

SAFETY

Safety Tips for College Students

NewsUSA

(NU) - College students and their parents continue to recall the tragedy that occurred at Virginia Tech last April, leaving many wondering how students can stay safe while attending college. Students can take many steps to protect themselves and reduce their risk of being victimized.

The National Crime Prevention Council, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Justice, offers the following tips for students:

- **Personal safety** – After dark, students should walk with friends or find out if their school offers an escort service. The phone numbers for 911 and campus security should be programmed as cell phone speed dials, and students should always carry their phones with them.

- **Theft** – Backpacks full of valuables should never be left behind – always keep possession of them, even during a quick study break. Students should always lock their dorm room and carry their room keys at all times. Keep valuables out of sight in vehicles and dorm rooms. If a wallet is stolen, students should cancel all credit cards and place a fraud alert with the three credit bureaus to prevent identity theft.

- **Alcohol consumption and drug abuse** – Alcohol and drug abuse can raise the risk for injury, intimate partner violence and victimization. Taking prescription



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medication in ways not prescribed, constitutes abuse, and can be as harmful as using illicit drugs. Rent movies, order take-out or play pick-up sports to have fun without alcohol.

- **Dating violence** – Recognize the behaviors that indicate abuse. Abusive individuals may hit or insult their partners, isolate partners from family and friends and pressure their partners to engage in unprotected sex. Those who believe themselves to be a victim of dating violence should seek support from a college counselor or victim service agency to get out of an abusive relationship.

All colleges must report crime statistics to the U.S. Department of Education, which can be accessed at www.ope.ed.gov/security/main.asp. For more information, visit www.ncpc.org.