



Georgian Institute of Public Affairs

Security Instruction and Guidelines ¹

Dear Students, Faculty,

GIPA location is considered as a safe and calm place where you can enjoy your student life to the fullest. However, no place can be regarded as completely safe and absolutely immune from the risks of criminal activity. The Administration is providing this information to better safeguard you from the possible occurrences of criminal activity that can involve the violent extraction of your personal belongings or carjacking. We hope that these guidelines will help you avoid the disturbances of your daily lives and help you limit the possibilities of any violent action against you.

Some of the general recommendations are as follows:

- **Remain vigilant.** It's important that you do your best to recognize potential danger before it reaches you or becomes too late. This can simply involve taking a few seconds to look over your shoulder or scan your surrounding every few minutes if you're taking a walk, or checking your rear view mirror a bit more frequently if you're driving your car. Or, as you leave home in the morning, take a look up and down your street looking for any unusual or suspicious individuals in your neighborhood. If someone is watching you, these simple procedures – a sure sign of increased security vigilance – may be enough to deter a potential assailant.
- **Be aware of your surroundings, especially in and around your residential neighborhood.** You will know when something is normal or when someone (or something) is unusual or out-of-place. Take note of the latter, getting as many details as possible regarding the suspicious person, vehicle, or incident, and pass this information to the relevant police authorities immediately. Trust your instincts and do not second-guess yourself. It is best to err on the side of caution.
- **Maintain a low profile.** This is very important. Failing to abide by this simple rule increases your chances of becoming a victim. This includes what you wear (including jewelry), how you behave, and what you carry (do not display large sums of cash in public). Remember, these things mark you as a potential target.
- **Vary your times and routes to and from your home to your work location.** This helps you become less predictable and less prone to develop habits, and therefore, helps decrease your chances of becoming a victim. This is a proven, effective deterrent against criminal-related surveillance.

¹ Adapted from the OSCE Mission to Georgia Security Instructions with their kind permission

Carjacking

WHERE DO THEY OCCUR?

The most likely places for a carjacking are:

- Lesser traveled roads;
- Intersections where you must stop;
- Isolated areas in parking lots;
- Residential driveways and gates; and
- Traffic jams or congested areas.

WHEN DO THEY OCCUR?

They can occur at any time during the day or night. No time is “safer” than another.

HOW DO THEY OCCUR?

Criminals use many methods to carjack vehicles or attack victims while inside the vehicle. The most common are the following:

- “The Stop” – the criminal(s) quickly approach the victim’s vehicle when it is stopped at an intersection or parked. Usually weapons are brandished and the vehicle or personal properties are taken.
- “The Bump” – the criminal(s) bumps the victim’s vehicle from behind. The victim gets out assessing the damage and exchanging information. The victim’s vehicle or personal properties are then taken.
- “The Good Samaritan” – the criminal(s) stage what appears to be an accident and attempt to seek the victim’s assistance. The criminal(s) may even simulate an injury. When the victim stops to assist, the vehicle or personal properties are taken.
- “The Ruse” – the vehicle behind the victim’s vehicle flashes its lights or the driver waves to get the victim’s attention. The criminal(s) indicate there is a problem with the victim’s car. The victim stops and then the vehicle or personal properties are taken.
- “The Trap” – criminal(s) follows the victim home. When the victim pulls into his or her driveway, the criminal(s) pulls up behind and blocks the victim’s vehicle.

WHAT DO WE RECOMMEND?

1. Avoid areas and/or situations that carjacking are most likely to occur, especially if you are alone and/or driving at night. Choose relatively well-lit, well – traveled roads.
2. At all times, use your rear and side view mirror to keep aware of your surroundings. Remember, check and check again your mirrors! And, keep your doors locked and if practical, keep your windows up. Don’t remain fully focused on the car directly ahead of you – you should also be watching what is taking place at least three blocks ahead.
3. Be especially vigilant when you arrive at home or depart from your home, especially when you are opening or closing your garage gate. Be aware of vehicles and pedestrians. If you feel uncomfortable or threatened for any reason, do not exit your car or attempt to depart your residence! Go back inside your house or drive away

to a safe location. Then call for assistance. Only when the assistance arrives should you attempt to exit from or enter your home.

