

Living alone safety tips

Never before have so many people lived alone. More than 30% of people 65 or older live alone and that rate reaches 39% among women in the same age category¹.

Someone living alone is often more vulnerable than someone with other people around in various situations.

However, whether you're alone or not, we must always remain vigilant.

Here are a few tips and tricks that can help you feel safer at home or in your day-to-day activities.



At home

- Lock your doors and windows, whether you're inside or outside your home, day or night.
- If someone knocks on your door, always check who is on the other side before you open it. To do so, look through a peephole or a window, talk through the door and, if your door has a safety chain, open it a crack. It is important to show that you are home inside your house.
- Make sure that you have adequate lighting in and around your house. Remember to close your curtains and blinds at night.
- When you come home, go to the door with your key in hand. If a door or window appears to have been tampered with, don't go in. Get to a safe place, and then call the police.

When travelling

- Share your plans with someone you trust. If you're taking a new route, study it before you leave.
- Put objects of value in your pockets or out of sight. Keep your handbag or personal items safe.
- If you're on foot or waiting for or taking a bus, stick to busy, well-lit streets. Walk confidently in the middle of the sidewalk. Keep distance between yourself and passers-by and cars.
- On a bus, sit close to the driver and be sure you are in his field of vision. Ask to get off between two stops, as close as possible to your destination, if it keeps you safer.
- If you're driving, always check how much gas you have, lock the doors and place your personal items on the floor on the right side. If you break down, pull over to the right and put your headlights and hazard lights on. Call the police and only leave your car if you need to.
- In all cases, if a stranger comes up to you or follows you, change direction, go into a business or call the police.

At a bank machine

- Opt for a busy, well-lit bank machine. Check the indoor and outdoor surroundings.
- Stand so that no one can see your personal identification number (PIN).
- Take your money as quickly as possible and count it in a safe place. If there is an error, contact your banking institution.

- Never leave your receipt on the premises, as it contains important information, such as your account number, transit and balance.

Whether you're alone at home or in your day-to-day activities, it is always important to trust your intuition when it comes to safety. **If you don't feel safe or think you are in danger, call the police by dialing 911.**

Whether you're alone or not, we invite you to analyze the situations in which you could be most vulnerable, identify your safety problems, find solutions and call on the authorities concerned to correct problem situations or areas.

¹ Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, Proportion de la population de 15 ans et plus vivant seule, selon le groupe d'âge et selon le sexe, Québec, 2011

<http://www.msss.gouv.qc.ca/statistiques/sante-bien-etre/index.php?Population-vivant-seule-selon-lage-et-le-sexe>