt a "non-victim" attitude.** Don't beg, plead or cry. No arguments, questions or discussions either.
- ▶ **Respond assertively.** Speak as little as possible and keep your tone of voice firm, reassuring and conversational. Reinforce what you say by nodding your head when you say "yes" and shaking it when you say "no." Deep breathing will keep your voice firm and help control fear and panic.
- ▶ **Verbalize your cooperation.** Use assertive sentences that focus on behavior (*"I'm going to give you my money; you don't have to hurt me"*).
- ▶ **Keep gestures to a minimum.** Don't make any sudden, jerky movements. Keep hands visible at all times. "Talk" the robber through each movement you make (*"I'm taking my left hand and reaching into my pocketbook ... there's a lot of stuff in here and I'm trying to find my wallet"*).
- ▶ **Be observant.** Look for signs of drugs, alcohol, or crazy behavior. Confrontations with a person in any of these conditions are unpredictable, no matter how cooperative you are.
- ▶ **Use your wits.** Don't tell a mugger you have no money. Stall for time with fast-talk or bargaining until you can attract attention or create an opportunity to escape.
- ▶ **Plan ahead.** Carry a small amount of "mugger money" that can be handed over quickly. Keep larger amounts hidden elsewhere on your person.