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## **OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY**

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### **Parking Lot Safety Tips**

- Don't approach your vehicle if a van or other large vehicle with tinted windows is parked next to it. Find a security guard to walk you to your car; they are paid to do so. If a security guard isn't available, look for a nearby couple walking to their car and say something like, "That car/van wasn't there when I parked. Would you mind walking with me to make certain nobody bothers me when I try to get into my car?" Most people would be happy to lend a moment and ensure your safety.
- Walk with purpose. Multiple studies have shown that a quick, purposeful walk sends subconscious signals to predators that you are not an easy mark. They typically decide to wait for another victim.
- Keep one hand free at all times. This at least gives you the opportunity to attempt to fend-off a would-be attacker.
- Have your key ready to open the car door. Never stand next to your car searching through your purse. Predators watch for this type of distraction.
- Once in your car, lock the doors immediately. This is the time a bystander could quickly and simply open a car door and let himself in.
- Get moving. Don't sit inside of your vehicle adjusting the stereo, rummaging through shopping bags or your purse, or talking on your phone. Instead, drive to a well-lit area and stop the car (but leave it running) and then search for the item, make a phone call, etc.
- If you have an unlocking button or keyless entry system, make certain you unlock only the driver door. Most keyless systems let you unlock either the driver door or use two punches to unlock all doors. Unlocking all doors allows a predator to simply slide into your car from the passenger side and do whatever he wants.
- Make sure that your dome light is always functioning properly. As you unlock your vehicle at night, glance into the back seat and make sure that an attacker has not gained access to your car.
- Never approach your vehicle if a single male is loitering anywhere near it. Period.
- If you are or about to be attacked, fight back. Yell, scream, hit, kick, and continue trying to squirm out of his grasp. The attacker is looking for an easy victim and will probably give up if you put up a fight.