

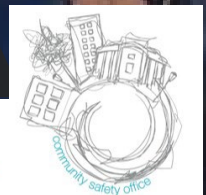


Safer Commute – Tips and Suggestions



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Gentle Reminders

The victims of violence on public transit did not “do” or “not do something” that made them victims of the attack.

What we are experiencing is unsettling because it is random and therefore unpredictable.

We may not be able to prevent violence because we cannot control another person’s choice, but we can try to reduce our vulnerability to those seeking an opportunity for violence.

What is happening?

- What feels like a sudden upsurge in physical attacks and violence on public transit
- A new or increased awareness of being “trapped” in different ways e.g.
 - Acknowledging that we have to use public transit to get around
 - Can’t exit quickly if there is a problem
- Feeling powerless and hypervigilant because
 - We can’t stop what is happening
 - We don’t know what to do



Where to begin

Three types of attacks:

- Targeted
- Escalation
- Opportunistic



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Targeted

Targeted Attacks look like:

- suspected gang members in conflict,
- groups of students from rival schools fighting,
- persons “known to each other” involved in physical assault

We have become used to targeted physical attacks in public and may not feel vulnerable because we are not involved.

Escalation

- Often begins with an expression of heightened emotion e.g. yelling, cursing, that moves into physical assault
- There may be an opportunity (but not always) to “de-escalate” and/or to avoid movement into physical altercation or engagement with the other person

There is a sense of predictability in so far that you can anticipate a likely increase in the heightened emotions and/or verbal threat of physical assault



Opportunistic

Not specific to the victim:

- Victim is not personally known to the assailant or representing a rival group
- Victim likely to be random – they happen to be present in the moment
- There may be no plan at all – e.g. seizing an opportunity to steal a bag
- Physical violence is not necessarily the ultimate intent



Opportunistic attacks occur all of the time but there is a spectrum of violence: a phone being stolen vs a person being stabbed.

It is both the level of violence and the apparent randomness of the attack which increases our sense of vulnerability and anxiety.

A **safe** contact.
Talk to TTC staff
anytime using
this passenger
intercom.

What can we do?

The TTC, York Region, MiWay and GO Transit have safety tips on their website including information on:

- Designated Waiting Areas
- Emergency Contact Phones in stations
- Emergency Alarm in trains
- Request Stop Program (buses)

 Assistance
Intercom



Passenger Assistance Intercom



 
Information

 
Emergency

Some other ideas

Reduce your vulnerability to crimes of opportunity:

- Pay attention to your surroundings
 - What is happening on the platform/on the bus/on the train?
 - Use only one earbud if you are on the phone
 - Keep your phone in your pocket (hidden) if possible
 - If you are reading, look up every couple of minutes to scan the environment
- Listen to your instincts – your “gut feeling”
 - Is the bus/train too crowded for your comfort?
 - Should you get off at a different stop?
 - Should you move closer to the driver/operator?



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Plan your route before you leave

- Know your stops
 - Is it typically well-populated?
 - Should you get off early or later and walk to your destination?
- Know where the DWA is on your platform
- Know where the platform exits are for your train stops

Adjust your routine, if possible, to have the time to take the next bus/train if you are feeling uncomfortable

Try to be intentional where you sit and stand (if possible)

- Sit in an aisle seat
- If this is not possible, consider standing in the center aisle so that you are less likely to be cornered



If you are feeling uncomfortable with someone on the bus/train:

