

# Staying **Safe** in the Community when you have a **Disability**



**Map out your routes in advance** using tools such as Street View on Google Maps, trip planning tools provided by transit services, or the help of orientation and mobility specialists. This will allow you to be aware of your surroundings and help you plan out routes that are more accessible, busy, and/or well-lit.



**Contact establishments** to get information on their accessibility so you don't find yourself stuck outside or attempting a more risky entrance. Buildings may be accessible only through certain entrances. Ensure you feel comfortable using entrances or washrooms that are out of the way or secluded.



**Pre-program** emergency numbers into your mobile device. T-911 can be used in Canada for those that are Deaf, deafened, hard of hearing or speech-impaired.



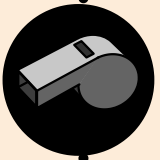
**Ensure electronic devices** (e.g. cell phone, power wheelchair, mobility scooter, hearing aids) are well charged. Consider carrying a portable charging device for small electronics.



**If using accessible door to door transit,** ensure you have the correct drop off location so that you don't become stranded in an unknown area. Ask your driver to wait until you have safely entered the home/building.



**Consider carrying a card** with emergency contact information and key phrases you can point to if you have difficulty communicating.



**Carry tools and aids** to protect yourself and make yourself noticeable in the community. These could include things such as a whistle, personal alarm, insect repellent, reflective panels on service animal harnesses, an emergency flashlight for low-lit areas, spoke lights for wheelchairs and/or wrapping LED light strips around canes and walkers.



**Check-in with someone.** Have a designated person who you'll periodically touch base with throughout your day, or let someone know where you will be going and what time you are expected back.



**Travel with a companion,** if you are able to, for either part or all of your journey.



**Make use of technology.** Apps such as WhatsApp or Life360 allow for location sharing. Explore what other apps may be of use to you. For example, *Be My Eyes* allows for blind and low-vision individuals to navigate new and unfamiliar places through the help of a sighted volunteer.



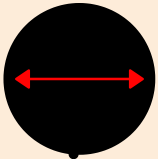
**Keep your valuables** close to your body if you are able to. Purses, bags, and other belongings hanging off of wheelchairs, walkers, or other mobility devices may be easily accessible to would-be thieves.



**Identify** your exits and any assistance points (i.e. security guards, information desks).



**Find a vantage point.** When sitting or resting in public areas or spaces try to find a vantage point that lets you see/hear people as they approach you.



**Create space** between yourself and your assailant. If you believe someone is following you cross the road or approach a passerby. If you use mobility aids try to place your mobility aid in front of you to create some distance.



**Use your voice** if you are able to. Loudly ask who they are, what they want, and why they are approaching you. Throw them off by saying "you look familiar, do I know you?". Most attackers are cowards and will back off if they think they can be identified later.