4. In traffic, look around for possible escape routes. Always keep some distance between you and the vehicle in front of you (at least one-half of your vehicle's length is a good rule-of-thumb), so you can maneuver easily if necessary.
5. When driving, if possible, use the middle lane. Don't allow yourself to be pinned against the curb at a light or stop sign. Again, leave enough space between cars to pull away quickly if necessary.
6. Don't be distracted by eating, drinking, or using your cell phone while driving. Losing focus on the road and your surroundings could make you an easier target.
7. Be careful after a minor rear-end accident or if someone is signaling or asking for you to stop. Remember your personal safety is first and foremost. If any of these things occur and you do not feel comfortable exiting your vehicle, motion to the other driver to follow you to the nearest police station. Do not go to your residence. And, never roll down your window to speak with another driver or pedestrian. This could be a pretext for a gunman to take your vehicle or personal properties.
8. When approaching your parked car, have your car keys in your hand. Check the surrounding area for suspicious persons near your car or following you. If you see a suspicious person, do not attempt to get in your car but immediately leave the area on foot and contact the relevant police authorities.
9. Do not make yourself a more attractive victim by leaving your purse or other valuables in view while you are driving or parked.
10. If you are stopping to use a public facility such as a gas station, try to use a well-lit facility. If you are forced to stop for mechanical problems, be wary of people who stop and offer assistance.
11. Keep your house keys on a separate ring from your car keys. Always have a full tank of gas and make sure your vehicle is well maintained. If you breakdown or run out of gas, this greatly increases your chances of becoming victimized.
12. If you are waiting for someone, if practical, do not sit inside your car. This limits your awareness of the surroundings and also tells potential carjackers that you are the driver and have the car keys. Rather, get out, lock the doors, and wait at a location away from the vehicle but with the vehicle and surroundings in full view.
13. Always carry your cell phone and have emergency telephone numbers readily available.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I BECOME A VICTIM?

Unfortunately, we cannot completely reduce your risk of becoming a victim. If you are victimized, remember the following:

1. Stay Calm. The carjacker may be just as nervous or as frightened as you. Do not do anything that the carjacker could construe as being hostile or use behavior or

language that may make the carjacker more nervous. Remember, the more nervous the carjacker, the more likely he or she will be to use violence.

2. **Give up the vehicle or personal belongings freely.**
3. Listen carefully to all directions and follow them as quickly as you can.
4. Again, make no quick or sudden movements that the criminal could construe as being hostile.
5. Make your goal to get out and safely away from the vehicle. Do not go with the criminals. We know this may be difficult given the circumstances – quickly assess the situation and use your best judgment.
6. **Make the carjacker aware if children are present.** The carjacker may be focused only on the driver and not know that children are in the car. If children are in the car, get them out as quickly as possible, telling the criminal exactly what you are doing. And remember, stay calm regardless of what the criminal says or does! If you become upset or agitated, then the criminal will become upset and agitated.
7. Remember, that the majority of criminal are armed and most likely will not hesitate to use violence. Do not resist! **Again, the most important rule is – if a carjacker wants your car or personal belongings, give them up.**
8. Contact relevant police authorities and GIPA administration as soon as possible after the incident. But remember to seek medical attention first if you, or someone else, are injured.

CONCLUSION

The best way to reduce your chances of becoming a victim is to understand how, when, and where such criminal acts occur, and to use common sense and to faithfully follow the recommendations summarized above. No one can completely guarantee your safety 100 percent of the time, but being forewarned and knowing how to reasonably respond to this type of crime can greatly reduce your risk. And should you become a victim, remember the objective is not to thwart the criminal but to survive uninjured.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Administration. Thank you.