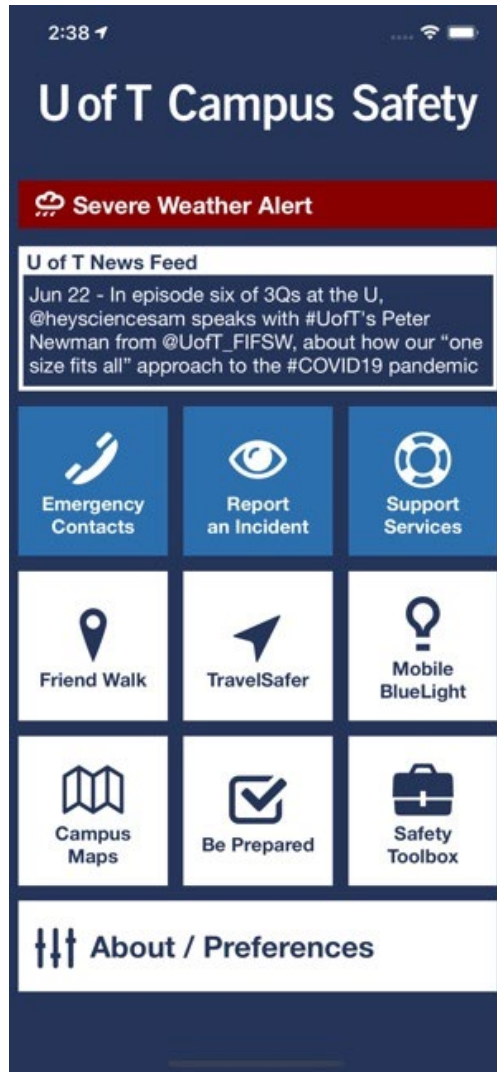
- Move closer to the driver/operator if possible
- Act with confidence – look directly at them
 - in the same way that you are gauging them, they may be gauging you
- Get off at the next stop (but remain close to the door)
 - try to be the last person off the vehicle if you can
 - if the person of concern follows you off, get back on the vehicle right away



- Look out for others too – is someone else experiencing uncomfortable or harassing behaviour?
- Assailants are less likely to take advantage of others if they believe that someone will confront them on their behaviour.
 - Can you move closer or make it obvious that you are watching?
 - Draw attention to the situation if you are safe to do so e.g.
 - “Stop bothering them”
 - “They already told you ‘no’”
 - Use the Emergency Alarm to bring the operator to your location

We encourage you to:

- Use the U of T Safety app's "Friend Walk" feature so that someone knows where you are and can contact police if necessary
- Contact a family member/friend and ask them to meet you at a particular stop at a particular time
- Not take public transit if you are intoxicated. Have a plan before you head out:
 - To have a designated driver
 - To have a family member/friend meet you at a particular time
 - To call a family member/friend to meet you
 - To ask the bartender to call a taxi for you



Some general suggestions:

- Consider taking a self-defence course:
 - increases your confidence in your ability to fight back
- Don't carry important documents on you unless you have to use them that day, instead:
 - Take a scan/picture of your:
 - Birth Certificate
 - S.I.N card,
 - Health card
 - Passport and/or other immigration papers
 - Keep a copy of these "in the cloud" and on your phone
- Keep emergency cash on you so you can take a taxi if your phone is stolen and you are stranded
- Enable the security features on your phone to prevent others from easily accessing your contacts and identifying information



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WEN-DO

Learn easy to use and easy to remember methods of protecting yourself in a wide range of situations.

WOMEN'S SELF DEFENSE FOR WOMEN BY WOMEN

TO REGISTER VISIT: www.communitysafety.utoronto.ca/self-defense

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**URBAN
SELF
DEFENSE
FOR MEN**

online workshop
free
register now

NEXT WORKSHOP
OCTOBER 22
5:30 to 7:30pm

Registration is required
All male-identified
University of Toronto
community members welcomed

Please have a water bottle and
wear comfortable clothing
& running shoes

www.communitysafety.utoronto.ca/self-defense

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ACTS OF RESISTANCE

A FREE ONLINE SELF-DEFENSE WORKSHOP
FOR UofT LGBTQ+ COMMUNITIES

www.communitysafety.utoronto.ca/self-defense

Are there any
guarantees?

No... but...

having a plan of action may
reduce the anxiety of not having
control of the unknown and
...feeling less anxious is priceless...



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Public Transit Safety Resources



Toronto Community Crisis Service

(can be accessed through 211 or 911)

<https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/public-safety-alerts/community-safety-programs/toronto-community-crisis-service>

TTC Safe App

<https://www.ttc.ca/riding-the-ttc/safety-and-security/safe-ttc-app>

MiWay Report Line

905-896-5040

Metrolinx (GO Transit and UP Express)

Report immediate safety or security concerns by texting "HELP" to 77777

York Regional Transit

YRT Contact Centre at 1-866-668-3978. Select option "4" to speak with a Customer Service Representative

M-F 7 to 7; weekends and holidays 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.



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U of T Campus Safety App (download)

Available through Google Play or the App Store

Community Safety Office

<https://www.communitysafety.utoronto.ca>

Campus Safety (Special Constable Services) 416-978-2222
(emergency line UTSG and UTSC)

De-Escalating Potentially Violent Situations

Available through the LLC and off-campus through CTRI

<https://ctrinstitute.com/topic/de-escalating-potentially-violent-situations>

